

CREATING A SPIRATION OF LOVE IN FREEDOM FOR PERSONAL GROWTH AT STRATHMORE UNIVERSITY (KENYA)

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DECLARATION

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Deo Omnis Gloria!

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List of Abbreviations

ADU	Academic Development Unit
ASDP	Academic Staff Development Programme
BBIT	Bachelor in Business and Information Technology
BBS	Bachelor in Business Science
BCOM	Bachelor in Commerce
BHM	Bachelor in Hospitality Management
BTM	Bachelor in Tourism Management
BERA	British Educational Research Association
BT	Blooms Taxonomy
CAT	Continuous Assessment Test
CHE	Commission of Higher Education
CUE	Commission for University Education
DCU	Dublin City University
DRECA	Developing Research Capacity among African Environmental Scientists
ELP	E-learning Platform
GA	Graduate Assistant
IFFD	International Federation for Family Development
IHEDS	Institute of Humanities, Education and Development Studies
ILO	Intended Learning Outcome
JKUAT	Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology
LDC	Library Development Committee
Lt	Lecture theatre
PA	Philosophical Anthropology
PCAP	Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice
PDA	Professional Diploma in Accounting

PDP	Personal Development Project
POE	Principles of Ethics
RAT	Random Assessment Test
RSO	Research Services Office
SAP	Self-Awareness Project
SHSS	School of Humanities and Social Sciences
ST	<i>Summa Theologica</i>
SU	Strathmore University
T and L	Teaching and Learning
UCD	University College Dublin

Abstract

Creating a spiration of love in freedom for personal growth at Strathmore University (Kenya)

Catherine Dean

My doctoral research presents my self-enquiry as an Irishwoman who has lived and worked in Ireland and Italy for over thirty five years. This context throws light on my life and practice in Kenya over the last nine years. I then focus more specifically on the evolution of my work with staff and students at Strathmore University in this time span.

Through my research I show how I have sought to understand the meaning of my life and practice in greater depth while trying to improve my teaching practice at Strathmore University. I express my new knowledge in my living educational theory and show how my work contributes to the knowledge base of practitioner research.

I employ a methodology which I developed using elements of a living educational theory approach which embraces values and diverse forms of meaningful representation such as personal reflective narrative, autoethnography, intellectual representation and visual narrative. I use philosophical and theological reflection and analysis to explain the deeper meaning of the values that emerge in the course of my research as well as in the explanation of my living educational theory. I provide evidence of my contributions to knowledge using feedback from students, colleagues, friends and family members.

I present the living values which give meaning to my life and practice as *creating a spiration of love, in freedom, for personal growth*. This expression illustrates how I understand these values as an analogical mirroring of the free flow of love among the Divine Persons of the Blessed Trinity as I explain in my living theory.

Introduction

In this Introduction I explain the context, general aims and specific objectives of my doctoral enquiry. I present the scope and rationale of my thesis followed by my contributions to the knowledge base of practitioner research. Finally I provide an overview of the thesis to facilitate my readers.

Context

The broader context of my dissertation is my life as an Irishwoman who has lived and worked in Ireland and Italy for over thirty five years. I explain who I am and where I am coming from. This perspective throws light on my life and practice in Kenya over the last nine years. I then focus more specifically on the evolution of my work with staff and students at Strathmore University (Nairobi) in this time span.

General aims

The general aims of my doctoral enquiry were:

1. To contribute to the knowledge base of practitioner research as I sought to improve my teaching practice at Strathmore University.
2. To understand the meaning of my life and practice in greater depth by developing my own living educational theory.

Specific objectives

To achieve these aims I identified the following specific objectives:

General aim 1:

Specific objective 1:

I designed, implemented and evaluated ways of improving my teaching of Philosophical Anthropology and Principles of Ethics to my undergraduate students at Strathmore University.

Specific objective 2:

I shared and made public my learning experiences in achieving the first specific objective by making presentations at academic staff seminars at Strathmore University, presenting papers at various conferences and preparing articles, and this dissertation, for publication.

General aim 2:

Specific objective 3:

I investigated and reflected on my family background, influences in my life, my learning experiences and my intellectual development while growing up in Ireland and while studying and teaching in Rome. I identified the concepts which made a greater impact in my way of understanding the world, the human person and myself. I also identified some of the values which I assimilated through these influences and which motivated me as my life unfolded.

Specific objective 4:

I identified, reflected on and analysed the evolution of the values which implicitly motivated my practice from October 2004, when I began teaching at Strathmore University, until 2009 when I formally began my doctoral enquiry. I investigated how, once made explicit, these values influenced my teaching practice from November 2009 to October 2012 as I tried to improve my practice by living out these educational values in the context of my doctoral enquiry.

Specific objective 5:

I used my capacity for reflection along with my philosophical and theological knowledge to draw out the deeper meaning of my living educational values in my life and practice. I developed my living educational theory to provide an explanation of these values and how they have helped me to discover the deeper meaning and purpose of my life and practice.

These aims and objectives provide the background to my overall research question:

How am I “creating a spiration of love in freedom for personal growth” as I seek to understand my life work and improve my practice at Strathmore University (Kenya)?

Scope of my research

My doctoral research has a double scope which I have presented as a harmonious continuity through time.

Scope A:

I study my own life as it has evolved in three stages using personal reflective narrative and autoethnography. The purpose of this aspect of my research was to gather material and draw out evidence to achieve General aim 2.

- My early years growing up and being educated to degree level in Dublin, Ireland (20 years).
- My years in Rome where I studied Philosophy and Theology to Masters level while living in an international study centre directed by Opus Dei. Towards the end of this period I made three trips to Kenya for periods of one to seven months which I also discuss and reflect on (15 years).
- My years living in Kenya and working at Strathmore University from October 2004 to the present (9 years).

Scope B:

I investigate my practice at Strathmore University from two diverse perspectives and within two timeframes to contextualize and gather evidence for General aims 1 and 2:

Perspective 1:

I describe, reflect on and analyse the nature and meaning of my non teaching activities at Strathmore over an eight year period (Timeframe 1: October 2004 - October 2009 and Timeframe 2: October 2009 – October 2012). I discuss how I tried to incorporate the University mission into my life and practice by contributing to administrative and staff development programmes. The purpose of this perspective is to illustrate my ongoing

commitment to the mission of Strathmore University which is centered on the human person.

Perspective 2:

I narrate and analyse my teaching practice at Strathmore in two different timeframes:

Timeframe 1: October 2004 – October 2009

I discuss my efforts to adjust to teaching in my new cultural context prior to starting my doctoral enquiry. I illustrate how my focus on improving my practice developed and evolved from a general approach to ever more specific strategies. Through reflection on my practice in this timeframe I show that I was motivated by implicit educational values which gradually became more explicit.

Timeframe 2: October 2009 – October 2012

I discuss some of the specific systems I designed to improve my teaching practice motivated by my explicit educational values in the context of my doctoral research. I use personal and visual narrative to illustrate the evolution and improvement of my teaching practice over this period. I show how my living educational values have taken root in my teaching practice. These are:

- ✓ Creating a spiration of love with and amongst my students (good interpersonal relations).
- ✓ In freedom (learning to exercise our freedom and respect each person's freedom).
- ✓ For personal growth (facilitating the personal development of my students and myself).

Within this perspective and over both timeframes I discuss and illustrate how I have transformed myself personally in my efforts to improve my teaching practice using personal and visual narrative along with student feedback. I also point to how I have facilitated change in one of my students in particular and in the teaching approach of some of my colleagues.

This double scope which I present in chronological order in my dissertation provided me with the necessary material to achieve my specific objectives and ultimately, my general aims.

Rationale for my research

The underlying concerns, concepts and forms within my dissertation are varied.

I wanted to improve my teaching practice at Strathmore University because I was concerned by the lack of interest shown by my students in the Philosophy units which I was teaching. I knew they found the units too abstract and irrelevant to their degree programmes. They are compulsory units for all undergraduates to help them develop a broader understanding of reality and the person through the study of the humanities. I realized that I needed to help them discover the practical dimension of Philosophy. The focus of my research to improve my practice became designing ways of helping students apply Philosophy in a practical manner and so discover its relevance for their life, studies and professional work.

I chose practitioner research as the approach to investigating how I could improve my teaching because I was studying my professional work (practice). The outcomes of my research could be useful to other practitioners seeking ways of helping students to apply theory to life. In the area of Philosophy this could be an important contribution due to the general conception that this field is very abstract and difficult to teach, especially to students who are not taking a degree in Philosophy.

My intellectual mindset, developed through personal reflection, and the study of Philosophy and Theology moves me constantly to seek the deeper meaning underlying my activity, events, other peoples' activity, etc. For me it was normal to introduce into my research on practice the quest for a deeper understanding of the processes involved, the outcomes and the meaning which it all may have for my professional practice and my personal life. The focus on values and reflection on practice in the living educational theory approach appealed to me as they indicate a search for meaning. Likewise the possibility of using this approach to express the understandings I may develop through my research in my own educational theory was also very attractive. For these reasons I adopted some aspects of this approach for my research methodology. However I also

wanted to use my philosophical and theological knowledge in my research in order to penetrate more deeply into the meaning of my enquiry. I have incorporated this knowledge into my personal reflection on and analysis of the various aspects of my doctoral research. I have used it in particular for the explanation of my living educational values and the development of my living theory. Through applying my philosophical and theological knowledge to my research I have achieved my two general aims.

Finally, my doctoral enquiry is about representation and meaning which connects with my personal way of being. No person or event is meaningless for me. I need to express the meaning I discover through representation. This usually translates into some form of narrative in which I draw out the meaning which a person or an event has for me. I have used various forms of meaningful representation in my dissertation. Some parts contain personal reflective narrative in which I describe and reflect on learning experiences and events to draw out their meaning. I use autoethnography at other moments to illustrate and explain the meaning of my experiences of cultural context and diversity. In certain chapters I use visual narrative in the form of photos or video clips accompanied by an explanation of my understanding of the meaning depicted in these visual forms. Finally, throughout the thesis I use what could be called intellectual narrative or representation. I understand this as explaining the meaning of the concepts or ideas which I use or develop. These concepts or ideas are actually intellectual representations of the real world. I draw out their meaning, as in the case of the other forms of representation, through my explanations of how I understand them. The forms of meaningful representation which I use in my thesis also contribute to achieving my general aims.

My contributions to knowledge

My doctoral enquiry offers contributions to the knowledge base of practitioner research through my theory of practice which has various manifestations.

Applied personal development projects:

In my efforts to improve my teaching of Philosophy by engaging my students more effectively I designed various forms of personal development projects. These constitute new ways of helping students to apply theoretical knowledge to their own lives which can be transformative to the extent that they make the knowledge part of their life, as I show in

Chapter Eight. In the context of teaching Philosophy in particular, these projects provide ways of making apparently purely abstract knowledge practical and relevant.

Educational relationships:

In order to facilitate better learning in my students I worked at improving our mutual relations and the relations amongst the students themselves. This facilitated a more conducive environment in which the students were able to learn better. I provide visual evidence of this along with the testimony of students in their feedback.

Living Theory:

My living educational theory *passion for the person*, which is a synthesis of my living educational values: *creating a spiration of love, in freedom, for personal growth* explains my influences in my own learning, that of my students and of my colleagues at Strathmore University as I tried to improve my practice. It is rooted in my understanding of the interpersonal communion of love which constitutes the life of the Blessed Trinity. My living theory expresses my discovery of the deeper meaning and purpose of my personal existence and may perhaps help others to discover the meaning of their own lives.

My methodology:

My use of philosophical and theological knowledge to draw out and explain the deeper meaning of my living values and living theory provides a solid intellectual basis for my practitioner research. My use of various forms of meaningful representation according to my personal way of being also enriches my doctoral enquiry. Both of these elements may provide light to others seeking to identify personalized methodological practices which can enhance their research.

Personal knowledge:

The deeper knowledge and understanding of myself as a person which I have developed through my research focuses on the following:

- The real harmony that exists between theory and practice in my own life.
- My personal unity of life which moves me to think and act motivated by love.

- The discovery and understanding of the source, evolution and meaning of my living values has helped to explain the continuity of my personal existence, the nature of my values and my living theory.

These elements which express the growth in my personal self-knowledge have contributed to the development of my living educational theory which I also refer to as the theory of my life.

This deeper understanding of myself as a person helps me to accept and to understand other people more and better and to treat them with the love and respect which they deserve by the very fact of being persons.

Overview of my thesis

My dissertation is divided into four sections.

Section One deals with *Methodological Considerations* in order to situate the reader regarding my overall approach to my doctoral research. In Chapter One, *Personal reflections on research – who I am and how I think*, I explain my understanding of the nature and purpose of research, and the quest for knowledge as openness to the truth. I discuss the nature of philosophical and theological research and my natural tendency to reflection. In Chapter Two I explain *How I developed my research methodology* using aspects of practitioner research, especially Action Research and a living educational theory approach. I highlight some features of this approach which I incorporated into my own methodology. I also explain the other elements which characterize my methodological approach to my research enquiry.

Section Two, *Laying the Foundations*, provides a general perspective on my life work in three stages using personal reflective narrative and autoethnography. The first stage of my life journey is presented in Chapter Three, *Ireland and my family*. I introduce the reader to my family background and the influences in my learning produced through the values I imbibed at home, my educational experiences, the discovery of my personal vocation to Opus Dei and my first work contract. I explain how my experience of family love and respect for my freedom, along with the discovery of my vocation to give my life to Christ for love, contributed to my personal development and prepared me to launch out into another world at the age of twenty-one. In Chapter Four, *Rome and my new learning*

experiences, I explain the second stage of my journey. I reflect on my experience of family love and warmth while I lived and studied at Villa delle Rose International Centre and the Centro Internazionale di Studi Villa Balestra in Rome. I discuss the philosophical and theological concepts which had a greater impact on my intellectual development as I carried out my initial studies (1989-1992) and while I did my Masters in Theology (1992-1994). These provide the foundation of my worldview, that of a Christian intellect, and assisted me in developing my living educational theory. I also describe and reflect on my teaching experience in Rome (1994-2004) and how I learnt to teach by teaching. I narrate the third stage of my life journey in the last chapter of Section Two. Chapter Five, *First steps in Kenya*, presents my initial visits to Kenya (2001-2003). I describe my initial impressions of the country and reflect on my reactions and gradual adjustment to the new cultural and socio-economic context. I also discuss my experiences in the classroom there and my perceptions about the education system. Finally I explain that through my experience in Rome and my visits to Kenya I had developed a greater appreciation for the family spirit in Opus Dei. I had a greater love for freedom as shown in my growing capacity to accept diversity. As I developed through these experiences, the foundations had been laid and I was able to make the decision to relocate to Kenya.

In Section Three *How I am growing in Kenya*, I focus on my life in Kenya over the last nine years. I highlight how I have transformed myself through the experience of living and working here. In Chapter Six, *Kenya as my new life context*, I describe and reflect on my family and social life in Kenya and how I have transformed myself as I tried to adjust to my new circumstances, moved by my underlying values of family love, freedom and openness to personal growth. I then discuss and reflect on the socio-economic context and the education system based on my observations and readings. My focus is to understand and explain the background of the students I began to teach in October 2004 at Strathmore University. Chapter Seven, *My non-teaching activities at Strathmore University*, explains how I gradually became involved in a variety of activities at the University, moved by my desire to live the Strathmore Mission and help my colleagues to do so. I discuss and analyse the presentations I was asked to make at various staff seminars up to November 2012. My reflection on these experiences illustrates my personal growth and the emergence of my living educational values over the years. This Chapter shows how I became aware of my implicit passion for the person as it emerged in the various aspects of

my practice. Chapter Eight *My work with students at Strathmore University*, is divided into three parts (A, B, C) to facilitate the reader. It focuses on my efforts to improve my practice and transform myself while working with my students at Strathmore University from October 2004 to October 2012. I provide evidence of how the experience and understanding of family love, freedom and personal growth, which I brought with me from Rome, gradually became explicit educational values in my teaching practice and have become part of my way of being in the world.

In Section Four *In Search of Meaning*, I explain my living educational theory and conclude my dissertation with a presentation of my contribution to knowledge through my doctoral enquiry. Chapter Nine, *The living theory of my life*, illustrates how my living values form the basis for my living educational theory which I explain using philosophical and theological considerations. These values are *creating a spiration of love, in freedom, for personal growth*. They express how I understand my influence in my own learning and that of others in my life and practice over the last nine years in Kenya. At times I refer to my living theory as *my passion for the person*. I show how my living values are rooted in the reality of my sharing in the interpersonal, loving communion of the Blessed Trinity. In the Conclusion I explain how each chapter of the dissertation is a learning experience for me as I draw out new ideas in different ways. I indicate my contributions to the knowledge base of practitioner research and how my knowledge of myself as a person has deepened.

I hope this Introduction provides helpful guidance to my readers as they embark on the journey of following in the footsteps of my research enquiry.

Section One: Understanding my methodology

In Section One of my dissertation I explain my personal approach to research (Chapter One) and the methodology I developed to carry out my doctoral enquiry (Chapter Two). These considerations will help the reader to understand the narrative and analysis that I present in the following sections.

Chapter One: Personal reflections on research – who I am and how I think

In this chapter I explain my understanding of the nature and purpose of research, and the quest for knowledge as openness to the truth. I discuss the nature of philosophical and theological research and consider my natural tendency to reflection.

The way I think and understand issues related to research, knowledge and truth has developed through my life experience and studies, and is linked to my living values, as I will show in Chapters Three and Four.

For the sake of clarity I will start with a synthesis of my research assumptions.

My assumptions about research in synthesis

My approach to research is the fruit of my personal reflection on my past readings¹. At the root of this approach we find three assumptions:

1. The unity of Truth. The Fullness of Truth by nature can only be One, although we find it expressed in partial and participated forms in the created world (Aquinas 1947, ST I, q. 16, a. 6). Even a small piece of new knowledge can be true if it clearly shares in the Fullness of the One Truth, which may be verified

¹ For example: Gilson, E. 1991. *The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy*. Gilson, E. 1939. "The Intelligence at the service of Christ the King". John Paul II. 1998. *Fides et Ratio*. John Paul II. 1988. *Christifideles Laici*. Vatican Council II. 1963-1965. *Gaudium et Spes*. Belda, M. 1989. "La nozione di 'unita di vita' secondo l'Esortazione Apostolica Christifideles laici". Lanzetti, R. 1989. "La unidad de vida y la misión de los fieles laicos en la Exhortación Apostólica Christifideles Laici". Llano, A. 2000. "The University and Unity of Life: Blessed Josemaria Escriva's Vision". Alvira, T. and Melendo, T. 1979. *La fe y la formación intelectual*. The writings of St Josemaria Escriva on Unity of Life.

by the intellectual harmony that exists between the two. This assumption has two implications:

- a. we can find the truth, at least partially, anywhere in the real world;
- b. at times the truth may be mixed with error and so we need to distinguish between “true knowledge” (knowledge which expresses the truth) and “false” knowledge (knowledge that does not express the truth).

Later in this Chapter I will discuss the nature of truth in philosophical terms and its role in research. In Chapter Nine I will show how my interest in understanding the reality of my life and work is motivated by my desire to discover the truth of my own personal being in the world.

- 2. The harmony which exists between faith and reason. “Faith” is here understood to mean truth which we know through God’s revelation and our personal acceptance of this revelation with the gift of supernatural faith. When we accept these truths through faith, we know them using our human intellect where they are retained². “Reason” expresses truth which we can access through exercising our intellectual capacity to know in a variety of ways, without using the gift of faith. The truths which can be attained by human reason alone are naturally in harmony with the truths which we know thanks to the gift of faith because:

- a. The Truth is One;
- b. True knowledge can be acquired through supernatural faith or through the natural intellect alone. Both paths lead to knowledge of the truth, as becomes evident when the knowledge acquired by either is seen to share in the Fullness of the Truth;
- c. True knowledge acquired following one path is in harmony with true knowledge acquired through the other path;
- d. True knowledge developed along both paths is rooted in the human intellect, which is one.

² The Catechism of the Catholic Church (1993) expresses this point as follows: “Faith is a personal adherence of the whole man to God who reveals himself. It involves an assent of the intellect and will to the self-revelation God has made through his deeds and words” (n. 176).

As I will show in Chapter Nine, the knowledge which I acquire about my life and work through my research can be understood and explained at a deeper level with the knowledge which I have acquired through faith.

3. When the previous assumptions are understood and assimilated, a truly Christian intellect may be developed. This term refers to an intellectual attitude in which the union of human and supernatural knowledge enriches our understanding of the various aspects of reality. The person who develops a Christian intellect can achieve an ever deeper penetration into the meaning of life, experience and practice. However, if this intellectual perspective is to be truly effective in developing our understanding of the world, the individual researcher must genuinely strive to live according to his / her convictions. The person then develops the necessary unity of life which contributes to explaining the meaning of their life and practice in greater depth.

The expression “unity of life” refers to a oneness of life, in which the way a person thinks, what a person wants or feels and how a person acts co-exist in deep and living harmony, due to a radical unifying principle which penetrates their whole personal being. I will refer to it again in Chapters Two, Four and Nine.

In Sections Two and Three I will illustrate how my Christian intellect and unity of life have developed over time, allowing me to penetrate more deeply into the meaning and purpose of my life and practice, and subsequently develop my own living educational theory (Chapter Nine).

What is the nature and purpose of research?

According to *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* (1984), research is:

careful search or enquiry after or for or into; endeavor to discover new or collate old facts etc. by scientific study of a subject, course of critical investigation (p. 884).

Research is an enquiry of an intellectual nature, which involves the effort to discover new or collate old facts, assumed to be synonymous with information, knowledge, data, and ideas, through the use of a scientific study which is equated with a course of critical investigation. We could summarise the three main features of research as:

1. Intellectual enquiry.
2. In search of new knowledge (ideas) or the collation of old knowledge in new ways.
3. Using some form of critical investigation or scientific study.

This broad definition covers any form of research as it underlines the essential elements that an activity should have, in order to be considered true research.

At the most basic level, research is the process we undertake when we have a question to answer; we need to acquire knowledge; we want to extend our understanding of the social world (Matthews and Ross 2010, p. 7).

As implied above, the aim of doing research is to discover or develop new knowledge, ideas or understanding.

The prime example is that of a child who is constantly seeking answers about the world outside of him or herself. This human ontological intentionality, this spirit of admiration and curiosity, is the reason behind research; it is the effort of a human being to develop knowledge (Grajales and Gonzalez 2008, p. 156).

So the purpose of research is to develop knowledge.

What is knowledge?

In many fields of research today there is an epistemological problem which draws out the fact that we need to reflect more deeply on the nature of knowledge itself (Winter, Griffiths and Green (2000, p. 27).

In general terms, knowledge is understood to mean familiarity with facts, truths, and principles by the human senses and / or the human intellect (Dictionary.com n.d.):

The Concise Oxford English Dictionary (1984) defines knowledge as:

- i) expertise, and skills acquired by a person through experience or education; the theoretical or practical understanding of a subject;
- (ii) what is known in a particular field or in total; facts and information;
- (iii) awareness or familiarity gained by experience of a fact or situation.

However, knowledge is not just an accumulation of facts in the mind. *The Cambridge On-line Advanced Learners Dictionary* (2013) defines knowledge as:

understanding of or information about a subject which a person gets by experience or study, and which is either in a person's mind or known by people generally (<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/knowledge>).

Here the key term is “understanding”. To know something implies understanding the facts, which we formulate as intellectual concepts or ideas. Matthews and Ross (2010) refer to the two central features of knowledge as:

1. Information: knowledge gained through study, experience or instruction.
2. Understanding: grasping the meaning of information.

I define intellectual knowledge, as opposed to sense knowledge, as the possession by the human intellect of facts, ideas and concepts as a consequence of the intellect coming into contact with things, people, experiences, etc. through the external and internal senses, and which are understood by the person in one way or another (Aquinas 1947, ST I q. 84, aa. 1 & 7; Young 2010, pp. 142-144).

From knowledge to truth

Knowledge with understanding implies that the person has discovered the meaning of something at the intellectual level, which involves the discovery of some truth. This is possible for the human person because: “It is the nature of the human being to seek the truth” (John Paul II 1998, *Fides et Ratio*, n. 33).

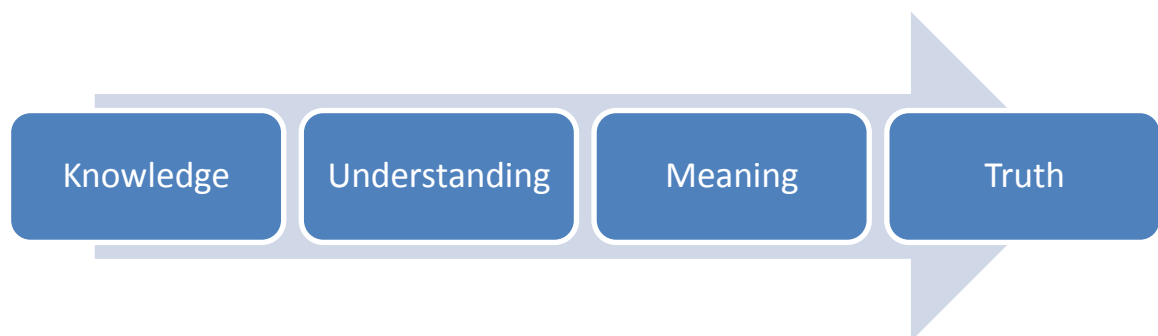


Figure 1 From knowledge to truth

If research is an intellectual and systematic enquiry in search of knowledge with understanding, it is also a search for meaning, which is intimately linked to the truth of the knowledge discovered. Ideally, any form of genuine research aims at discovering the truth by developing meaningful insights into and understandings of the real world, which constitute new knowledge.

Here I am assuming that there is a link between knowledge and truth. But, is knowledge the same as truth? Does the knowledge we develop or discover always express the truth? It is a common human experience to realise that our knowledge of someone or something is erroneous, because it does not reflect the truth of that person or thing as they are in reality. This makes us aware that our knowledge may be true, totally or partially, or that it is false. Not all knowledge is true and so, for the genuine researcher the relationship between knowledge and truth is crucial.

As I will describe in Chapter Three, at the age of twenty I had a transformational experience through which I discovered that my own mind is not the reference point for the truth of my ideas, but rather the reality beyond my inner world. This experience opened up a whole new realm for my thinking and search for truth and meaning in life. It was the existential discovery of the link that exists between my ideas and the real world, which can assist me in finding the truth. This experience points to the harmony which can exist between subjective truth (in the mind of the person) and objective truth (in the real world).

This harmony can be achieved through the human knowing process. We receive data through the external and internal senses. It is transferred to the intellect where it is converted into an idea that expresses our understanding of the evidence contained in the data. The idea is evaluated to confirm the truthfulness of the evidence it contains. In this way we go beyond the data itself through human thought and reflection. We are able to transcend self-evident truths to reach non-evident truths, using reasoning processes. These are natural functions of the human intellect, as it strives to know the truth (Aquinas 1947, ST I, q. 84, a. 6).

One of the ways we know the truth as human beings is through our interpersonal relations. We usually assume that people are telling the truth. For example, in the teaching context students expect their lecturers to help them discover the truth about some aspect of the world or life. The person who seeks the truth often finds it through human faith, or trust in the authority and/or trustworthiness of the person communicating knowledge to them.

This idea was brought home to me very forcefully when I read the following in John Paul II's encyclical letter on *Faith and Reason* (1998, n. 32):

In believing, we entrust ourselves to the knowledge acquired by other people. This suggests an important tension. On the one hand, the knowledge acquired through belief can seem an imperfect form of knowledge, to be perfected gradually through personal accumulation of evidence; on the other hand, belief is often humanly richer than mere evidence, because it involves an interpersonal relationship and brings into play not only a person's capacity to know but also the deeper capacity to entrust oneself to others, to enter into a relationship with them which is intimate and enduring. It should be stressed that the truths sought in this interpersonal relationship are not primarily empirical or philosophical. Rather, what is sought is the truth of the person –what the person is and what the person reveals from deep within (...) knowledge through belief, grounded as it is on trust between persons, is linked to truth: in the act of believing, men and women entrust themselves to the truth which the other declares to them.

As I understand this text, we can know the truth through our trust in the person who is transmitting that knowledge because there is a link between the person transmitting knowledge and the truth itself. The person must be truthful and the knowledge must be true so that we can trust that person and accept as true the knowledge they impart. I accept as true what that person says because I perceive and accept the truth of the person himself. This is the case in any type of interpersonal relationship. Ultimately personal relationships are possible because we trust the other person's veracity as we intuitively perceive that they are genuine. At the same time, each person develops their own body of evidence regarding others, which contributes to confirming or belying their initial trust in someone's personal authenticity.

These considerations highlight two fundamental ideas:

1. We can access true knowledge through faith in the person who transmits it, but such knowledge should be perfected and corroborated by each person through accumulating further evidence.
2. Knowledge acquired through faith can be richer than pure evidence because it is based on an interpersonal relationship in which we acknowledge the truth of the other and entrust ourselves to him or her.

These points highlight a key element in my approach to research. If we perceive the truth of the person doing research, who the person is and what the person reveals from deep within, we can discover their personal authenticity or trustworthiness. This personal authenticity becomes a reference point for the acceptance of the truthfulness of their research work. The link I am establishing between the authenticity of the researcher and the veracity of their research findings depends on the fact that the person lives and works

according to their convictions regarding true knowledge. It implies that love for the truth is the unifying factor in the thought, life and practice of the researcher. In this case, the person possesses the unity of life which I mentioned earlier in this chapter.

At the same time, the rigour of academic work requires that the researcher provide evidence, which may be expressed in a variety of ways, to further support their personal authenticity in their claims to knowledge. I understood this through personal experience in a validation meeting at Dublin City University (April 2012). I was told that my claims to knowledge, for which I had just presented evidence, were genuine because of my own personal authenticity. One participant commented: “Just by listening to you, I know that what you are saying is true”. In keeping with these considerations, as well as illustrating my efforts to live according to my personal convictions, I will provide appropriate evidence in Chapters Seven and Eight to support my various claims to knowledge.

Whitehead expresses the combination of personal authenticity and the need for supporting evidence quite explicitly in his formulation of the fourth criteria used by Habermas for social validation in an article published in *Action Researcher in Education* (2010, p. 101):

How could I demonstrate more convincingly (appropriate evidence) my authenticity in the sense that the reader can trust that I am genuinely committed to living my ontological values as fully as I can (personal authenticity) in my enquiry, ‘How do I improve what I am doing?’

In the search for truth, much depends on one’s internal attitude to and perception of the truth itself. I remember sitting at the foot of the mountains in the Abruzzi region in Italy around 1995. I was praying as I contemplated the beautiful views around me. One mountain in particular seemed not only to be soaring over me but to be falling on me. The thought occurred to me that nature and God could be seen as forcing themselves upon us like that, as impositions. Then I realised that the beauty of the scene was a manifestation of the greatness of God’s love for me and the world. The mountain was now expressing the tremendous gift of love which God offers me personally. I realised that to receive it, I needed to be open to and accept His love-gift. In an analogous manner, something similar occurs in the authentic search for truth. It is a gift we receive when we open our minds to it with love.

As I will explain in Chapters Three and Four, my education at home and my philosophical studies have lead me to develop a great love for the truth. I am convinced that truthfulness and honesty in word, deed and thought are essential elements for living in accordance with my nature and dignity as a human person. This requires effort, but it enables one to discover the deeper meaning of the reality one experiences in their life and practice, as I will show in Chapter Nine.

Up to this point we have discussed the nature and purpose of research as an intellectual enquiry, along with issues involving knowledge and truth as essential to research. We will now look at two specific approaches to doing research as a critical or scientific study:

- Philosophical enquiry
- Theological enquiry

Philosophical Enquiry

The philosophical method originally asks *why* as the person seeks to know and understand the deeper causes and meaning of the real world. Many civilizations express the understanding they have developed using different concepts to explain the knowledge acquired (John Paul II 1998, *Fides et Ratio*, n. 1). In all these cases, the human mind sought to know the truth about what it was investigating, not falsehood.

At times I ask people if they want to be at the receiving end of the transmission of falsehood, and they always say *no*! When we discuss the issue further, they usually agree that what they want to know about a subject, an event or a person, is the truth. Universal experience confirms the natural human inclination not just to know anything, but to know the truth. No-one deliberately seeks to know falsehood. Clearly the search for truth is one of our most basic natural tendencies. It is a core feature of philosophy.

Men and women have at their disposal an array of resources for generating greater knowledge of truth so that their lives may be ever more human. Among these is philosophy, which is directly concerned with asking the question of life's meaning and sketching an answer to it. Philosophy emerges, then, as one of the nobler of human tasks. According to its Greek etymology, the term philosophy means 'love of wisdom'. Born and nurtured when the human being first asked questions about the reason for things and their purpose, philosophy shows in different modes and forms that the desire for truth is part of human nature itself. It is an innate property of human reason to ask why things are as they are, even though the answers which gradually emerge are set within a horizon which reveals how the different human

cultures are complementary (...) Every people has its own native and seminal wisdom which, as a true cultural treasure, tends to find voice and develop in forms which are genuinely philosophical (John Paul II 1998, *Fides et Ratio*, n. 3).

My own personal experience resonates with these words as from childhood I have tried to know and understand the truth. After reading *Fides et Ratio* I published one of my first articles *Dare to think!* (Dean 1999), in which I discussed the natural inclination to question the real world in search of understanding, by asking *why?*

Analysing the text quoted above, we can identify various key features of a philosophical approach to research:

- Philosophy is a way of generating knowledge of the truth
- Philosophical knowledge can contribute to making our lives more human
- Philosophy asks questions about the meaning of life, the reasons for things and their purpose
- Philosophy strives to provide answers that explain the meaning of life, etc
- Etymologically, philosophy (*philo-sophia*) means *love of wisdom*
- Philosophy manifests the natural human desire to know the truth
- Human reason and philosophy ask: *why things are as they are?*
- The answers to this seminal question vary in different cultures, yet they are complementary
- The native wisdom of the various cultures manifest a genuine, philosophical understanding of the meaning of life and other matters

These points highlight the fact that philosophical enquiry is a form of research which seeks to generate true knowledge by answering deep questions which are rooted in the human heart regarding the meaning of life, the existence of things, their purpose, etc. The key philosophical question is WHY? The answers to this question which have been provided by different cultures and individual thinkers manifest a deep understanding of reality, which is expressed in the term *wisdom*. This wisdom, or profound understanding, is not purely intellectual. Its attractiveness, when perceived by the person, gives rise to love for that knowledge, and so the philosophical approach to research is known as *love of wisdom*.

Philosophical enquiry “attains the unsensed depths of things” (Young 2010, p. 102) precisely because it involves a longing (love) to know the deepest meaning of reality (wisdom). This love of wisdom is not simply a love for knowledge or truth for its own sake. As the text above points out, philosophy is a quest to know and love the truth, so that

our lives may become more human. There is clearly a practical dimension to philosophical enquiry in that:

- It begins with asking questions about the real world, life, experience, etc.
- It seeks to understand the deepest truths and meaning of these realities
- The knowledge it develops should be applied to help us live in a more human manner in the real world
- It helps us to know, understand and love ourselves and the real world more and better, so that we can live in the world in a way that manifests the meaning of our own existence and the existence of the world itself
- Philosophical knowledge can and should be applied to life in the world

In Chapter Eight I will illustrate how I have sought ways of teaching Philosophy to undergraduate students at Strathmore University, with the aim of helping them to discover its practical dimension and relevance for their lives. Although in some schools of thought, Philosophy is considered to be a purely theoretical approach to knowledge, I am convinced that it is meant to be applied directly to life. Currently the challenge is to discover ways of achieving this goal in order to enhance the quality of peoples' lives.

In *Fides et Ratio* (1998, n. 5), John Paul II explains the direction taken by modern philosophy. On the one hand there has been a greater focus on man, which has led to the development of complex systems of thought in different fields of knowledge. However, man's capacity to know the deepest truths has been left aside and this has contributed to a certain "dehumanization" of the person, who is now often looked upon as a *what* (a thing) rather than a *who* (a person with special dignity).

John Paul II expresses the core of the problem as follows:

reason, rather than voicing the human orientation towards truth, has wilted under the weight of so much knowledge and little by little has lost the capacity to lift its gaze to the heights, not daring to rise to the truth of being. Abandoning the investigation of being, modern philosophical research has concentrated instead upon human knowing. Rather than make use of the human capacity to know the truth, modern philosophy has preferred to accentuate the ways this capacity is limited and conditioned (1998, *Fides et Ratio*, n. 5).

Modern philosophy has separated knowledge, truth and being (*esse*), and focused on developing theories of knowledge independently of their relationship with the truth. This is a danger which threatens every form of research. It is easier to develop epistemologies to "produce" new knowledge without considering the link between that theory of knowledge

and accessing the truth. As a result, the truth of being, the ways things are in reality as known through Metaphysics, is rarely the focus of philosophical enquiry. If the link between knowledge, truth and being is lost, philosophical research loses its meaning. Of what use is erroneous, false, knowledge? It is more challenging intellectually to seek the truth of being in the pursuit of knowledge, but it is more rewarding because ultimately our minds seek the truth. If the knowledge we discover is true, we experience personal fulfilment because we have followed our natural inclination to know the truth. In this case, our contribution to knowledge will be authentic, genuine and of greater use to others as it will be the fruit of the human spirit which naturally longs for the truth. Philosophical enquiry requires a genuine *love for the truth* which translates into seeking the deeper meaning of human life and activity, in order to enhance our holistic understanding of the person and assist each individual in fulfilling their potential (John Paul II 1998, *Fides et Ratio*, n. 33).

If the human person naturally seeks to know the truth and has an infinite capacity to continue seeking the truth over time, we need to clarify ‘what is truth?’ St. Thomas Aquinas defines the truth in various ways, such as:

- The conformity of the mind to reality (Aquinas 1947, ST I, q. 65, a. 1).
- Truth is the equation of thought and thing (Aquinas 1947, ST I. q. 16, a. 1)
- The being of the thing, not its truth, is the cause of truth in the intellect (Aquinas 1947, ST I. q. 16, a. 1, ad. 3)

These definitions look at truth in terms of the link between the knowledge attained by the human intellect and the way a thing is in reality (the truth of its being). The knowledge developed by the human intellect is true because it corresponds to the way things are in the real world. What, then, is the source of truth? It is not the human mind, which discovers it, but rather the real world itself (the being of the thing is the source of intellectual truth). The world is there, outside the person, to be known, explored, and understood by the human being as the knowing subject. The world around us challenges us to reach out, to enter into contact with it and come to know it.

In a certain sense the truth is beyond us. It is an “objective” reality to be discovered. We do not “create” true knowledge, although we have the capacity to think and reason

independently. The truth becomes our own subjectively when we know things intellectually according to the way they are in the real world. Once we know the truth about things and people we can begin to think further and create new ways of understanding and expressing the reality of the world. We can then refer back to the real world and assess our new ideas in relation to the world, to evaluate whether or not they are a true expression of the way things are in reality. Genuine philosophical thought and systematization involves this constant reaching out to the world, as a reference point for testing the truth of its affirmations, before returning to further reflection. This outward and inward movement in philosophical thought is a sign that it functions in the service of the truth.

As a scientific discipline, philosophical enquiry needs to formulate and express its knowledge in a rational and systematic manner. It does so by identifying common universal principles which help to explain reality such as the principle of being, the principle of non-contradiction, the principle of causality, the principle of finality, the principle of substance and accidents, the principle of change, etc. Philosophy “does not resolve or analyse its concepts into the observable, but into the intelligible” (Young 2010, p. 102).

In spite of the finiteness of the created human intellect, its capacity to seek and know the truth is infinite. The philosopher is never fully satisfied with his knowledge of the truth. He realises that he can always know it better, in different ways and from various angles. He is constantly seeking to go deeper into the truth. This experience is shared by the true artist who is never fully satisfied by his creation; it could be more beautiful, more perfect, better in some way. The lover is never fully satisfied by the love he gives and receives; he or she always wants more. The human being even when it seems that he or she has everything they could possibly need or want, is never fully satisfied; we always want something more. These human experiences reveal our natural tendency towards perfect love, the fullness of truth, the greatest good or beauty. Yet perfect happiness eludes us in this life. These tendencies towards complete self-fulfillment can only be fully satisfied by an encounter with perfect goodness and truth.

Referring to the search for the truth, John Paul II says:

It is unthinkable that a search so deeply rooted in human nature would be completely vain and useless. The capacity to search for truth and to pose questions itself implies the rudiments of a response. Human beings would not even begin to search for something of which they knew nothing or for something which they thought was wholly beyond them. Only the sense that they can arrive at an answer leads them to take the first step (1998, *Fides et Ratio*, n. 29).

We naturally seek the truth because the fullness of the Truth does exist although it transcends us. We are capable of reaching it otherwise we would not even begin to seek it. We can apply the same reasoning to our infinite longing for perfect love, goodness, happiness, etc. We tend naturally towards these realities because they do exist otherwise these longings would not “make sense”. They would be irrational inclinations in the human person who is a naturally rational being.

These natural, infinite inclinations experienced by the finite human being indicate the person’s real capacity to transcend the finite world and enjoy eternal fulfilment and perfect happiness in an infinite world of total and unlimited goodness, truth, love, and beauty. The fullness of the truth which the Philosopher seeks can be attained by transcending the finite world, reaching out to the perfect Truth of the Fullness of Being. This Infinite Reality is God Himself, the source of the existence of our world, ourselves as persons and our capacity to know the truth.

I have presented some of the principles of philosophical enquiry which I use when teaching Philosophical Anthropology and Principles of Ethics at Strathmore University. They also inspire the explanation of my living educational theory in Chapter Nine.

Theological enquiry

I will now explain the essence of theological enquiry which is also relevant to my living educational theory.

A simple definition of theology can be found in the Greek etymology of the word *theologia* which means “science or study (*logia*) of God (*theos*)”. Christian theology is the study of the mystery of God and his salvific plan for the world based on what he has revealed to us and which we know through the gift of supernatural faith. This faith enlightens human reason so that we can accept as true the mysteries which God has manifested to us in a supernatural manner. We then begin a process of ever deepening

intellectual understanding of revelation. As the *Instruction on the Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian* (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith 1990) states in n. 6:

revealed truth beckons reason - God's gift fashioned for the assimilation of truth - to enter into its light and thereby come to understand in a certain measure what it has believed. Theological science responds to the invitation of truth as it seeks to understand the faith. It thereby aids the People of God in fulfilling the Apostle's command to give an accounting for their hope to those who ask it.

Theology is the science in which the mind of the believer, guided by faith in God seeks a better understanding of the revealed mysteries in themselves and in their consequences for human existence (Scheeben 1946; Nichols 1991; Morales 1997; John Paul II 1998, *Fides et Ratio*).

St. Augustine (5th Century) formulated theology as (*Sermones*, 43, 9):

Crede ut intelligas. Intellige ut credas: I believe in order to understand. I understand in order to believe.

Along with the need for faith, he underlines the role of the intellect in coming to understand the faith. The intellectual understanding of the faith proper to theology actually helps in strengthening our faith because it provides reasons for our belief.

St. Anselm of Canterbury (11th century) formulated a motto that became a common definition of Theology³:

Fides quarens intellectum.

That is, faith seeking understanding moved by love and reverence towards the mystery of God. St Anselm underlines the importance of faith, love and intellectual humility in theological work.

John Paul II explained the basic principles of theological methodology as follows:

Theology is structured as an understanding of faith in the light of a twofold methodological principle: the auditus fidei (listen to the contents of the faith) and

³ It was the initial title of his *Proslogion* (A Discourse) on the existence of God.
http://oll.libertyfund.org/?option=com_staticxt&staticfile=show.php%3Ftitle=1033&chapter=94635&layout=html&Itemid=27 [Accessed 7 June 2013].

the intellectus fidei (strive to understand the contents of the faith). With the first, theology makes its own the content of Revelation as this has been gradually expounded in Sacred Tradition, Sacred Scripture and the Church's living Magisterium. With the second, theology seeks to respond through speculative enquiry to the specific demands of disciplined thought (1998, *Fides et Ratio*, n. 65).

The first “moment” of theology is expressed in the term *auditus fidei*, which literally means to hear or listen to the faith. It refers to the aspect of theological methodology which involves discovering the contents of Revelation as contained in the fundamental theological sources: Sacred Scripture and the Tradition of the Church (*Dei Verbum*, n. 24). The role of the teaching authority within the Church, known as the Magisterium and made up of the Roman Pontiff and the Bishops in union with him, is to assist in giving an authentic interpretation of the Word of God both in its written form and in the form of Tradition (*Dei Verbum*, n. 10).

Some theological disciplines focus more directly on the *auditus fidei*, developing an in depth knowledge of revelation through the study of Sacred Scripture, Patrology, History of the Church, etc. Divine revelation possesses an innate intelligibility which is so logically consistent that it constitutes an authentic body of knowledge (John Paul II 1998, *Fides et Ratio*, n. 65).

The second “moment” in theological activity is expressed in the term *intellectus fidei*, which refers to the intellectual activity involved in analysing the contents of revelation with the light of faith to understand them more deeply and explain them in a systematic way (John Paul II 1998, *Fides et Ratio*, n. 66).

Some areas of theology focus on expressing conceptually and explaining the meaning of the mysteries of faith such as systematic theology, fundamental theology, moral theology, Liturgy, etc. In these disciplines theologians use all the problem-solving techniques of reason to clarify the meaning of the faith. This includes distinguishing between concepts, analysing judgements, defining, dividing, comparing, classifying, inferring, reasoning their way to an explanation, deducing, synthesising and so on. These operations are characteristics of any science and form part of the processes of rational thought.

In order to move from the knowledge of the mysteries of faith which are contained in Revelation to the systematic development of an intellectual understanding of these truths

of faith and their meaning for our lives, theology makes use of philosophical thought. Philosophy provides concepts which help to explain the contents of revelation in a critical and universally communicable way so that these mysteries can be transmitted meaningfully from one generation to the next (Ibid.).

St Thomas Aquinas was among the first thinkers to formally define theology as a science. He distinguished between those human sciences which start from immediately evident principles (primary sciences), and other sciences which start from principles that are not self-evident but are proved by or based on some other science (secondary sciences).

there are two kinds of sciences. There are some which proceed from a principle known by the natural light of intelligence, such as arithmetic and geometry and the like. There are some which proceed from principles known by the light of a higher science: thus the science of perspective proceeds from principles established by geometry, and music from principles established by arithmetic. So it is that sacred doctrine (theology) is a science because it proceeds from principles established by the light of a higher science, namely, the science of God (God's knowledge) (...) Hence, just as the musician accepts on authority the principles taught him by the mathematician, so sacred science is established on principles revealed by God (Aquinas 1947, ST I, q. 1 a. 2).

Aquinas defined theology as a secondary science, because it is based on the *science* or knowledge of God Himself. It does not invent or develop its own first principles, which are the truths of faith revealed by God, rather theology accepts these first principles with the help of supernatural faith. They are found in divine revelation, which is contained in Sacred Scripture and the Tradition of the Church of Christ.

The theologian then thinks, reflects and relates to his own personal relationship with God, to acquire a deeper intellectual understanding of these mysteries. His reference point for confirming the truth of any conclusions he may come to, are the original principles, or truths of faith from where his reasoning started. If there is a logical harmony between these principles and the final conclusions which respects the mysteries of faith, the theologian has discovered new ways of understanding the truths of faith that contribute to deepening in our knowledge of Revelation (Morales 1997). In order to support his claims to knowledge, the theologian will refer to the sources of theological reflection in accord with its methodology. These are Sacred Scripture and the Tradition of the Church of Christ, along with the guidance of the teaching authority of the Church.

In Chapter Nine I will use theological reflection to explain my living educational theory, based on the evidence regarding my life and practice which I provide in Chapters Seven and Eight.

The role of reflection in my approach to research

My personal approach to research has developed through the values which I acquired in my home environment and during my studies, as I will illustrate in Chapters Three and Four. These fostered my natural tendency to reflect on and search for the deeper meaning of life and reality, along with the desire to synthesise the knowledge I developed.

While studying in Rome, I developed a study method which aided me in pushing myself intellectually to think further and more deeply. After reading class notes or part of a text on some topic, I would write a brief synthesis of the ideas in one colour. I would then stop:

- to think about what I had studied
- to ask myself why these statements had been made
- to check whether or not I agreed with them and why
- to discover possible links between these ideas and other topics in other units which I had studied

Subsequently, I would jot down new ideas, questions, etc. in another colour and try to think them through further, answer them using other knowledge I had already acquired, etc. I would then write the possible answers in a third colour. At times I would speak with my lecturers about the ideas I had not been able to understand or solve, or I would wait until new points came up in class to clarify my doubts.

Another factor which has fostered my reflective capacity is my commitment to personal prayer and contemplation each day. I often read and meditate on the Gospel or other texts to foster my dialogue with God in prayer. This process can lead to contemplation which could be expressed as “intellectual gazing” at God in His company, without need for rational thought to maintain spiritual contact. Through meditation and contemplative prayer, the person often receives intellectual lights which deepen their understanding of God, oneself, the world, events in one’s personal life, etc. (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1993, numbers 2709-2719).

Finally, the writings of John Paul II have stimulated me to think ever more deeply about human and supernatural issues, particularly the meaning and value of the human person. Some commentaries on his work by other authors have also contributed to further deepening my understanding of the mystery of the human person⁴.

My capacity for reflection has developed over time. As I will show in Chapters Seven, Eight and Nine, this aspect of my personal way of being has contributed significantly to the emergence of my living values as I have sought to improve my life and practice in Kenya.

Summary

In this chapter I have explained the principles that guide my approach to research, which may be summarized as follows:

- my understanding of research as a quest for true knowledge
- my use of philosophical enquiry to know the truth
- my use of theological enquiry to understand the mystery of God and his plan for the world
- my natural tendency to reflection

I will use these principles at different points in my dissertation. In particular, philosophical and theological enquiry will guide the explanation of my living educational theory in Chapter Nine.

In Chapter Two I will discuss the methodological approach to my research and show how I have incorporated my research principles.

⁴ For example: Illanes, J.L. 1997. *Iglesia en la historia. Estudios sobre el pensamiento de Juan Pablo II*. Valencia: Edicep.

Chapter Two: How I developed my research methodology

I will explain the characteristics of the research methodology I wanted to use, my discovery of Practitioner Research, Action Research and the living educational theory approach to research. I will then outline my methodology as I have designed it using elements of living theory along with other features.

In search of a research methodology

When I began to think about my doctorate I was interested in using a flexible methodology which would allow for my own approach to research. I was also interested in a personal form of research which would allow for the values which I have developed during my life. As I will show in Chapters Three and Four, one of the key elements of my learning has been the acquisition of personal values such as love for the truth and freedom, love for others, the desire to develop myself as a person and to help others grow. These and other values have become part of my life and who I am as a person through the process of trying to live them over time.

Within the social sciences there are many ways of approaching research in the field of education. However I was not attracted to the traditional quantitative and qualitative methodologies. My philosophical and theological training had prepared me for discovering new ways of explaining the real world and the mysteries of God using personal reflection and critical analysis, as I have explained in Chapter One.

Although I was not initially aware of this, I wanted to study my own teaching practice in order to improve what I was doing for the sake of my students and to contribute to the knowledge base of practice. My supervisor Dr Margaret Farren, who created her pedagogy of the unique through her ontological commitment to a web of betweenness (Farren 2006) introduced me to practitioner research and the idea of researching your own practice. As she states:

A pedagogy of the unique refers to the unique contribution that each practitioner-researcher makes to a knowledge base of practice (Farren 2006, abstract).

She helped me to discover that practitioner research allows for my personal creativity in contributing to knowledge, while also being relevant to academic theory and professional practice. I realized that if I took this path I would move beyond traditional research methodologies, which are still considered to be the only valid forms of research in Kenya where I am based. I saw that my learning process in using practitioner research would be rich and would expose me to new approaches which I could bring to the Academy in Kenya.

Practitioner Research

The following quotation from Dadds and Hart (2001, p.169) expresses the *spirit* of what I was seeking:

More important than adhering to any specific methodological approach, be it that of traditional social science or traditional action research, may be the willingness and courage of practitioners –and those who support them- to create enquiry approaches that enable new, valid understandings to develop; understandings that empower practitioners to improve their work for the beneficiaries in their care. Practitioner research methodologies are with us to serve professional practices. So what genuinely matters are the purposes of practice which the research seeks to serve, and the integrity with which the practitioner researcher makes methodological choices about ways of achieving those purposes. No methodology is, or should be, cast in stone, if we accept that professional intention should be informing research processes, not pre-set ideas about methods or techniques.

As I considered the elements of practitioner research contained in this text, I realized that I could personally identify with these ideas for the following reasons:

- Life experience has taught me the importance of linking theory with practice to be more effective in helping my students to learn in a transformative manner. I will offer evidence of this in Chapter Eight.
- The emphasis on service to others in practitioner research resonates with my personal conviction that all forms of noble human work are a way of serving other people and society itself. As a higher education professional I share Escriva's view that the main goals of a university are:

to elaborate a synthesis of knowledge, to harmoniously form its students, and to serve the social environment around it (Llano 2000, p. 122).

I strive to serve my students, my university and society through my professional work, as I will show in Chapters Seven and Eight.

- The need for integrity in one's research resonates with my love for the truth which I discussed in Chapter One, and the other values which I strive to live in my practice as I will illustrate in Chapters Seven and Eight.
- This type of research allows for great flexibility and inventiveness which I was searching for as I mentioned above.
- Practitioner research encourages my natural inclination to personal reflection on my teaching practice to evaluate it, find ways of improving it and develop my own understanding of what I am doing in class, and how these efforts are changing me and my students. I discovered that the action-reflection cycles of Action Research correspond to this tendency to reflect on my practice in order to improve it.
- This approach enriches my understanding of my practice and allows for the creation of new, personal knowledge which can contribute to the general body of knowledge, to the extent that I make my knowledge explicit and public. Through my doctoral research and conference presentations, I am developing this knowledge base and making it public.

I found practitioner research helpful, attractive and stimulating. It supported the teaching practice which I had already developed and would open up ways of improving it further.

The development of practitioner research has contributed to greater value being attributed within the traditional research community to the learning, knowledge and theory which has been created within the workplace and is often referred to as theory of practice (McNiff and Whitehead 2006, p. 48). It is an approach which aims to link theory with practice and to theorise practice, to produce relevant and useful new knowledge which may be beneficial to society, industry, etc.

Practitioners can show how they have contributed to new practices, and how these practices can transform into new theory (McNiff and Whitehead 2006, p. 19).

The term *practitioner research* now covers a variety of research methodologies and methods such as:

- Narrative Enquiry: has developed over the last fifteen years, as may be seen in the *Handbook of Narrative Inquiry* (2007).
- Self-Study of Practice: in particular the Self-Study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices is developing as seen in the publication of the *International Handbook of Self-study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices* (2004), which has been followed by the publication of various volumes within the series of the same name (2004; 2006; 2008; 2009).
- Autoethnography: has developed from Ethnography within the social sciences but is a field that is evolving autonomously as reflected in the publication of texts (Chang 2008; Muncey 2010) and articles (Davis and Ellis 2008; Ellis 1999; Ellis, Adams and Bochner 2011). In June 2013 Sage Benchmarks in Social Research Methods Series will publish *Autoethnography* in four volumes.

One of the earliest and most developed forms of practitioner research is Action Research. It evolved through two main influences:

- Lewin (1946) believed that people would be more motivated at work if they were more involved in decision-making about how the workplace was run. He carried out research into what happened when people did become more involved and was able to show the benefits of this practice. He is best known for the action-reflection cycles which he designed to facilitate his research: observe – reflect – act – evaluate – modify – new cycle – observe – reflect – act – evaluate – modify – etc. This original idea has been adopted and adapted by many researchers to organize their work and reports.
- Schön's work on reflective practice (1983) and his call for a new epistemology (1995) which could only be achieved through action research (1995, p. 31). This should involve new ways of acquiring acceptable knowledge, based on reflection on professional practice, giving rise to new ways of understanding that practice and how it may be carried out in an effective manner. Schön was concerned that within

the research community, the work of academics who produce “pure” conceptual theory is usually regarded as the only form of legitimate, new knowledge in any given field. He claimed that the work of those practitioners “on the ground”, people in their work places, often produces new forms of practical knowledge which although it may be recognized as useful knowledge by professional researchers in academia, is not considered to constitute real conceptual theory. Yet Schön claimed, often the knowledge produced in the swampy lowlands (1995, p. 28) of professional work is of more benefit to ordinary people, while the knowledge produced on the “high ground” (Ibid.) of academia is frequently far removed from the real needs of everyday life and so becomes somewhat meaningless and irrelevant. Schön encouraged professional practitioners to investigate their practice, develop their own theories of knowledge within their fields, test and critique their theories to demonstrate their validity and so have these ideas accepted as genuine contributions to theory within academic research.

Action research has developed various sub-forms e.g. Participatory Action Research; Action Learning; Collaborative Action Research; interpretative approaches to Action Research; Action Research in the political context, etc. The acceptance of Action Research in academic circles is evidenced in the publication of the *Sage Handbook of Action Research* (2001; 2008, 2nd ed.). In particular, Educational Action Research has developed as a broad and significant field in its own right as may be seen in the publication of the *SAGE Handbook of Educational Action Research* (2009).

Action Research took a new direction with the development of action research living theory (Whitehead and McNiff 2006). This approach began with Whitehead’s efforts to improve his professional educational practice by asking, researching and answering questions of the kind *How do I improve what I am doing?* (Whitehead 1989) and is still evolving (McNiff and Whitehead 2009). As I became more familiar with Whitehead’s approach I found his concept of educational research interesting:

educational research is distinguished as the creation and legitimation of valid forms of educational theory and knowledge that can explain the educational influences of individuals in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations in which we live and work (Whitehead 2008, p. 105).

I felt challenged by the possibility of developing my own educational theory that would explain how I have influenced my own learning, that of others and that of my workplace in my efforts to improve my practice at Strathmore University. I also discovered that this approach was not limited to the field of education as illustrated in *Action Research in the Educational Workplace* (Farren, Whitehead and Bogner 2011) which focuses specifically on individuals creating their own living educational theories in a variety of settings.

The living educational theory approach

As I studied the writings of Whitehead in conjunction with Jean McNiff I identified some characteristics of the ontological and epistemological perspectives underlying the living educational theory approach to research.

Ontological perspective

This understands ontology as the study of one's being in the world. It is a genuinely value laden approach to research which involves moral commitment in the researcher. In this sense, living educational theory seeks to understand what I/we are doing in practice, not only "they", some third party that is being investigated. Finally, the researcher relates to everything in the research field, influences and is influenced by others (McNiff and Whitehead 2006, p. 26).

Epistemological perspective

The living educational theory approach understands epistemology as ways of knowing. The focus is on how we know, that is acquire and understand knowledge. In the research process, the object of the enquiry is the "I", oneself in the first place. At the same time, knowledge creation is understood to be a collaborative process in relation with other people. Finally, knowledge is considered to be uncertain and so constantly developing and changing over time (McNiff and Whitehead 2006, p. 26).

Predominant elements in the living educational theory approach

Given the ongoing evolution of living educational theory and the introduction of new elements within the methodology, I highlight here a few key features which are generally accepted as having remained constant. These are:

- The legitimate inclusion of “I” in the research questions which emerge from the context of the practitioner researcher. The “I” expresses the experience of oneself as a “living contradiction” for Whitehead (2009, p. 182).
- The use of action-reflection cycles to assist the research process, data collection and evaluation. Whitehead uses these cycles following a systematic pattern (1985, p. 98).
- The inclusion of life-affirming energy with values as explanatory principles for one’s educational influences (Whitehead 2009b, p. 182) which may also be expressed as living standards of judgment for one’s practice (Laidlaw 1996, 2012).
- The importance of having an educational influence in the learning of social formations such as one’s workplace (Whitehead 2008, p. 108).
- The generation and testing of living educational theories (Whitehead 2008, p. 113).
- Evaluation of the validity of one’s research with the assistance of other people by making it public (2008, p. 107). Whitehead refers to this as strengthening the personal and social validity of living theories (2009, p. 182).

Whitehead makes a clear distinction between living educational theories, and a living theory methodology.

A living (educational) theory is an explanation produced by an individual for their educational influence in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formation in which they live and work (Whitehead 2008, p. 104).

A methodology is not only a collection of the methods used in the research. It is distinguished by a philosophical understanding of the principles that organise the ‘how’ of the enquiry. A living theory methodology explains how the enquiry was carried out in the generation of a living (educational) theory (Whitehead 2008, p. 107).

As I planned my doctoral enquiry, I decided to develop my living educational theory through research into my practice, as my explanation for my educational influences in my own learning, the learning of others and learning in my workplace.

The living educational theory approach to research is flexible and allows people to draw on various ways of showing educational influence. I developed my own methodology to carry out my research which is inspired in this approach. However I have incorporated other elements such as my philosophical and theological knowledge to explain the process of improving my practice using personal reflection and critical analysis.

My research methodology

I explained my personal approach to research in Chapter One. This is founded on ontological and epistemological principles which differ somewhat to those underlying the living educational theory approach.

My ontological perspective

I understand the term “ontology” from the metaphysical perspective as the study of being, or that which is // has act of being (*esse*). I combine this classical philosophical approach, which considers the real world from the metaphysical perspective (*esse* = act of being), with the personalist philosophy of John Paul II which highlights the importance of each individual person and their life experience.

My research takes into account the unity of my personal being in which I strive for the harmonious co-existence of body, soul, values, affectivity, etc. I unite in my personal being all that forms part of who I am and what I do, both past and present. The unifying factor is my personal act of being which, in God, has also been identified with love by some thinkers. As a human person I do not exist alone. I seek loving co-existence, harmony with others, while accepting their uniqueness by respecting their freedom.

This metaphysical-personalist philosophical foundation allows me to incorporate my personal values as valid reference points within my research, following the living educational theory approach.

My epistemological perspective

As I explained in Chapter One, I understand that Truth is infinite and that the world is a rich and complex reality. Therefore I can always know and understand myself, other people and things more and better. The truthful person seeks the truth and tests the

truthfulness of their claims to new knowledge. This may be confirmed as true by others and by assessing the truthfulness of the person who has developed the knowledge.

The truth of the knowledge I acquire may also be evaluated by comparing and contrasting it with the way things and people are in the real world following the principles of philosophical enquiry. The harmony that exists between faith and reason provides me with knowledge of God which can also enlighten my intellectual understanding of the world, people and situations following the principles of theological enquiry.

I also give importance to reflection on my real life experience and that of others as a way of learning and knowing. I try to be open to learning and knowing, through and with other people.

From theory and practice to life

One of the features of the living educational theory approach which I find particularly interesting is the possibility of developing a theoretical explanation for one's practice. In this approach we do not take a particular theory and apply it in action. The emphasis is on developing one's own living educational theory, using other theoretical perspectives to assist in its formulation when necessary. A living educational theory is not based on an abstract, purely intellectual construction of ideas. It develops over time as one explains their real life experience while living one's values as they strive to improve their professional practice.

In my enquiry I will show how I use this approach in a different way. I follow another avenue for understanding and explaining how theory may be drawn from practice, as a constant interplay between action and an ever deeper understanding of the meanings of the experience which that action gave rise to through reflective self-questioning. As I will show in Sections Two and Three, over time it becomes clear that what matters are the values which motivate one to improve their practice (action) and which they try to come to know and understand better in the very effort to live those values in real life. In my enquiry I seek to identify my deepest motivating values which will not change radically in future as they express who I am as a person and the unity of life which I try to live. These motivating values and how I strive to live them in practice become a key element in understanding my practice better. Understanding my motivating values in the context of

my practice leads me to formulate ideas and principles which explain and guide my action (theory).

The theory I develop is not purely abstract, it is alive because I try to live it out in my practice each day. The living theories developed by others using the living educational theory approach are also practical. These theories evolve continuously as through on-going reflection on one's practice, changing circumstances and new challenges, one may adjust their motivating values and living theory. In my case, although my deepest motivating values and the living theory I develop may be more stable over time, I still need to find ways of living out my theory and values in diverse situations. As I illustrate in Chapters Six and Seven, when I moved to Kenya my surroundings were very different, however my underlying values which remained the same, moved me to find new ways of living those values in practice in my new context. I describe how this was a genuine challenge for me. However as I show, this challenge gave rise to a deeper understanding of my values and how to live them coherently in my new context. I am convinced that reflection on this values-based practice helps in developing one's own living educational theory. For me this is a genuinely *living theory* because it is as an explanation of the values I live in my practice. It may have a stable foundation but my understanding of and way of living out my educational theory develops over time, as my life and circumstances evolve. In this sense, my living theory moves away from those formulated purely within the living educational theory approach.

I see here an interesting link between how we act, the values which motivate us in real life, and our intellectual understanding of these processes and their meaning acquired through reflection. As well as being a "personally relevant theory from personally relevant experience" (Dick 2006, p. 441), I understand that the living educational theory approach demands personal integrity and authenticity. This is true of Action Research in general and should be true of every type of research. However, the limitations of human nature at times make it difficult to live out this personal integrity completely in one's practice and whole life, particularly in the case of values. For example, if one of my values is to foster loving interpersonal relations, I cannot limit myself to living that value only with certain people (students, colleagues). As I understand personal integrity, I need to live that value with everyone: my boss, the people I live with, my parents, a shop attendant, a bus conductor, etc. Otherwise, in my opinion I am not living my value authentically, in a manner which

touches every aspect of my personal existence. Naturally at times I will not manage to live my value so radically because of tiredness, distraction or many other reasons. But as I reflect back and realize that I mistreated or ignored someone, I can rectify and choose to start again in living my value “across the board” in my life and activity.

My understanding of personal integrity and authenticity in living my values implies fostering true harmony between how I act and how I think with everyone and in all circumstances. This effort to live according to my values as I understand them contributes to developing a greater degree of inner unity between mind, heart, and body, which helps me to develop myself as a person. As I become ever more aware of who I really am and how I really act, I can grow towards becoming the person I can be. I become capable of making the necessary changes in myself to achieve that unity between action, thought and values which is an essential element in my living theory. In this way I move towards a greater degree of personal unity of life, which I have mentioned in the previous chapter as one of the underlying assumptions in my research.

Inspired by the living educational theory approach, I have developed a methodology which moves one towards the goal of uniting theory and practice in one’s personal life in a way which contributes to the well-being of the individual who carries out the research as well as of those who experience his / her professional practice.

As I will show in Chapters Seven and Eight, my doctoral research is helping me to understand not only how I am trying to improve my practice, but how I am developing and transforming myself through this process to live a better life.

The specific features of my methodology

My methodology uses some aspects of the living educational theory approach such as the following:

- Throughout my doctoral research I have always focused on myself as the object of enquiry as expressed in my usage of the key living educational theory pronoun “I”: *How am I...? / How have I...?*
- I use action-reflection cycles in a broad manner in my research, based on my natural reflective tendency as I described in Chapter One. The purpose is always to

identify ways of improving my practice. In Chapter Seven I illustrate how I implemented this process in contributing to academic staff development, amongst other initiatives. In Chapter Eight I show how through action and reflection, I have created practical projects as forms of assessment, along with specific classroom activities to enhance the teaching and learning experience for my students. I also show how I have transformed myself through my efforts and contributed to helping others, both staff and students, to transform themselves.

- As I reflect on and analyse my life and practice through my doctoral enquiry I identify the living educational values which motivated me at different moments. Although in my teaching practice I had various sets of living values which evolved from 2004 to 2012, my analysis reveals that they were changing manifestations of a deeper set of implicit values which have their source in my early life, and which emerged through my research into my life and practice. I show how these values became my living standards of judgement (Laidlaw 1996, 2012) to evaluate my practice with the contribution of my students. I continue trying to live them better in my daily life and practice. They manifest a radical unity in my life over time in diverse cultural contexts, and illustrate my personal authenticity. In Chapter Nine I explain the nature and meaning of these values and draw my living educational theory from them.
- Through my research into improving my practice I illustrate how I have tried to facilitate improvements in learning not only amongst my students but also amongst lecturers and in administrative matters at Strathmore University (Chapter Seven and Appendix L). Freedom is one of my living values which for me implies that I cannot “force” change / improvement on others as I need to respect their freedom as I would like them to respect mine. Through my philosophical knowledge of the person and freedom I understand that each individual needs to be the free and voluntary source of their own improvement in order to bring about true and lasting personal betterment or transformation. I prefer to use terms such as “facilitating”, “helping”, “fostering” when I refer to my educational influences in others and my workplace to highlight the reality of and my respect for personal freedom.

- As may be seen in Chapter Nine through my doctoral enquiry into improving my practice I have generated my own living educational theory *passion for the person*, which I break down into these living values: *creating a spiration of love, in freedom, for personal growth*.
- I have tested and validated the *truthfulness* of these living values, my living theory and my research as a whole in various ways.
 - ✓ I have sought opportunities for public validation of my work during the research process at Dublin City University, Strathmore University and at various conferences⁵. The people who saw this evidence and heard my explanations, understood the existence and meaning of my living standards of judgement, thus confirming their relevance in my living educational theory.
 - ✓ In philosophical terms, my reflections on the meaning of my living values are in harmony with the way the human person is in reality (Chapter Nine).
 - ✓ In theological terms, the explanation of my living values and my living educational theory are in harmony with the supernatural truths regarding the mystery of the Blessed Trinity (Chapter Nine).
 - ✓ My personal authenticity: the harmony between what I think, say and do expresses a radical unity in my life, which illustrates the truth of who I am as a person; this inspires trust in others who accept my claims as true (Chapters Seven and Eight).
 - ✓ The testimonies of my students and colleagues are more than evidence. They indicate the truth of my claims to have helped them make changes in themselves or in their practice (Chapters Seven and Eight).
- As I use autoethnography within my methodology, I also take the following into account:

Readers provide validation by comparing their lives to ours, by thinking about how our lives are similar and different and the reasons why, and by

⁵ For a list of the occasions when I have sought public validation for my research see Appendix A.

feeling that the stories have informed them about unfamiliar people or lives (Ellis, Adams and Bochner 2011, para. 35).

Some relatives and friends who have read parts of my dissertation have confirmed that it speaks to them about their own experience in the circumstances which I describe. Now unknown readers will have the opportunity to determine if the story speaks to them about the lives of others they do not know. Have I been able to illuminate unfamiliar cultural processes? Does my narrative help the reader to communicate with others different from themselves or offer a way to improve the lives of readers? They will evaluate my credibility, the verisimilitude and narrative truth of my research.

I have brought some elements into my methodology which come from other sources:

- I use personal, reflective narrative on my life experience, studies and professional practice to identify the source and development of my living values particularly in Chapters Three, Four and Five.

Personal narratives are stories about authors who view themselves as the phenomenon and write evocative narratives specifically focused on their academic, research, and personal lives (Ellis, Adams and Bochner 2011, para. 24).

- As my research is situated in three different socio-cultural contexts, I use autoethnography in some parts of the dissertation.
 - ✓ Ireland: my family home and early studies: Chapter Three
 - ✓ Rome: postgraduate studies and years of teaching practice: Chapter Four
 - ✓ Kenya: first visits (2001-2003): Chapter Five
 - ✓ Kenya: my new life context (2004-2013): Chapter Six

As Ellis, Adams and Bochner (2011) explain:

When researchers do autoethnography, they retrospectively and selectively write about epiphanies that stem from, or are made possible by, being part of a culture and/or by possessing a particular cultural identity (para. 8).

My natural and initial cultural identity is Irish. However, my experience of living in an international environment in Rome required me to adjust to a multiplicity of cultures as I discovered them in the people I lived and worked with there. My initial visits to Kenya followed by my relocation was a new challenge to adjust

again to another, very diverse culture which is made up of forty-two different ethnic communities. As I will show in the above mentioned Chapters, my personal and cultural identity has evolved through these experiences. This has not meant shedding one identity and taking on another, but rather assimilating in myself the various cultures in which I have lived such that I carry all of them with me wherever I go. As I analyse my diverse cultural experience I have the

intent of gaining a cultural understanding of self that is intimately connected to others in the society. The cultural meanings of self's thoughts and behaviors—verbal and non-verbal—need to be interpreted in their cultural context (Chang 2006, p. 9).

Throughout my reflective analysis using personal narrative and autoethnography, there is a unifying, common denominator which is my personal vocation to Opus Dei. This call and the way it helps me live as a Christian is always the same wherever I am. At the same time, as I will show in Chapters Seven, Eight and Nine, the need to adjust myself to diverse cultural contexts has contributed to drawing out my deepest living values more clearly.

- I explain the socio-cultural, economic and educational background and context of my life and practice in Kenya to facilitate my understanding of the educational influences in myself and others as I strive to live my values in an authentic manner (Chapter Six).
- I provide evidence of and explain my educational influences in my own life and practice, in the learning of other people and at Strathmore University in Chapters Seven and Eight, as follows:
 - ✓ Personal self-transformation: is seen in my reflective narrative and in the visual narrative (Farren and Whitehead 2005) I present.
 - ✓ Transformation in others: is seen in my students' feedback, which is a key source of information for my reflection on and for action to improve my practice.
 - ✓ Transformation in my social context: is seen in the testimony of colleagues and one particular student regarding what they have learnt through my influence.

- Perhaps the most distinctive feature of my methodology is the way I use philosophical and theological reflection and analysis to explain the deeper meaning of the values that emerge in the course of my research as well as in the explanation of my living educational theory. In this way I am applying a principle which I referred to in Chapter One and is inspired in John Paul II's *Fides et Ratio* (1998, n. 33). A genuine *love for the truth* translates into seeking the deeper meaning of human life and activity, in order to enhance our holistic understanding of the person and assist each individual in fulfilling their potential. I am applying philosophical and theological knowledge to enhance my understanding of my own personal existence so that I can achieve my full potential. I do this while seeking to improve my practice at Strathmore University. This contributes to my understanding of human life and activity in more general terms and enables me to appreciate the dignity and purpose of each person I encounter. In this way I am implementing my conviction that philosophy and theology are meant to be applied to life in order to improve the quality of life for everyone.

In this explanation of my methodology I outline the way in which I have carried out my doctoral enquiry. It is illustrated throughout my dissertation and is the basis for understanding the development of my living educational theory (Chapter Nine).

My research ethics

As my research involved my work in the classroom and the various teaching methods I use, I did not request the explicit collaboration of my students in this part of the research process. I did involve them in my research by explaining that I am carrying out a self-study of my teaching practice to develop myself, in a similar process to the development projects I ask them to carry out for my courses. Just as I give them feedback on their journals and projects, I have asked them to give me feedback on how they think my own teaching practice is developing.

The students I have worked with are 18 years of age and above, and the type of research I have done is low risk. In some cases I provided Plain Language Statements and Informed Consent forms to confirm the students' willingness to cooperate according to DCU regulations on low risk research. In other cases I have explained verbally that I am

researching my teaching practice and that I would appreciate their assistance by providing me with feedback freely. In those cases where I have actually quoted my students' coursework, their feedback and input from other people, it has been with the explicit consent of the individual. I have identified the person using the system requested in every case. I consider that I have respected the dignity and rights of all those who came within the context of my self-enquiry.

Strathmore University does not have procedures to guide practice based research although it is being encouraged, neither do we have an institutional ethics committee. However I requested permission for my research in writing from the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and the Dean of my Institute (Institute for Humanities, Education and Development studies) which was granted. I have also submitted Chapter Seven to high level management at Strathmore for comment and approval as it deals with my administrative work at the University. I received a letter acknowledging the Chapter contents and giving approval for its use in my thesis. I consider that I have met international requirements in research by following the British Educational Research Association's Ethical Guidelines (BERA 2011) as I have just described.

Summary

In this chapter I have explained my discovery of practitioner research, its nature and some of its forms. I have focused on Action Research in particular and specifically, living educational theory. I have highlighted certain aspects of this approach which I chose to incorporate into my own methodology. I have also explained the other features which characterize my methodological approach to my research enquiry.

In the next section I will discuss the background to my life and practice as these foundations have had an important influence in the development of my living educational values and are necessary to understand my living educational theory.

Section Two: Laying the Foundations

In this section I present a reflective autoethnographic narrative of my life in three stages: my family background and initial education in Ireland (Chapter Three); my move to Rome and my studies there (Chapter Four); my first visits to Kenya (Chapter Five). I will show how my implicit values developed during these phases of my life.

Chapter Three: My family background and initial studies in Ireland

My Family

I was born in Dublin (Ireland) in the late 1960's, to Neil and Anne Dean. I am the first of four girls and two boys.



Photo 1 Family photo taken in May 2009

My father is a retired accountant and banker. He also spent a number of years teaching at the Irish Management Institute (IMI). My mother is a radiographer by training and an artist at heart. She has always expressed her creativity in a variety of ways from painting to poetry, artistic embroidery, interior decoration, etc. She has dedicated her life to bringing up her children and living for her family. Based on my observation and memories of other Irish families at the time, my parents were exceptional in various ways. They stood out in their love for and commitment to the family. They have always tried to help us grow to be the best we can. They encouraged each of us to find our path in life and to develop our personal potential to the full. They especially appreciate education and have always helped us to further our academic studies. My parents' on-going commitment to education is evidenced in the fact that they are sponsoring the tuition fees for my doctoral research.

Their innate passion for education led them to start two private, parent-run, Catholic lay schools in Dublin in the mid-seventies, along with other couples: Rockbrook Park School for boys (www.rockbrook.ie), and Rosemont School for girls (www.rosemont.ie). My siblings and I went to these schools for our secondary education. One of the differentiating factors about these schools from the start was the emphasis on helping each student in their all-round personal growth and development. This is facilitated largely through the coaching system in which each student is assigned a personal coach from among the teachers. S/he has the role of helping the child to grow in academic terms, talent, virtues, sports and other areas. Over the years the schools have developed their academic and extra-curricular activities and both now have state of the art campuses.

They created our own family life-style in which we grew up in an atmosphere of love, trust, encouragement, good humour, freedom and responsibility. We learnt to develop the virtues through the normal ups and downs of life and the interactions among the various family members. We were happy at home because we trusted our parents and they trusted us. They were our friends and confidants. In this they were inspired by St. Josemaria Escriva de Balaguer:

I always advise parents to try to be friends with their children. The parental authority which the upbringing of children requires can be perfectly harmonized with friendship, which means putting themselves in some way on the same level as their children. Children –even those who seem intractable and unresponsive– always want this closeness, this fraternity with their parents. It is a question of trust.

Parents should bring up their children in an atmosphere of friendship, never giving the impression that they do not trust them. They should give them freedom and teach them how to use it with personal responsibility. It is better for parents to let themselves be fooled once in a while, because the trust they have shown will make the children themselves feel ashamed of having abused it –they will correct themselves. On the other hand, if they have no freedom, if they see that no one trusts them, they will always be inclined to deceive their parents (Escriva 1972, *Conversations with Monsignor Escriva*, n. 100).

We all helped at home and learnt to do the jobs we were asked to carry out. We made our own beds, helped to prepare the family dinner, looked after our younger siblings and shared our time and resources with each other. As the eldest, I helped my mother a lot at home and I was usually diligent in seeing and doing whatever was necessary.

However, on one occasion I became annoyed because I felt that I was doing too much and that my younger sisters were not doing their share. I went on a go slow for a number of days and did nothing to help at home. My sisters were forced to help more in the house, but deep down I was feeling guilty about my lack of generosity. One evening my Dad intervened by asking if I would help my sister to prepare supper. I didn't feel like it but I did help her. My Dad's suggestion brought me back to myself. After that I started helping as usual, I felt happier and I didn't rebel again. He helped me to break the vicious circle which I had created, but which I wasn't able to come out of alone.

My parents taught each of us to develop a strong sense of moral uprightness. This moral sensitivity is a common feature which I see in each of my siblings and in myself. It is manifested in many ways: horror for getting into debt; truthfulness; personal integrity and honesty; hard work; love for freedom; loyalty; conscientiousness, etc. Like any other family, we had our fights and we still argue and discuss things heatedly. But even as children, if anyone from outside the family did or said anything against one of the family members, the rest of us would gather around "the victim" to protect and defend him or her. Our sense of family loyalty is totally engrained in each of us, thanks to our experience of mutual love at home.

When I was eleven I did something which I knew was wrong. I think it may have been that I stole money from my mother's purse, which was usually in her bag in the kitchen. She

realised that I had done it and asked me if I knew anything about the issue. I remember that I vacillated between telling the truth and telling a lie. Finally I told her the truth although I knew that I may get into trouble. To my surprise, she paused and then said “well done for telling the truth”. She then explained that I should not do it again as it was wrong, but I was neither scolded nor punished. I recall the sense of relief at having told the truth and not being punished! I also felt stimulated to be honest and truthful in future⁶. I have often reflected on this event. I know that my deep love for the truth probably has its roots in this and other similar experiences at home. After that I always tried to be truthful and honest. At times when I am teaching Principles of Ethics, I tell my students this story. Initially they don’t always believe me but I usually manage to convince them it is true. My personal learning then becomes an incentive for them to understand the value of truthfulness and to foster it in their own lives.

I remember how I learnt about freedom and responsibility when I was thirteen. I refused to continue going to a girls’ club at Glenard University Residence (www.glenard.org). Instead of forcing me to keep up the activity, my Dad told me that I was free to decide but that I should ring the club leader to inform her that I would no longer go to the club. At that suggestion I nearly backed out of my decision. However, I gathered my courage and did what he had proposed. The club leader respected my decision and so I stopped going. At the time I did not realise what my Dad was doing. Reflecting on the episode later in life, I understood that he was respecting my freedom while teaching me to take responsibility for my decisions.

I have described these personal experiences to illustrate practically how my parents inculcated values and virtues in us. This approach to parenting was not common in Ireland at the time. From 1978 my parents took on the challenge of developing their parenting skills in a more systematic manner through membership of the International Federation for Family Development (IFFD: www.iffd.org). This institution provided them with courses and learning material based on the case study method, which they used with their friends to learn how to be better parents. I remember the evenings when their meetings would take

⁶ When I reminded my Mum about this she explained that she used to tell us “you won’t be punished if you tell the truth”, because she wanted to encourage us in a positive manner to be truthful, not out of fear of the consequences, but because we freely wanted to be honest.

place at home, although at the time I did not know much about what they were doing⁷. Both of them did training courses in parenting by correspondence and on campus at Navarre University (Spain) and received certification to train other couples. Through their example I have also become passionate about educating others on the value of marriage, true human love, family, dating, courtship and similar matters. At times I give talks in workshops and seminars on these and related issues.

Over the last few years, three of my siblings got married and each couple has two children to date. These events have made my parents very happy. They refer to it as being “surprised by joy”. In December 2011 while speaking with my mother on the phone, she made a comment which helped me to reflect more deeply on the meaning of family. She said she had discovered *the power of love in bringing the family together*. I know that she and my Dad have struggled with a generous spirit of sacrifice to help the new spouses and children feel part of our home. I was initially surprised by her comment because she has spent her life creating and maintaining the sense of the family home among all six of her children as we moved around the world, worked in different countries, etc. Love with sacrifice for the sake of home and family have always been her motivation. Perhaps she was “re-discovering” the power of love and sacrifice in creating and maintaining the family home through the new experience of reaching out to young adults from other families, to ensure that they feel part of our family home.

⁷ When reading this chapter for validation purposes, my Dad reminded me that when they went to a friend’s house for these sessions, my sister and I would wait at home to ask them “so what have you learned today?” when they came back!



Photo 2 Mum with her first granddaughter, Lucia.

This photo reflects the loving affection which my Mum has always given us, and which seems to flow even more strongly now with her first grandchild. Lucia's smile and the sense of delight which she exudes, reflects her spontaneous response to Mum's affection. Their mutual love is clear. My own response to the photo when I saw it posted on Facebook was:

Catherine Dean I LOVE this photo!!!!

January 23 at 11:29am · Like

My Dad shares this loving warmth towards his grandchildren with my Mum as may be seen in this photo:



Photo 3 Dad with his first granddaughter, Lucia.

My sister Liesanne, Lucia's Mum, posted the photo on Face book with the following title:

January 24: The Mutual Adoration Society...

Among the many comments to this photo, I found some very significant:

- **Joan Dean I think this is the most beautiful, beautiful, loving photograph. It's an absolute delight. Made my evening. Lovely little girl with her (Grandfather).**

January 24 at 10:27pm · Like

- **Janet Dean There cannot be a dry eye left in the house.**

January 24 at 11:26pm · Like

- **Michele Dean That's a connection if I ever saw one!**

January 24 at 11:32pm · Like

The next photo was taken in the family kitchen where lots of activity happens:



Photo 4 My Dad holding my nephew Max, with my brother Jon holding his son Jack

Three generations of the Dean family. My brother's grin and my Dad's attentive smile reflect the joy of love in the family.



They dressed up for St Patrick's Day (2012) and posted this photo on Face book to greet family and friends and give them a laugh.

Typical of their sense of humour!

Photo 5 My brother Jon with his wife Paula and their 4 month old son, Jack



Their smiles express the sense of fun which characterises our family love.

Photo 6 My brother Alex with his wife Davida and their son, Max

Reflection on my mother's comment has helped me to understand what I am trying to live out each day in all I do: reach out to others while respecting their freedom to facilitate their personal growth, moved by my love for them. As I will show in Chapters Six, Seven and Eight, I try to foster an atmosphere in which each person can experience the sense of being loved and respected for their own sake as a unique human person. My personal experience of family love has had a strong influence in my life. Through my reflection on these experiences in the context of my doctoral enquiry I have become rationally aware of this influence and its pedagogical impact on my life and practice.

My reflective and questioning tendency

Along with love for freedom, honesty and truthfulness, my parents also taught my siblings and I how to think and fostered our natural curiosity and desire to know. When we asked the normal questions of a child such as "why does the rain come from the sky?", my Dad would explain what happens when it rains, rather than just brushing off the question as nonsense. We had encyclopedias for children in the house and a series of books called *Tell me why?* This title communicates to me my parents' efforts to help us learn through everyday life. When they asked us to do something or not to do something, they would give us reasons according to our age, rather than just replying "because I said so...". This

stimulated in me an interest in knowing the reason why I should act in one way or another. I learned to think about my acts before carrying them out, and to try to act in a rational manner.

As we began to learn Irish history at school we would come home talking about some historical event. We often sat around the table after dinner discussing what we had learned in class. If my parents felt that we had a one-sided understanding of an event, they would challenge us to think about the “other side of the story” and offer us further historical facts as food for thought and reflection. As teenagers, at times we found this frustrating. However, it helped me to have a broader, more flexible and open perspective on history. Life experience and hearing people from many different countries speaking about their history and culture has taught me that there are always many ways of looking at a given historical event. One needs to know the diverse perspectives to have a deeper understanding of what happened. I have learnt that nobody is fully right or fully wrong and that it is often impossible to know the full truth about any given event. Human life and history is a complex matter.

The intellectual stimulus which I received at home and at school fostered my tendency to ask “why” about everything. At times our Religion teacher would bring up philosophical issues in class, which I found very interesting. I discovered that I liked trying to go deeper in my understanding of matters. I found a book at home called *Christian Philosophy* (De Torre 1980) which I started reading. The text is a manual which covers many of the basic issues in philosophy such as metaphysics, ethics, anthropology, social ethics, etc., following Aristotelian and Thomist principles. I was particularly interested in metaphysics and the notion of *being* (*esse*). Everything that is real exists because of its underlying *act of being*, which makes that particular thing (*essence, nature*), be what it is. I did not have difficulty in moving to a more abstract level of thought and reflection, which opened up my mind to deeper ways of understanding the real world. This was the beginning of my love for philosophy, which I would later have the opportunity to develop.

Living my faith and discovering my personal vocation

I grew up naturally imbibing the Catholic faith and learning to live the various practices of Christian piety such as grace before and after meals, morning and night prayers, the family rosary, Sunday Mass with the family, etc. Through my parents' example I learnt to practice frequent Confession, spend time in personal prayer and attend daily Mass. They never forced me to practice their life of piety. They offered me opportunities to discover it for myself but they did not become directly involved in the process out of respect for my freedom. Little by little, I began doing these things in a freer, more personal way because I wanted to, not because my parents did them. This was an important step in internalising my life of faith and piety.

I got to know Opus Dei through my parents' life, the girls club at Glenard University Residence and our school Chaplain who was a priest of the Prelature of Opus Dei. I grew up knowing about Mons. Escriva and his book *The Way* (first English edition 1953). I prayed for his intentions as a child. After his death in 1975 I usually went to the funeral Mass celebrated for him around the 26th of June each year and I learnt to use the prayer card for private devotion to pray through his intercession. The spirit of Opus Dei was part of our family life in a natural and simple manner⁸.

While I was staying with a family in Spain in the Summer of 1984 I went to a sports seminar organised by the girls club run by people of Opus Dei in Cordoba. One evening we watched a film about Opus Dei which made a great impact on me. I began to sense that perhaps God was calling me to join the Work. When I returned to Ireland I went to speak with the Director of Glenard about my possible vocation. She guided me spiritually in the following months along with the Chaplain of the residence. In late 1983, I received the grace to see that God was calling me to give myself to Him totally for life. I freely accepted this call to apostolic celibacy because I wanted to respond lovingly to His love for me. My parents respected this free decision to follow my personal vocation.

⁸ Opus Dei was founded by St. Josemaria on 2nd October 1928, by divine inspiration. Its mission is to remind everyone that all men and women are called to seek union with God (holiness) and try to help others come closer to God, through the ordinary circumstances of their daily lives (www.opusdei.org).

The day I moved out of home to live in a centre definitively was probably the first time I experienced the radical consequences of my free choice to give my life to Christ in Opus Dei. It was a difficult step, because I had always been so loved and happy at home. I was living the challenge of leaving a loving home to follow my personal vocation.

When I reached my room I was very touched to see a rose in a small vase of water beside my bed. I had never experienced that before and it showed me that someone in the house had thought about how to make me feel at home as soon as I arrived. I now know that this is one of the manifestations of family affection which help to make the centres of Opus Dei be real homes, as St Josemaria wanted. When I lived in Rome I saw that people made an effort to remember the detail of the flower when someone was returning home. It is a small gesture which still means a lot to me, as it touched me so deeply that first day. Even now I try to find a flower to put in someone's room in the centre where I live when someone is coming home.

The evening of the day I moved into Glenard, one of the older people of the Work living in the house arrived home from work and found me there. She knew that I had just moved in and greeted me kindly. As a result I became weepy because it hadn't been easy to leave my family behind. She immediately produced a bar of chocolate and started giving it to me in bits. I was very moved because she knew that I love chocolate and had obviously thought ahead and bought it for me on her way home! Details like these helped me to experience the reality of the family spirit of the Work in a personal manner. As Escriva put it during an interview in the 1960's:

Opus Dei ... is a large family where all are united by the same spiritual aims!
(Escriva 1972, *Conversations with Monsignor Escriva*, n. 98).

And he explained the family atmosphere of the centres as follows:

Some members, very few in comparison with the total number, live together to attend to the spiritual care of the others, or to conduct some apostolic activity. They form an ordinary home, just like any Christian family, and continue at the same time to work at their profession (Escriva 1972, *Conversations with Monsignor Escriva*, n. 63).

Thanks to the welcome which I received in Glenard, I was able to accept my suffering because I realised that it would not last forever. The warmth and affection had enabled me

to respond with love to this step forward in living my vocation. The whole experience helped me to mature in my commitment to God in Opus Dei.

Each day I renew my free decision to be faithful to God's love, which strengthens my personal commitment and gives meaning to my life and work. I receive spiritual help and encouragement in living my vocation to Opus Dei from my family, the Work.

Influences at university

I joined University College Dublin (UCD) in October 1985. I had applied for the Bachelor of Arts degree because I liked the Humanities, although I had not yet discovered my professional vocation. In order to keep my options open, I chose English Literature, Political Economy and Logic in first year. I dropped Logic after first year although I had performed best in that field in the end of year exams. I enjoyed Logic but at the time I didn't want to continue with philosophy because I didn't see how I could make my living with it.

I did not particularly like Political Economy, other than the historical dimension and the theories on possible solutions to the problems of Ireland's economic recession at the time (O'Donnell 1998; O'Connor 2009). When I reflected on my experience later I realised that I had found Political Economy too theoretical and somewhat disconnected from real life. So many elements that cannot be held constant in reality had to be held constant to make the theory work. It seemed more like fiction than fact. I was not convinced by the process of creating theories about reality which seemed so disconnected from the real world. It appeared to be somewhat risky to me in intellectual and practical terms. I thought Economics could lead to a split life in which the person functions at one level intellectually and at another level in practical, day to day reality. I was concerned that such a disconnect could lead to lack of unity in a person's life, which may translate into hypocrisy, dishonesty, thinking one thing and doing or saying another, etc. These considerations go back to my love for truth and honesty. They highlight my interest in developing a harmonious life where there is a balance between mind, heart and will which contributes to the genuine growth and development of our capacities as persons (Burke 2007, pp. 50-59). My concerns also illustrate my wariness towards what appeared as "pure theory", with

little real relevance for improving the world. Perhaps my perceptions were limited but they explain how my interest in achieving harmony between theory and real life developed.

I enjoyed the courses in English Literature. I was fortunate to have an English lecturer as my tutor who really stimulated our critical thinking during the tutorial sessions. Although our underlying approaches to literature were different, hers being deconstructionist and mine representing a search for the truth about reality, she was an open person who listened to, respected and encouraged her students. She helped me to improve my grades by marking extra assignments which I took from questions on the past English exam papers. Her dedication and openness to others in spite of not sharing the same views made a big impact on me.

My discovery of *The Lord of the Rings* by J.R.R. Tolkien was one of the biggest influences in my university life. During the last year of the B.A., we were required to write an extended essay on any theme or work of literature as part of our final grade for the degree. As I was thinking about what to choose, a friend happened to comment on her liking for *The Lord of the Rings*. As I trusted her, I decided to consider studying it for my extended essay. As soon as I began to read the text I knew that I liked it. I found unexpected depth within the fantasy which revealed worlds of meaning to me. I read Tolkien's work *On Fairy Stories* and discovered that for him, while this literary genre involved an escape from reality, was actually a route to understanding the hidden meaning of the real world in greater depth.

Fantasy is not the imitation of reality which we find in drama – it is the creation of a new reality. But this creative fantasy relies essentially on the recognition of the fact that things are in the real world as they appear. Ordinary material, then, can become vested with new possibilities (Tolkien 1966, *On Fairy Stories*).

In his writings the creative imagination is given wings while still keeping in touch with reality. For Tolkien, in the return to reality after reading fantasy one discovers a whole new world as one sees the real world in new ways.

While I was at university I had started studying philosophy during the summer holidays, according to the plan of formation developed by St. Josemaria for the faithful of Opus

Dei⁹. I particularly enjoyed Metaphysics as it helped me to reason out and answer many of the questions which had arisen in my basic philosophical readings as an adolescent.

As I studied *The Lord of the Rings* I discovered elements which resonated with my recently developed metaphysical understanding of the world. I was especially interested in the *sense of being* which I found in Tolkien's descriptions of trees, stones, etc. I captured a sense of the living reality of even non-living creatures as described by Tolkien¹⁰.

The mind that thought of light, heavy, grey, yellow, still, swift, also conceived of magic that would make heavy things light and able to fly, turn grey lead into yellow gold and the still rock into swift water. If it could do one, it could do the other; it inevitably did both (Tolkien 1966, *On Fairy Stories*).

In *The Lord of the Rings* when Frodo touches a tree in Lothlorien:

he knows suddenly and more keenly than ever before, the feel and texture of a tree's skin and of the life within it...the delight of the living tree itself (Tolkien).

As I analysed *The Lord of the Rings* I focused mainly on how Tolkien's understanding of fantasy was manifested in this work. As I personally found so much meaning in the story I tried to find out if the author had a specific message to transmit. This was a conscious attempt to be coherent with my idea that it is important to know what the author meant to say when analysing a text. For me it was a matter of intellectual honesty in my academic work. I discovered Tolkien had clearly stated that he had no premeditated allegoric meaning to transmit in his writing, particularly regarding certain Christian interpretations of his work. However, I did find commentators who stated that albeit unconsciously, an author may transmit his own values and beliefs in his writings. This was a possible explanation for the philosophical and theological depth to be found in *The Lord of the Rings*, in spite of Tolkien's denials regarding the intentional transmission of Christian

⁹ He had realised that ordinary lay people need good philosophical and theological preparation in order to know and understand the Faith in depth and be able to transmit and explain it accurately. His aim was that all the faithful of Opus Dei should have intellectual training in philosophy and theology, at a level similar to the intellectual preparation they have received for their professional work. This plan is implemented for each person according to their individual needs, availability, and other factors.

¹⁰ While in Rome, I introduced one of my lecturers to *The Lord of the Rings*. She was struck by the ethical dimension of the text and the deep understanding of human freedom it manifests. Tolkien does highlight the importance of personal freedom for the individual and for society in this work. This is clearly seen at one of the highpoints in the story, when Frodo has to decide whether or not to finally and freely relinquish the Ring at the Crack of Doom. I have subsequently used parts of the text when teaching Ethics to help my students grasp concepts such as good and evil, freedom, the need for a goal in life, the need to struggle, face and overcome obstacles in order to achieve one's goal, the value of loyalty and friendship, etc.

ideals in his work. He was known to be a practicing Catholic with a deep and lively faith (Carpenter 2000; Kelly 2003).

A life-changing discovery

Mid-way through my university career I had an important intellectual experience. One day I was chatting with the Director of the centre where I lived. I do not remember the theme of the conversation. I made a statement which according to me was true. It expressed the way I understood the matter to be in reality. However she pointed out something in a pleasant, non-aggressive manner which made me realise that I was clearly mistaken. I was so convinced that I was right, that her observation came as a great shock. It brought out the fact that my idea was wrong. I experienced an initial emotional and intellectual turmoil. It was the first time that I was conscious that I needed to adjust my idea on some matter to know the truth about it. I realised that I had to change my intellectual understanding, adapting myself to an idea that I had not personally worked out and which was somehow coming from outside me. My big discovery was that the truth of things does not always depend on me, or what I think about them. I realised that at times the truth is outside me, and I need to open my mind and heart to accept it as it is, in the reality beyond my inner world. This required an existential change of attitude on my part. I needed to be open to receiving from other people and the world, not just giving whatever it may be: ideas, solutions, love, etc. This was a discovery which as I tried to live it over time, helped to shape me as a person. I have often gone back over that experience because it helps me to appreciate the fact that truth has a subjective dimension to it (what I understand to be true), as well as an objective dimension (the reality of the way things are beyond ourselves and our understanding of them). At times I use this personal experience when discussing truth with my students because it seems to resonate with them and help them open their minds to broader and greater truths.

As I reflect on this experience now, I realise that my shock was partially due to the inexperience and self-confidence of youth. I was also accustomed to thinking critically about concepts, the world, etc., and forming my own ideas which I was convinced were true, because I had worked them out in that manner. This experience manifested a certain intellectual pride in me, the personal conviction that my ideas are right because they are mine. Intellectual pride is always a danger to people involved in intellectual activity

because it can close us up to receiving new ideas from others. Yet they could actually help us grow more in our knowledge and understanding of the real world, people and the truth. Life has led me to try to develop the virtue of intellectual humility, which is an ongoing challenge.

Life after university

During my final year at University College Dublin I decided to apply to the big accounting and auditing firms for a job. I chose this path because my father was a successful accountant and at the time, I did not want to become a teacher which was another possibility. When Coopers and Lybrand¹¹ came to the university searching for graduates, I was struck by their approach to recruitment. They were interested in hiring students from various academic backgrounds, not just Accounting and Commerce. Their aim was to have a broad variety of mindsets and approaches to life in their workforce. I found this attractive and I felt that I could fit in there with my Humanities background. I was fortunate to chat casually with the Personnel Director of Coopers and Lybrand during the recruitment drive at UCD who, as it turned out, knew my father well¹². I was offered a contract which involved a one year full-time Professional Diploma in Accounting (PDA) to acquire the basic knowledge already attained by the Commerce graduates. Afterwards I would start working at the firm and continue studying accountancy in the evening, doing the necessary exams to obtain my professional qualification.

I studied for the Professional Diploma in Accounting (PDA) at Dublin City University (DCU) from September 1988 to June 1989. I enjoyed my time there as I was attracted by the youthful, open atmosphere on campus and the approach of the lecturers. Many of them were working in professional practice as well as teaching on our course which was a novelty for me. I remembered DCU afterwards because of the good experience I had there and the fact that in spite of only being there for a year, I always received the DCU graduate magazine even when I lived in Rome. I was able to follow the progress of the university. I was impressed by its development and professional approach to work and study, along

¹¹ The company was still an independent firm at the time.

¹² I asked my Dad if this person had spoken to him about me before offering me a job and my Dad replied that he had never said anything to him about me. My Dad explained that the only possible “influence” which their relationship may have had on my job offer, was the fact that the Personnel Director would have known that I came from an accounting background because of my Dad’s work. My Dad insisted that I got the job offer on my own merit.

with the practical dimension of the programmes. This led me to look into the possibility of doing my doctorate at DCU when I was searching for a suitable programme.

When I had done the final exam for the PDA, I was informed by the Directors of Opus Dei in Ireland that if I wished, I could go to Villa delle Rose International Study Centre in Castelgandolfo (Rome) to study Theology and do further studies in Philosophy¹³. Since I had joined Opus Dei I was fascinated by Villa delle Rose, the Philosophy and Theology studies and the chance to live in the “heart” of the Work, which is my family. I was very enthused when I was offered the possibility of moving to Rome, although I already had a professional commitment with Coopers and Lybrand. I thought and prayed about the situation. I then realised that I was more interested in living and studying in Rome than in continuing with a career in accountancy.

I made an appointment to discuss the matter with the Personnel Director at Coopers and Lybrand to find the way forward. This was probably one of the most challenging moments in my life. I had to present my situation to a member of senior management at the age of 21, and justify my decision to go back on the contract I had already signed. I needed to be polite and firm while recognising that I was effectively letting the company down. I felt it was like going back on my word which seemed disloyal, although I had entered into the contract in good faith and with no prior knowledge of this possible change in plan. This challenge moved me to pray and trust in God and His plans for my life. It also required me to exercise the virtue of fortitude. I got through that interview with the help of some words of St. Josemaria, which I repeated in the back of my mind: *lo que hay que hacer, se hace* (*what has to be done, is done*).

I explained that I had been given an unexpected opportunity to study at an international educational centre in Rome for three years and that I preferred to take that opportunity

¹³ The main purpose of the Centre was to give people of Opus Dei who had already completed their academic studies, the opportunity to deepen their philosophical and theological training. Afterwards they would transmit their knowledge to the faithful of the Prelature, friends, colleagues, etc. upon returning to their professional work and other activities in their countries of origin. Some could move to other countries where the Prelate may ask them to live and work so as to spread the spirit, message and teachings of St. Josemaria, Founder of Opus Dei. Life at the International Centre also gave one the opportunity to interact with people of the Work from all over the world and learn about their cultures, apostolic activities, professional interests etc. Meanwhile, one could become more immersed in the spirit of the Work thanks to living close to and interacting with the Prelate and other faithful of the Prelature.

rather than to continue with my contract at Coopers and Lybrand. The Personnel Director exercised great prudence. He reminded me about the financial commitment I had to the company, which was quite large. I acknowledged the fact, explaining that I was aware that they had every right to reclaim the funds they had invested in me during the previous year. I was in their hands and was willing to accept any decision they may take in that regard. He commented that he could not force me to continue with a contract in which I was no longer interested. Finally, he mentioned that my three years study abroad in an international environment could also be beneficial to the company in the future. The interview was brief and concluded with the promise that I would receive a letter soon informing me of the company's decision. I was impressed by the director's acceptance of and respect for my freedom during the meeting. I was also relieved that the interview had been open, frank and respectful. After that, all I could do was to pray, wait and keep myself busy in other activities.

I still have the letter (see Appendix B) I received informing me that the firm had accepted my decision, waived their claim to repayment of their financial investment in me and would be willing to consider reviving my contract if I was interested, upon my return to Ireland. I was very impressed by the values expressed in the letter: openness to and respect for others, even a young student; a certain financial detachment; magnanimity; an awareness of the impact such a debt could have on my life; prudence; foresight regarding future possibilities for the company and myself. In retrospect, God in His divine providence was preparing the path He had planned for me in the future.

Summary

In this Chapter I have shown the impact on me of the family atmosphere that I grew up in at home and which enabled me to freely take life-determining decisions. My experience of family love and respect for my freedom, along with the discovery of my vocation to give my life to Christ for love, contributed to my personal development and prepared me to launch out into another world at the age of twenty-one.

I was now ready for new challenges which began when I left Ireland for Rome on 30th September 1989, as I will discuss Chapter Four.

Chapter Four: Rome and my new learning experiences

In this chapter I describe and reflect on the second phase of my life as a young adult studying and working in the context of the family atmosphere at the “heart” of Opus Dei, in Rome.

Setting the scene

When I went to live at Villa delle Rose International Centre (Rome)¹⁴ I was faced with a new challenge. I would live in Rome surrounded by over 80 people from the five continents with their diverse cultures, backgrounds, professional and life experiences. I would experience the wealth of the spirit and teachings of St Josemaria in the “heart” of Opus Dei, and carry out my philosophical and theological studies.

During my first three years in Rome I interacted daily with people from North, Central and South America, many European countries, the Philippines and Nigeria. I learnt a lot as I heard them speak about their cultures and countries and I came to love each one of these people. Six months after my arrival, a group of four or five women from Villa delle Rose went to start the Work in Cameroon. I got a shock as I experienced the reality of the expansion of Opus Dei for the first time. I had given myself to God in the Work in apostolic celibacy, to be available to look after my family, the Work. I knew that the Father, Prelate of Opus Dei, could ask us to move to one centre or another, to one country or another, according to the needs of the Work. But I had never directly experienced the beginnings in a new country. Now it was people I knew personally who were going to start the Work in a country which I had hardly even heard of. It was Alicia, Maria, and others. We helped them to put together some basic things to start the first centre in Yaoundé and prayed a lot for the new adventure. After they left in early April 1990, we eagerly awaited the letters with news of their arrival and how everything was going.

A few months later, at the end of my first year, the third year students returned to their countries. This was another shock as Ana Isabel, Marcia, and so many others who had helped me settle down and “learn” life in Villa delle Rose were leaving and we didn’t

¹⁴ Also known as the Roman College of Our Lady.

know if we would meet again! Those initial goodbyes were painful but helped me to learn the real consequences of living my life according to the needs of my family the Work. Then the group of first years arrived, and it was our turn to teach them the ropes. Life started again as I learnt how to live with a new group of people.

These experiences of suffering when the people I knew and loved had to leave helped me to reaffirm my love for God and the Work. I learnt to accept these realities as part of my life and vocation. St Josemaria also suffered when his children left his side in Rome to start the Work in new countries or to return to their places of origin.

Perhaps one of the most notable impacts that the Roman years had in my personal life is that the world and the different countries are no longer just “the world”, “this country” or “that country”. Many countries and cities around the world for me are now people: Venezuela is Tatiana and Mariana and others; Brazil is Marzia, Maria Ines; the Philippines is Tilda, Marina, Amy; the USA is Ruth; the UK is Ida; Switzerland is Sophie; Nigeria is Noma; Chile is Tere; Puerto Rico is Hannah; Spain is Ines Maria; and so I could go on! I learned to know and love these countries through their people. One of the aims that St Josemaria had when establishing these International Study Centres was to help his children broaden their hearts and learn to love other peoples and nations, with the awareness of our radical unity as children of God, within the diversity that characterises each culture. He expressed it frequently in a well known phrase:

So there is only one race, the race of the children of God. There is only one colour, the colour of the children of God. And there is only one language, the language which speaks to the heart and to the mind, without the noise of words, making us know God and love one another (Escriva 1974, *Christ is passing by*, n. 106).

While I lived and worked in Rome, I experienced the family love and warmth of the Work constantly thanks to the people around me, including the two Prelates of Opus Dei whom I knew personally. Bishop Alvaro del Portillo, who passed away on 23rd March 1994 and Bishop Javier Echevarria, Prelate and Father of the Work since 20th April 1994. I had met don Alvaro with my family during his pastoral trip to Ireland in 1980. His affection on that occasion had created in me a bond of trust and affection for him even before I asked to join Opus Dei.



Photo 7 Don Alvaro in Ireland (1980)

In this photo my Dad is the first from the left beside don Alvaro as he accompanied him on a visit to Rockbrook Park School. It was a wonderful day when many families met the Father informally and which he recalled ten years later when my parents and I met with him in Rome.

During my years in Rome both don Alvaro, and later the current Father took a personal interest in me at various moments. Bishop Javier followed my progress closely when I became ill after finishing my Masters in 1994. When I had recovered, he often took the initiative in greeting me when he came to the centre where I lived, on my birthday, before and after an eye operation I had and at other moments.

His affectionate and communicative nature is visible in the photos below:



Photos 8 Bishop Javier Echevarria with Pope Benedict XVI and at a gathering

I responded to their fatherly warmth and interest with my frequently renewed desire to be a support for them with my life and work and by being faithful to my vocation. In a sense they were and are a visible manifestation of the loving affection of my Father God, as my own Dad is too in his magnanimity and goodness.

In March 2010, I was invited back to Rome along with a few other past teachers of the Roman College for a three day seminar on the Theology of St Josemaria. It was a real homecoming as I had not returned since 2004 when I moved to Kenya. I was surrounded by people with whom I had lived and worked for many years, in a very homey atmosphere. We enjoyed each others' company once again and spent time together with the Father telling him our stories and listening to his words. During our first meeting with him, when he saw me he addressed me by name and asked me when exactly I had arrived from Kenya. Before we left we received various gifts from the Father to bring back to our countries. Once again I had a chance to experience the family spirit of the Work in a special way. Throughout my life I have been fortunate to receive and give love in a variety of ways, thanks to the foundations built by my parents at home, my life in the Work and particularly in Rome. Through my free response to these gifts of love, I have become a loving, warm-hearted and generous person.



Photo 9 With Marzia and Cata in Rome (March 2010)

Marzia tucks her hand under my arm as a sign of affection. This is one of her typical gestures.

Rome: Initial study of Philosophy and Theology (1989 – 1992)

During my five years of study in Rome, I covered a broad range of topics within philosophy and theology which contributed to the development of my Christian intellect. I will focus on the courses, readings, or ideas which link with my experience of family love and freedom, as they helped me to foster a deeper understanding of these realities. In this context some of the key concepts are related to the human person, family, love, unity and diversity, freedom, virtues, the mystery of Christ and the mystery of the Blessed Trinity.

Key philosophical concepts

Through my doctoral enquiry I have discovered that the philosophical themes which I enjoyed most during my studies in Rome are connected to Philosophical Anthropology and Principles of Ethics, which I have subsequently taught frequently as I will explain in Chapter Eight.

Human Freedom:

I have always been passionate about freedom thanks to my education at home. This passion was further fostered in me through living the spirit of Opus Dei. Escriva's teaching on human freedom resonates perfectly with my own experience and understanding. His homily *Freedom a gift of God*¹⁵ is a wonderful synthesis of his ideas on freedom. He explains that freedom starts with God Himself who, in a free outpouring of love creates the world and man, and sends His Son as Man to save us through His sacrifice on the Cross. We learn from Christ that freedom is used properly when it is directed towards the good, and that it is misused when men are forgetful and turn away from the Love of loves (Escriva 1981, *Friends of God*, n. 25). Escriva illustrates the harmony between freedom, love and self-surrender as follows:

Freedom can only be given up for love; I cannot conceive any other reason for surrendering it... When people give themselves freely, at every moment of their self-surrender, freedom renews their love; to be renewed in that way is to be always young, generous, capable of high ideals and great sacrifices (Escriva 1981, *Friends of God*, n. 31).

¹⁵ Published in *Friends of God*.

This linking of freedom with love resonates deeply in me. Each time I freely renew my love for God and my commitment to Him in Opus Dei, each time I put love into carrying out freely the smallest action, I am consolidating my freedom and my love for God. This makes me personally freer and more in love, a *free being* moved by my love for God and souls.

Ultimately the fullness of love leads to the fullness of freedom:

Only when we love do we attain the fullest freedom: the freedom of not wanting ever to abandon, for all eternity, the object of our love (Escriva 1981, *Friends of God*, n. 38).

In philosophical terms, freedom has been analysed, defined and sub-divided in many different ways (Debeljuh 2006, pp. 110-124; Mimbi 2007, pp. 283-289). Having studied freedom in various writers, I have developed my own definition:

Freedom is the human capacity to move myself toward that which I know to be good, because I want to, which is ultimately an act of love (Personal definition).

As I understand it, freedom is much more than choice. I may not have another possible option, but I can still want and move myself towards obtaining the available option which I know is good, because I want to; knowledge and will power are therefore at the heart of human freedom.

One of the books which I have found most enlightening in terms of understanding the reality of freedom based on personal experience is *Man's search for meaning* (Frankl 1985)¹⁶. The author, an Austrian psychiatrist, writes about his life in two Nazi concentration camps during World War II. He speaks of a form of inner or spiritual freedom which he discovered based on his observation of the behaviour of different prisoners under similar circumstances. He relates this inner freedom to freedom of choice in an interesting manner.

And there were always choices to make. Every day, every hour, offered the opportunity to make a decision, a decision which determined whether you would or would not submit to those powers which threatened to rob you of your very self, your inner freedom; which determined whether or not you would become the

¹⁶ As I discussed my dissertation with my parents, my mother unexpectedly began to explain that the book which had influenced her life most was this work by Frankl. We were greatly surprised by the coincidence as we never knew that both of us were fascinated by this text.

plaything of circumstance, renouncing freedom and dignity to become moulded into the form of the typical inmate (Frankl 1985, pp. 86-7).

He claims that, in spite of the circumstances, the power of human freedom can actually help the person rise to the occasion and overcome himself / herself. Referring to those prisoners who were capable of giving away their last piece of bread although they were starving, he says:

They may have been few in number, but they offer sufficient proof that everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way (Frankl 1985, p. 86).

Frankl shows that our inner, constitutive freedom and our freedom of choice are never entirely lost, thanks to the fact that they are rooted in our nature and are intrinsic to who we are as persons. Although our freedom of choice may be severely curtailed, we are still free to choose our attitude, how we will personally respond to our circumstances. We can use our freedom to make the most of the worst circumstances in order to grow and develop as persons, or we can choose not to choose and simply let ourselves be determined by those same circumstances (Frankl 1985, p. 93 and p. 99).

Frankl's text is a tremendous testimony to the reality, depth and richness of human freedom. He shows that we never lose the power to decide who we will become in any given circumstance. Our lives are always in our own hands.

Human Affectivity:

Dr Francisca Quiroga taught me Philosophical Anthropology and opened up new horizons in terms of the value and importance of human affectivity¹⁷. I learnt that human feelings are intrinsic to who we are as persons and contribute to our knowing process as well as influencing our capacity to love. She taught that we can learn to master our emotions in such a way that they contribute to our growth as persons. It was a discovery for me to learn that our emotions, as they arise, are neither good nor bad, but rather their value and impact on our lives depends on what we do with them (Quiroga 1994).

¹⁷ She later wrote a book entitled *La madurez afectiva* (Emotional maturity), which is the fruit of her ongoing studies in this field, and a simplified version of an academic work called *La dimension afectiva de la vida* (*The affective dimension of life*)

This relates to the experience I described in Chapter Three, when I stopped helping at home because I felt I was doing too much. Those feelings were valueless until I let myself be led by them into not doing anything at home (in spite of the guilty feeling this produced in me). Then those feelings became bad for me as I was being controlled by them, rather than by my own free will. As a result, I acted in ways which I knew were not good e.g. letting my sisters do all the work at home. As I mentioned, I began to feel trapped by my own self as I “gave into” those feelings. I found myself in a vicious circle which I did not have the will-power to get myself out of. When my Dad suggested that I help my sister to make the supper one evening, I did it although I felt unwilling. He helped me to act against my bad feelings, to do good. By rejecting those bad feelings I was able to start again and learn to use my freedom well to choose the best way of acting. I have had to start again many times throughout my life in the on-going battle to harmonise freedom and emotions. When I try to understand what I am feeling, assess where the feeling may lead me, etc. it becomes easier to make a decision on whether or not to follow that feeling. In this way I am empowered to manage my own life, and harness my emotions for my personal growth.

In Chapters Six, Seven and Eight I will provide evidence of how I have freely transformed myself particularly through my relocation to Kenya.

Key theological concepts

My love for philosophy evolved and developed into a greater passion for theology during the second year of my studies in Rome. In my theological studies, the units which had most impact on me were those which helped me to understand more deeply:

- the central mysteries of faith: the Blessed Trinity and Christology
- the action of God in the human person through grace: Theological Anthropology

Here I will refer to my study of Theological Anthropology while I was in Villa delle Rose.

Theological Anthropology:

Theological Anthropology studies the supernatural mystery of the gift of grace which the Blessed Trinity grants the person who receives the sacrament of Baptism. The unit delves into the Christian mystery of the real indwelling of the Blessed Trinity in the soul in the

state of sanctifying grace. It explains how the person can freely respond to these divine gifts and develop their personal relationship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. I was fascinated by the unit as it helped me to understand and to explain the practical workings of God in the soul who freely cooperates with His grace.

I learnt how to develop my spiritual life and collaborate on a daily basis with the action of God in my soul. It helped me to make the link between theory, the supernatural knowledge about God and salvation acquired through revelation and faith, and the practical reality of the struggle to live a deep Christian life in the middle of the world. I discovered that theoretical knowledge acquires its true value and meaning to the extent that it can be practically applied to real life situations.

One of the books I studied during the unit which made a great impact on me was *Hijos de Dios en Cristo* (Ocariz 1972)¹⁸. It provides a philosophical analysis of ontological participation in God's Being as manifested in creatures. The concept is then applied to the human being's supernatural participation in the interpersonal life of the Blessed Trinity. The main focus of the text is on the supernatural reality of the divine filiation of the Christian, through sharing in the Perfect Filiation of the Son to the Father (The Bible, I John 2: 24, 28; 3: 1-2). I discovered that the supernatural world is real and has tremendous implications for the soul in grace.

This subject helped me to understand the scientific method proper to the study of systematic theology, which involves a harmonious exchange between faith and reason. I saw how deep philosophical analysis can be applied to supernatural revealed truth and bring to light the logic, meaning and reality of these truths in themselves and in the lives of Christians. In this way the unit contributed to the development of my Christian intellect.

The practical dimension of my theological studies:

I found that my thirst for the truth was satisfied by theological study, through intellectual deepening in the supernatural mysteries of the faith. My love for the truth became more practical as I found ways of applying these highest of truths to my personal relationship

¹⁸ An updated and summarised version of this work was published later in *Naturaleza, Gracia y Gloria* (2001).

with God. I was no longer interested in the truth for its own sake, but rather my passion for the truth became a way of knowing and loving God (the Fullness of the Truth) more deeply. I could apply the knowledge I gained to my spiritual life and living out my personal vocation in a way that gave my efforts to grow as a Catholic ever greater meaning.

The study of theology became the source of an all-round sense of well-being, satisfaction and personal fulfilment as it responded to all my natural desires for knowledge, truth, goodness, love, and happiness. I was on the path to understanding and accepting, with the help of reason enlightened by faith, the deeper, divine meaning of all the events of my life in the context of God's personal love for me and my love for Him. I found this experience echoed in *The Mysteries of Christianity* as follows:

When the heart thirsts after truth, when the knowledge of the truth is its purest delight and highest joy, the sublime, the exalted, the extraordinary, the incomprehensible all exercise an especial attraction ... To enchant and hold us it must surprise us by its novelty, it must overpower us with its magnificence; its wealth and profundity must exhibit ever new splendours, ever deeper abysses to the exploring eye ... Does not Christianity impress us so powerfully just because it is one vast mystery, because it is the greatest of mysteries, the mystery of God? (Scheeben 1946, p. 4-5).

In March 1992 during the last year of my studies at Villa delle Rose, I was asked on behalf of the Prelate of Opus Dei if I would like to do my Masters in Theology at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross. Afterwards I would teach in the Roman College for women of Opus Dei. I was immediately enthused by this plan, however I prayed about it first and then I agreed.

Rome: Masters in theology (1992 – 1994)

In early October 1992, those of us living in the Roman College moved from Castelgandolfo to the Centro Internazionale di Studi Villa Balestra, situated on Via dei Monti Parioli within the city of Rome.

I began the Masters shortly afterwards. Marzia (Brazil) and Martha (Venezuela) started the Masters in Theology with me. We went to the university together, studied together and above all, we talked. We discussed and debated all that we were learning in our courses. We shared ideas, clarified issues, agreed and disagreed as we tried to understand more

deeply all that we had heard in class. These conversations were usually in a mixture of Italian, Spanish, English and Portuguese and took place while we walked through the old historical centre of Rome and along the Via Flaminia to and from Villa Balestra. We used to joke that we would write a book called *Conversazioni sulla Flaminia* about our discussions.



Photo 10 Via Flaminia



Photo 11 Piazza del Popolo

The intellectual stimulus of exchanging ideas, dialoguing and clarifying each others' points helped me to learn and understand more deeply all that came up in class and in the readings which were assigned to us. It also helped me to learn from others as I had nearly always studied alone and independently. At this time there were a few students in the Roman College who had similar intellectual interests and so we would also debate issues and discuss ideas together. It was a time in my life when I developed friendships which ran deep and enjoyed the experience of a shared intellectual life, which doesn't mean that we necessarily agreed on everything. This lifestyle, characterised by the family spirit of the Work which we had in common, created a beneficial context in which I could make the most of my Master's studies.

The Masters programme in Theology at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross involved two years of study across a broad range of theological disciplines. In many of these subjects we analysed important documents from the Magisterium of the Church, one of the sources for theological research, along with various texts indicated by our lecturers. I preferred the units in dogmatic theology which presents supernatural truths in a systematic manner using theological sources. These are complemented by the ideas of various

theologians particularly St Thomas Aquinas, to understand and explain the meaning of the mysteries in greater depth.

The courses which influenced me most were those relate to:

- the central mysteries of faith: the One and Triune God and the mystery of Christ
- the role of the laity in the Church and Ecumenism

I studied the *One and Triune God* with Professor Tanzella-Nitti who taught us about the mystery of the Blessed Trinity in a way which made God “come alive”. I discovered that God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit do not live a static form of life, beyond the created world. Rather, their life is a living communion of mutual love and self-giving. I understood more deeply the reality of the eternal generation of the Son by the Father and the eternal procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son in love. We are called to share this divine communion of love through the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity in our souls in the state of sanctifying grace. The vividness of the explanations about the seal which the Holy Spirit prints on our soul so that we can relate in a different manner with each of the divine persons was very applicable to my own struggle to live in the presence of God and converse with Him in all I was doing in each day.

I found that an in depth understanding of the work of the Blessed Trinity in the soul through the action of the Holy Spirit can be used to make the Christian life, which is based on faith, hope and love, more real. It also helps in giving reasons for our faith and to persevere in one’s efforts when it is more difficult or one’s feelings pull one in different directions. I like to highlight the importance of bringing theological teachings to one’s personal life in order to benefit further from one’s study and not stop at the level of knowing more simply for the sake of it. Greater knowledge should stimulate a greater and more personal love for God. It comes back to moving from theory to practice; linking what we know to how we live; growing in “unity of life”, which means striving to live according to what we know is good and true.

As I will explain in Chapter Nine, these concepts are important elements in my living educational theory.

In another unit we studied the *Role of the Laity in the Church*. This was an important topic which was highlighted by Vatican Council II due to the fact that over the centuries, Catholics had developed the idea that Bishops, priests and religious members of the Church were called to holiness, while the lay faithful were somehow considered as second class citizens. They were not called to holiness or at most they were called to a lower “level” of holiness than the consecrated members of the Church (Rodriguez, Ocariz and Illanes 1994, pp. 125-135). This was a concern which lay close to the heart of St. Josemaria Escriva, Founder of Opus Dei, precisely because the light he received from God on 2nd of October 1928 was to make known once again in the Church that everyone is called to holiness, including the ordinary lay faithful. As a member of Opus Dei, it was important for me to understand how the Church during the 20th century had rediscovered, reaffirmed and expressed this universal call to holiness. As *Christifideles laici* puts it:

The eyes of faith behold a wonderful scene: that of a countless number of lay people, both women and men, busy at work in their daily life and activity, oftentimes far from view and quite unacclaimed by the world, unknown to the world’s great personages but nonetheless looked upon in love by the Father, untiring labourers who work in the Lord’s vineyard. Confident and steadfast through the power of God’s grace, these are the humble yet great builders of the Kingdom of God in history (John Paul II 1988, n. 17).

At the time I also studied an article on unity of life and the mission of the lay faithful in the Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles laici* (Lanzetti 1989, pp. 308-310) which drew out the theological and pastoral meaning of the term *unity of life*. The author highlighted common elements in the Church’s teaching on the topic and in the teaching of St Josemaria. The key to understanding the universal call to holiness based on a radical unity of life is the mystery of the Incarnation, whether one looks at *Gaudium et Spes* (Vatican Council II 1965), *Christifideles laici* (John Paul II 1988), or the writings of Escriva (see Appendix C).

The three sources focus on the mystery of the Son of God who became Man, lived, worked and died as man, and taught all men and women how to find God and become holy in and through their ordinary lives. In the mystery of Christ, the specific, differentiating feature of the lay faithful within the Church may be discovered. Escriva emphasises that to achieve holiness in our daily lives, we should live ONE life:

I often said to the university students and workers who were with me in the thirties that they had to know how to 'materialise' their spiritual life. I wanted to keep them from the temptation, so common then and now, of living a kind of double life. On

one side, an interior life, a life of relation with God; and on the other, a separate and distinct professional, social and family life, full of small earthly realities. No! We cannot lead a double life. We cannot be like schizophrenics, if we want to be Christians. There is just one life, made of flesh and spirit. And it is this life which has to become, in both soul and body, holy and filled with God. We discover the invisible God in the most visible and material things (Escriva 1972, *Conversations with Monsignor Escriva*, n. 114)¹⁹.

Following the teaching of the Church and the spirit of Opus Dei I try to seek union with Christ in my daily activity by fostering this unity of life. My efforts contribute to the authenticity of my life as I strive to “walk the talk” (see Chapters One and Two, and Section Three).

In Ecumenical Theology we analysed *Unitatis Redintegratio* (Vatican Council II 1964) and the Encyclical Letter *Ut unum sint* (John Paul II 1995) which draws out and further develops the ideas in the Vatican II document. Ecumenism is the study of how to achieve:

the restoration of unity among all Christians (Vatican Council II 1964, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, n. 1)

The lecturer encouraged us to identify that which is essential for preserving unity within the Catholic Church which is charity (Vatican Council II 1964, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, n. 3). At the same time he fostered in us a great sense of freedom regarding the areas of spiritual life and discipline, liturgical rites, theological elaboration, etc., where there is room for variety within the Church of Christ. Love is the key to maintaining unity within this broad diversity. Personally I found these ideas daring and challenging, coming from a traditionally Catholic country but they encouraged me to open up to other views, people, and ways of doing things. I began to develop the intellectual flexibility and maturity which would help me to distinguish that which is essential and cannot change in Church teaching, from that which is either a matter of opinion or which allows for greater diversity in its expression.

This lecturer taught me that unity can be achieved within diversity where love is present. Love helps one to accept and respect diversity, which is not necessarily negative. It is simply a manifestation of freedom of spirit, a different way of doing the same thing or

¹⁹ This text is from the homily “Passionately loving the world” which was published in *Conversations with Msgr. Escriva*.

achieving the same goal. I learnt to apply this principle by living my vocation to Opus Dei with freedom of spirit and responsibility. As Escriva said:

you would not be able to carry out this programme of sanctifying your everyday life if you did not enjoy all the freedom which proceeds from your dignity as men and women created in the image of God and which the Church freely recognises. Personal freedom is essential to the Christian life. But do not forget...that I always speak of a responsible freedom (Escriva 1972, *Conversations with Monsignor Escriva*, n. 117).

The principle that love can achieve unity within diversity was important for me in learning to interact with people who were different to myself in the centre where I lived in Rome and when I came to live and work in Kenya. The theoretical grounding which I received in my ecumenical studies during the Masters helps me to love each person in their uniqueness, foster unity amongst us all and respect our various diversities. My experience of family love also helps me to accept diversity and to love others as they want to be loved, rather than how I think that I should love them. My biggest motivation in these efforts is my desire to love each person as Christ does, letting His love reach them through me.

I will illustrate how I implement these ideas in my life and practice in Section Three.

After the Masters (see Appendix D), I studied a text which broadened my horizons: *The God of Jesus Christ* (Kasper 1984). This work combines Trinitarian theology with Christology to explain that, as God is perfect freedom in Himself, He can also be freedom in love outside Himself (Kasper 1984, p. 229; p. 309). Human freedom calls for the existence of absolute freedom (God), to explain itself and it can only be fully actualized in the encounter with Infinite Freedom (Kasper 1984, pp.105-106; p.115). The mystery of the Incarnation and the Redemption reveals the freedom in love of the Triune God, which should be the basis for the freedom in love of the children of God (Kasper 1984, p. 275). The suffering of God in Christ reveals God as freedom in love (Kasper 1984, p. 195). When we perceive that God is love, it is easier to understand the possibility that he would want to suffer for love. The author also identifies being and love; the meaning of being is love and being reveals itself as love (Kasper 1984, p. 155). This helps to understand the Trinitarian mystery better, along with the meaning of the human person and the created world. In Christ, God as Man takes the created world to himself. He is really present in time and history without ceasing to be God and without changing the nature of the created world, but rather converting it into a vehicle of God's love. These ideas enriched my

spiritual life as well as my intellectual understanding of the central mysteries of the Catholic faith. The experience of accepting God's free love in the real ups and downs of each day helped me to discover that my free and loving response to him makes me share in the freedom and love of God himself.

I will return to these concepts when explaining my living educational theory in Chapter Nine.

Rome: Teaching and Learning Experiences

Throughout my life I have learnt to do things by actually doing them, reflecting on my progress, making adjustments and trying again. St Josemaria used to say that ducklings learn to swim by swimming. He used this example to encourage his spiritual children to launch out to try new things without fear of making mistakes, as one can always learn from those mistakes and start again. He expressed this idea synthetically with the phrase "*patos al agua!*" (launch out like ducks into the water!). I learnt to teach by teaching²⁰.

Initially, I didn't have appropriate textbooks available, so I read many articles, conference proceedings and other lecturer's notes, to prepare material for class. My teaching style was usually traditional lecturing, as this is what I had experienced throughout most of my student life. I had never had classes on teaching methodologies. The system involved more or less passive learning in class and personal study, followed by one final exam at the end of the semester. However, I was motivated to:

- make the contents interesting
- relate the contents to real life by drawing out their practical implications
- try to ensure that my students enjoyed learning in class

I believed that learning could be interesting, practical and enjoyable. I had often enjoyed learning in the classroom and I wanted to offer this experience to others, to facilitate their learning process. I had also sat in lectures on interesting topics which were delivered in a boring manner. Reflecting on this experience, I felt that it was unfair to the students and an

²⁰ I began teaching at Villa Balestra in 1993 while I was still doing my Masters. I continued teaching there until I relocated to Kenya definitively in October 2004.

injustice to the content itself. It was an experience that I did not want students to have in my classes.

As I became familiar with the contents of my subjects, I began to involve my students more actively. For example, when a text was available each person read a different section and presented it to the rest of the class, followed by discussion. I designed assignments that linked course content to some document by John Paul II or a text by St Josemaria to help students discover the deeper meaning of the course contents or its practical applications. I also encouraged more questions and answers in class.

My students were very diverse as they came from the five continents. They represented a variety of cultures, educational and socio-economic backgrounds. However they were all professional women with their first degree, while some had postgraduate qualifications. The majority also had some professional experience. Usually they had all studied philosophy and many had done some theology. I normally had 25 to 30 students in a class, although sometimes the numbers rose to 70 or 80 if groups were combined.

This diversity could have made my work very challenging, especially as I was still learning to teach in the first few years. Once my father asked me how I coped with this variety and I explained that, due to its immensity I had opted to adjust my teaching to the general needs of my students within the classroom. I relied on the students to come to me when they had particular difficulties or issues related to their own intellectual or cultural background. When they did so, we discussed and dealt with those specific cases and needs.

I had an advantage in an important common denominator among my students. They were all laywomen, faithful of the Opus Dei Prelature who had various years of experience in living their vocation to apostolic celibacy and sanctifying their daily life and work. They had come to Rome to strengthen their knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith through the study of Philosophy and Theology. They were open to deepening in their understanding, appreciation and living out of their personal vocation to Opus Dei. They knew that they would return to their countries of origin to transmit all they had learnt in Rome to other people of Opus Dei, friends, families, and colleagues, as they carried out their professional work. They also knew that they may be asked to go to start Opus Dei's activities in a new country or to help support the activities in another country, etc. So,

within the immense diversity, they were united by their common vocation, their good will and strong motivation to make the most of their studies in Rome.

This context made my teaching much easier than it would otherwise have been. Some students did challenge me at times regarding my teaching methods and made suggestions based on their previous experience. I listened and when I felt it was possible, I tried to make adjustments. But I did not focus on changing what I was doing too much as I felt that it was good enough, and that the type of subjects did not allow for a lot of experimentation. My principle aim was to teach the contents I had to transmit, and I gave priority to this rather than to the individual students. My concern was to help them make the most of these studies and discover their relevance for one's personal life, through explaining the concepts as clearly as I could, and by drawing out the practical consequences.

When I was informed about students who had greater difficulties in studying for various reasons, I would meet them individually and suggest ways of helping them to follow the classes better and to improve their performance. I also spent time discussing deeper issues regarding my subjects with the students who came to me with further questions, concerns and interests. I would recommend other readings so they could continue to deepen in their knowledge and understanding of specific topics.

My general impression is that the students were more or less happy with my teaching practice, based on the fact that the director of studies never asked me to change my methods. Occasionally I would pick up information informally about the fact that the students liked my classes and found them helpful. We had no system for obtaining formal feedback and I did not have the confidence to seek it personally by asking my students directly.

As lecturers and students lived and worked together in the same house, the atmosphere in the classroom and in our personal conversations was always warm, friendly and family like, while maintaining the necessary professionalism and standards in academic terms. This was thanks to our common vocation to Opus Dei, which made us part of the same spiritual family, while living and working in our family home where there was genuine interest in and concern for one another. When I first arrived at the Roman College in September 1989, I sensed this family atmosphere so I did not have problems interacting with my lecturers inside and outside the classroom, as we lived together in the same house

and got to know each other quickly. While teaching in Villa Balestra, I tried to build relationships with my students outside the classroom, so they would feel comfortable and able to learn easily in the classroom.

Recently a Kenyan who returned from Villa Balestra some years ago told me that she had been surprised at the way many students interacted freely, laughed and joked with their lecturers there. She felt somewhat inhibited, and almost as if this was a lack of respect for the teachers. She explained that it was due to her learning experience growing up in Kenya, where the teacher was the ultimate authority, never to be questioned, challenged or interacted with outside the classroom. She also described how, after a short time in Villa Balestra her own attitude to the lecturers changed and became freer. In my experience, this must have been due to the family like warmth, friendliness and openness of her lecturers. When she described this experience it confirmed my impressions about the challenges I had when I first began teaching in Kenya. It was a testimony that confirmed the efforts I had to make to adjust my teaching practice here. I will discuss this in Chapter Eight.

In Villa Balestra people had the opportunity to experience and imbibe the family love which characterises the spirit of Opus Dei in a special way, thanks to the presence of the Father (Bishop Prelate of Opus Dei). He lived close by and would come to visit us frequently with gifts, listen to our stories and offer his fatherly advice. This contributed to making the students feel “at home” and also facilitated their learning process as the Father encouraged them to make the most of their stay in Rome and the studies they were doing.

In the Summer of 1999 I went to Ireland to teach theology to people of Opus Dei. This was a challenging experience, and the change of context was refreshing. During the Summer of 2000, I taught theology to people of Opus Dei in Estonia. It was an interesting and enjoyable experience due to the historical and cultural context of the few students I was teaching and the opportunities to see new places, meet new people and do new things. These experiences helped to prepare me for the challenge of teaching in Kenya for a few months in 2001 when I was offered the opportunity.

Summary

My roman years were characterised by the warm family atmosphere of the centre of Opus Dei where I lived which was created by all of us who lived there. Due to our diversity, we

all had to make an effort to foster that family spirit. I grew personally by struggling to adjust each year to living with new people, while others whom I had come to know and love moved on to other places. This was a challenge as, although I usually got on well with most people, I still needed to make the effort to come out of myself, discover, accept, understand and love my new students. I used my freedom to contribute to making others feel welcome and at home as we studied and worked together. Over time and with practice, this became easier as I developed habits of openness of mind and heart, along with the acceptance of others as they are. In essence, these are some of the qualities of love.

The years I spent studying and teaching in Rome were an adventure which helped me to develop the seeds which had been sown in my mind and heart while growing up in Ireland: a great appreciation for family love, freedom of spirit, on-going personal development and my commitment to Christ in Opus Dei. Those years contributed to making me who I am today. They also prepared me for the next big step in my life which began with some initial visits to Kenya between 2001 and 2003, as I will explain in Chapter Five.

Chapter Five: First steps in Kenya (2001 to 2003)

In this chapter I narrate my initial visits to Kenya over a period of three years (2001–2003). The knowledge and experience I acquired during this time was an important factor in my final decision to move to Kenya. I had the opportunity to become progressively familiarised with a new world of opportunities and needs, without pressure and in a spirit of freedom. I have placed this chapter in Section Two *Laying the Foundations* because it describes the voyage of discovery which led me to Kenya as my new *locus*.

In early 2001 I was asked on behalf of the Father (Bishop Prelate of Opus Dei), if I would be willing to travel to Kenya from July to early November that year. Opus Dei had started in Kenya in 1960 and was growing quickly (Marlin 2010). They needed someone to help with teaching philosophy and theology to the people of the Work there. I understood that I was free to accept the plan or not. I realised that it would be a way of helping my family the Work, in Kenya and an opportunity for me to learn about life there. As I prayed and reflected, I also understood that this was something that God was asking because He trusted me and my desire to love Him and do His Will. I chose to respond to His love for me in this new plan, by freely accepting it as a way of living out my love for Him.

Kenya: July – November 2001

I arrived in Kenya around 6.00am on 1st July 2001. I was collected at the airport by Carmel, Tricia and a few other people who lived in Kianda Catering where I would stay until early November 2001. This catering department is a residential training unit for Kibondeni College²¹. It was a grey Sunday morning and my first impressions of Nairobi included seeing street families warming themselves beside small piles of burning rubbish, and attending Mass with hymns sung in Kiswahili to the rhythm of drums. At that point I felt that I had really arrived in Africa. I could also hear the singing, chanting and drumming of different church services in the nearby Kangeme slum throughout that first day in Kenya. Although I had seen the usual images of Africa as portrayed in the Western media highlighting poverty, drought, famine, etc., I didn't expect to see those images in

²¹ For further information see: <http://www.kianda-foundation.org/kibondenicollege.org/>. For an historical and sociological study on the beginnings of Kibondeni see Gichure 2011.

daily life in Nairobi. I really had no prior expectations about what Kenya would be like. I had already experienced the fact that the spirit of Opus Dei is the same everywhere, although it may have different manifestations in diverse contexts. I knew that I would find the same family atmosphere in the centre, and carry out my professional work teaching people of Opus Dei and their friends during my stay in Kenya. I didn't realise beforehand that I would actually find life very different in Nairobi and that I would need to adjust to an environment which was unfamiliar to me in more ways than I had expected.



Photo 12 Kianda School

Kianda Catering where I lived caters for Kianda School a project of Kianda Foundation (www.kianda-foundation.org²²) which has been developing projects to empower Kenyan women since 1961, inspired by the spirit and message of Opus Dei. Initially it had catered for a women's residence and secretarial college. Over time the college had merged with Strathmore College, as I will explain in Chapter Seven. The residence had been converted into a girls' school which has grown and developed to become one of the better schools in the country. After 50 years of service to women, Kianda is a household name in Kenya. The purpose of the catering department was always to facilitate a clean, well cared for living and working environment as part of the family spirit of Opus Dei. It also contributes to offering the girls and teachers the experience of high human standards in material and other details. The school and the catering unit are on a nice compound, with quality buildings and good basic standards of living. As I got to know Nairobi, went to different places, visited other centres of Opus Dei and heard stories about the impact on visitors of a clean bathroom, well kept working and living facilities, etc. I was able to compare and

²² As the website explains: "Kianda is a local word meaning 'fertile valley', where everything planted flourishes. Not in vain was the name chosen over 50 years ago" [Accessed 17 May 2013].

contrast what I saw. I learned to appreciate in the local context the real difference which the apparently simple human and material standards actually make in helping people discover their own dignity as persons. Over the last ten years, the material and human quality of the centres of Opus Dei and the institutions which its members run with other people have continued to improve, just as the standards of living in general have been improving.

At Kianda Catering I interacted daily with the 40 people living in the house. I noticed that the rhythm of life was much slower than Europe, although things got done. People had more time for each other and even though we were living in the same home, they would stop to greet me every morning instead of walking on as I would reply “hello” or “fine”. I discovered that people had a genuine interest in me if I responded to their friendliness. Perhaps one of the greatest gifts of the Kenyan people is their human warmth.

Our diet was mainly African, with a touch of Anglo-Saxon influence. Some dishes such as *pilau*, *kachumbari*, and *ugali* were very different and I took time to adjust to them. I learnt that chicken is usually considered to be a delicacy for special occasions. Little by little I understood that while I was not living in the slums or deserts of Africa, neither was I living in the material well being of Europe and I needed to learn to accept things as they were.

Outside the Kianda compound, I had a deep sense of insecurity in this completely new and unknown world. There were many people walking everywhere, and few footpaths. In 2001 there was a lot of rubbish in the streets and the public transport system was chaotic, although this situation has improved greatly over the years. I had a strong sense of being different and standing out due to my colour. I was afraid to move around alone, and this gave me a sense of being somewhat “trapped” at home. I found this hard to live with, coming from an environment where I could move around independently.

These were my first subjective impressions, which illustrate the unexpected reality that I had to learn to adjust to in Kenya. They provided plenty of material for reflection and for my personal prayer, as I tried to accept this diversity and offer it to God moved by love for Him. It was a new way of sharing Christ’s cross and living my vocation, which moved me to ask for His grace to learn to suffer for love with Him.

Part of my work involved academic mentoring for girls who were studying accounting at the School of Accountancy linked to Strathmore University. I became friends with one in particular, Juliet, who invited me to her home before I left. We have kept up contact over the years and are still friends. Juliet is a typical example of Kenyan warmth and hospitality. When I later moved to Kenya and my parents visited me, we went to Juliet's home for a meal with her family.

My teaching activities involved giving theology courses to married women of Opus Dei doing week-long seminars at Tigoni Study Centre (Limuru)²³. I taught philosophy to girls who were training in hospitality at the catering department of the study centre. I also gave lectures on a variety of topics such as freedom, faith and reason etc. to university students. I taught theology to young professional women, members of Opus Dei, on Saturday mornings. I found that they usually had little time to study during the week so I tried to cover a lot of material in class.

I used the traditional lecturing method when teaching, but I found that I needed to ask more questions to assess the levels of understanding of my students. I realized that I needed to be practical, clear and straightforward in my explanations especially with the more mature ladies. I tried to help the students discover the relevance of these studies by linking them to their life experience, although I still did not know it well. I found that people were very keen to learn. The married ladies were especially appreciative and expressed their gratitude openly. When I taught philosophy to the hospitality trainees I made an extra effort to be practical, go to the essential points, etc. Most of them grasped the ideas well, asked good questions and understood the abstract concepts with the help of practical applications.

Although I taught different groups, I always experienced something which still happens today. During the first class in any unit, people were usually silent even when I asked obvious questions. I got the impression that they were sizing me up and trying to get to know me. I found it strange and unusual, as some people already knew me outside the classroom. Perhaps this is part of the role of silence as a form of communication which characterises certain aspects of Kenyan culture. It also reflects the Kenyan respect for the teacher as the person with authority, which I will explain in Chapter Six. After the first

²³ <http://www.tigonistudycentre.org> [Accessed 10 April 2012].

class, people opened up and began to participate more actively. At times I have asked my friends for their opinion on this experience. Some have confirmed that in the Kenyan context it is normal to size up a teacher at the start of a new course.

Through my interaction with a variety of Kenyans on that first visit I started a learning process which continues today. Some of the things which struck my attention were:

- the prevalence of the boarding school system (Jagero, Ayodo and Agak 2011);
- the emphasis on good academic performance of individuals and schools and the ranking systems to evaluate performance (Amadalo, Maiyo and Amunga 2010);
- the genuine desire for education in many, although in others the main motivation was the “paper” (certificate, diploma, etc.);
- the fairly strong disciplinary systems in all schools, even for small “offenses”;
- the use of the house system in some schools, points, etc.;
- the high level of competitiveness fostered by all this.

Personally I did not agree with some of these practices. I found them somewhat rigid and possible contributors to learning motivated by fear and based on outcomes. I felt there was not much room for the reality of student diversity in terms of capacity, learning opportunities, etc. In general the education system gave me a sense of a lack of freedom in the learning process. I was concerned about this because of my personal experience regarding the effectiveness of freedom of spirit and positive encouragement in my own learning process, as I described in Chapter Three. Sometimes I would discuss these ideas with other teachers however I did not want to impose my views. I listened and tried to understand why the school system functions as it does. Many of these features are a reflection of the strong colonial influence in the education system (Mulwa et al. 2011), which I will discuss further in Chapter Six.

As I interacted with younger and older people, I developed an awareness of a culture in crisis and transition. There were big differences between the lifestyle and interests of married people from 35 upwards, those of single, young professional people, and those of adolescents and children. Among the youth the influence of western style music, movies, and fashion was evident. I also realized that there was a crisis of understanding between the older generation and younger people who seemed to be imitating their western peers in

the workplace, at school and at home. I learnt about the 42 different tribes that exist in Kenya and their diverse traditions and customs. The younger generation seemed to know much less about these things and have a weak sense of their origins, especially if they had grown up in Nairobi housing estates. In many cases their parents were the first generation of city dwellers. In Chapter Six I will show how these initial impressions were confirmed through my teaching experience and my study of relevant literature when I began to live and work definitively in Kenya.

When I returned to Rome in November 2001 and interacted again with the Kenyans I knew there, I reflected on their socio-cultural background as I had experienced it and I realised how adaptable they are as a people. In spite of the very different world they came from, they blended in well in Rome with people from other, mainly western cultures. This seems to be another characteristic of the Kenyan people.

The day I arrived in Rome, one of the Directors in my centre told me that the Father had asked when I was returning from Kenya. I was very moved by his fatherly interest in me. A couple of days later I was told that he wanted to see me personally, so I went to the centre where he lives with someone else. He welcomed me back and asked about my stay in Kenya. I told him a few things and he said that we would continue chatting about Kenya. I was touched by this manifestation of the family spirit which is so typical of the Work.

After a few months of teaching in the familiar surroundings of Rome, in May 2002 I was asked if I would be willing to return to Kenya. The proposed plan was that after a few weeks of rest in Mombasa in August, I would teach in Nairobi for three weeks and return to Rome in mid September. There was a possibility that I may return to Kenya again for a longer period in February 2003.

My first trip to Kenya had been a cultural shock which it took me time to adjust to while I was there. It helped me to be more open to cultural diversity and I was moved by the receptivity of the Kenyan people. I had realised that I could contribute further through my classes to the development of the Work in Kenya. So, after thinking and praying about this plan, I agreed.

Kenya: August - September 2002

My holiday in Mombasa was a wonderful experience. I spent time snorkeling, reading and studying along with other people of Opus Dei. Our living conditions were simple and the lifestyle was relaxed. I had the opportunity to visit Mombasa town and was fascinated by the Swahili culture which is especially evident in the old town. I visited Fort Jesus built by the Portuguese in the 16th century and which now houses a museum with plenty of information about the coastal tribes and cultures. I also went to the Marine Park in Watamu Bay where we enjoyed seeing the beautiful fish and corals.

When I returned to Nairobi I taught philosophy to hospitality students in the catering department of Tigoni Study Centre (Limuru) for three weeks. I gave two subjects that I had to prepare and teach simultaneously which was stressful as I was not familiar with the units. I did what I could within the time available.

I was living with university students who were doing their philosophy studies as faithful of Opus Dei. I found that they were generally shy when interacting with me giving the impression of apparent passivity, however they were noisy with each other, watching movies or dancing, etc. I do not think I have a particularly threatening personality. These reactions were probably due to a mixture of the respect usually given to older people and the fact that they did not know me. This made it more difficult for me to experience the family spirit of the Work particularly when we were all together. These young people seemed to expect me to take the initiative in the conversation on these occasions, which I found hard to do especially as I did not know them either. On an individual level it was easier to interact in a more personal manner and I began to build relationships with them little by little.

I returned to Rome at the end of September 2002. I was not sure that I wanted to return to Kenya as I still had difficulties in adjusting to life there.

Rome: October 2002 – February 2003

During Christmas 2002 I was asked by the Director of my centre in Rome if I would be willing to go to Kenya from February to September 2003 as had been proposed earlier as a

possibility. I prayed about this request and again sensed that God was inviting me to continue with the adventure in spite of my difficulties in adjusting to life there, so I agreed.

I realise now that the challenges I had in Kenya were because I did not seem to experience the family spirit of the Work as strongly there as in Ireland or Rome. I also sensed a lack of freedom because I was unable to move around Nairobi alone. I had found life there somewhat “reglamented” which seemed to inhibit my own sense of freedom of spirit. Over time and with reflection, I now think that these intuitions were based on my experience living in specific centres of the Work: a training centre for hospitality students and a residence for young university students who were learning the spirit of the Work. In both cases, I was living with younger people who were not in the Work or if they were, had less knowledge and experience of the spirit of the Work. This, combined with their sense of respect for older people and the fact that we did not know each other, made it harder for us to live the family spirit of Opus Dei. Both centres also had a fairly regulated lifestyle due to the activities they were involved in and they were located in parts of the city which were not very safe so I could not move around alone.

My reason for going back to Kenya each year although I found it challenging, was that my personal commitment to God in Opus Dei involved being available to go to new places to help my family, the Work. I also realised that if I was being asked to do so, it was because the Father (Bishop Prelate of Opus Dei) wanted it and thought it was possible for me to manage the challenge. Personally I trusted his judgement completely both humanly and in supernatural terms. He knew me well and I knew that he wanted what was best for me as well as for the Work. I was ready to freely correspond to God’s love for me. My personal efforts to adjust to life in Kenya were motivated by my desire to please him and my love for the Work.

Kenya: February - September 2003

I returned to Kenya in mid-February 2003. I lived in a centre called Roshani which had opened the previous year. The house itself was very nice and located in an area where I could walk safely to a shopping mall and other places. The weather was warm, pleasant and fairly stable for most of the time I was there, which made a big difference to me as I had only experienced Kenya in the cold months before.

There were eleven people living in Roshani. They were mature professional women, mainly Kenyan along with some Europeans. I found it much easier to interact with everyone in the house compared to my experience in other centres. This is probably because they were older and knew how to make me feel welcome and at home. I would often go swimming or walking with Carmen. Angie was always in the house and available if I needed anything. Margaret and Flo would talk about their work at Strathmore University which had just started. Serah told me about her publishing company and Christine brought me to a cultural week at Kenyatta University where she worked. Lucy and Lina would update us on Kianda School where they taught. We celebrated my birthday in great style. There was a lot of activity as at lunchtimes on week days many women came for classes, talks, confessions, spiritual direction, etc. At times I helped in giving classes so I had many opportunities to meet people. During my stay in Roshani I learnt a lot about the customs and traditions of the various ethnic groups in Kenya and I became more familiar with the daily work and life experiences of the average Kenyan.

My main activities were to teach philosophy and theology to people of the Work on week-long courses and on Saturdays. I also spent time preparing classes and working on a journal article.

This visit to Kenya gave me the opportunity to see what my life could be like if I came to stay on a more permanent basis. I had found a centre that suited me in terms of the people living there and its location. I had a better overview of the weather patterns in Nairobi through the year, and they seemed pleasant. I could see that there was plenty of teaching work available. I had become fond of the Kenyan people and could appreciate their good qualities, such as their dynamism and capacity for hard work which I greatly admired.

When the time came to return to Rome in September 2003, I was sorry to leave not knowing whether I would come back.

I realised that my visits to Kenya had helped me to develop as a person both humanly and spiritually. I had learnt to live with fewer material resources at my disposal and to accept the reality of unexpected power cuts, water shortage, etc. My sense of security had grown as I learnt to move around independently, to pray more and to trust in God's protection. Divine Providence became a living reality for me as I had no choice but to rely on Him when I needed to commute alone. Little by little the African sense of God and trust in Him

was taking root in me. I learnt to accept other challenges such as poor roads, slow service in public offices, the transport system, etc., as realities which I could not change or do anything about. This helped me to take life as it came and adjust my own rhythm to the situation I was living in, keep my peace and not become annoyed. I think that all these circumstances contributed to opening my mind and heart much more both to God and to other people, as I developed greater flexibility and the capacity to accept diversity.

I discovered these changes in myself when I returned to Rome after my third visit to Kenya. One friend told me that she had never heard me speak so much about trusting in Providence before. It seemed to have become part of my habitual attitude and vocabulary. Another friend told me that the trips to Kenya had changed me. She found that I had come out of myself, was more outgoing, had learnt how to enjoy life, was more relaxed, and interacted better with people.

Rome: October 2003 – October 2004

I resumed my usual teaching activity when I returned to Rome in September 2003. However I was aware that I needed to decide whether I would stay in Rome or I would go to live in Kenya. I knew that I could not go on spending some months teaching in Kenya, return to Rome to teach for a few months and then go back to Kenya. The strain of adjusting each time was too much for me and it didn't seem like a viable long term solution to the teaching needs both in Rome and in Kenya.

One day I had an informal conversation with the director of Villa Balestra. We chatted about my experiences over the last few years, whether I had preferences about where I would like to live, etc. I tried to explain the advantages and disadvantages for me of the various possibilities. I did express a clear liking for Kenya and willingness to live there as I now saw this as a real possibility in terms of health, climate, professional work, and an opportunity to contribute to the growth of the Work in the African continent.

On 31st December 2003 the director told me that the Father (Bishop Prelate of Opus Dei) would like me to think about the possibility of going to live in Kenya permanently. He wanted me to feel entirely free and to take all the time I needed to make my decision. I really appreciated the Father's concern that I feel free in making such a decision and it gave me a lot of encouragement. It was another manifestation that the Work is a genuine

family, where affection for one another and acceptance of each person's way of being is respected.

I prayed about the idea to discover the Will of God and I also spoke with the person I usually consulted on spiritual matters. As I prayed and thought about the possibility, it seemed very attractive to me and I felt comfortable with the proposal. I also recalled the challenges it would involve, such as detaching myself from Rome where I had lived for 15 years and everyone I knew and loved there. However, with the help of grace and encouragement from my spiritual advisor I decided to go take the plunge, trusting in God and in the Father's faith in me and my capacity to handle this new challenge. I told the director that I would like to move to Kenya and I wrote to the Father telling him my thoughts and my decision. Afterwards, I had a great sense of peace and calm. When I mentioned this to another director, she said it was probably a sign that I had made the right decision regarding God's Will. A few weeks later, the Father confirmed that he was sending me to Kenya and I told my family and friends the news.

I stayed in Rome until early October 2004 to finish my teaching assignments and gradually get used to the idea that I was leaving. In May I received an electronic mail from the people of the Work in Kenya asking if I would be interested in teaching philosophy at Strathmore University. I agreed and sent my curriculum vitae and other documents so that my work permit could be arranged. I was then contacted by Margaret Roche, the Director of the Institute of Humanities, Education and Development Studies at Strathmore University. She explained that I would teach Principles of Ethics to two groups of students from November 2004.

In June I travelled to Ireland for a few days to see my family. The Father gave me the blessing of the journey before I left and asked me to bring a gift to my family on his behalf. My move to Kenya was hard for them because while I was living in Rome I was much closer and my parents came to see me nearly every year, or I went to Ireland. Now it would not be so easy to meet as Kenya was further away. We made the most of the few days I spent in Ireland and had a good time together.

During my final months in Rome I had the opportunity to speak with the Father a few times about going to Kenya. He emphasised that I was very lucky to be going to live there and that there was a lot of work to be done to help people develop their Christian formation

more deeply. He gave me the blessing of the journey on 4th October 2004 and reminded me not to forget Rome, the Father and all they do there in my prayers.

I left Rome on 7th October 2004, and travelled to Brussels where I spent the night in a centre of the Work. I appreciated this arrangement as it meant I could take a break in the trip and spend some time with the people of the Work in Brussels which gave me a sense of home and family. The next morning I was accompanied to the airport by someone from the centre. I left Brussels around 10.00am on the 8th October and I arrived in Nairobi that night.

Summary

After some years of preparation I was now taking another big step in my life. My love for Christ and my vocation to the Work had helped me to face the challenges of those years which had transformed me personally. I had developed a greater appreciation for the family spirit in Opus Dei. I had a greater love for freedom as shown in my growing capacity to accept diversity. As I developed through these experiences, the foundations had been laid and I was able to make the decision to relocate to Kenya.

As I took this step I was not fully aware of the new level of personal transformation to which I was being called. After many years of receiving family love in a spirit of freedom that fostered my personal development, I would now be asked to offer all this to other people unconditionally. I would also have to create an environment in which others could freely accept this gift or not, according to their personal preferences. It has taken me time to discover this, to accept the challenge and to work at transforming myself further to respond to this call.

In Section Three of this dissertation I will illustrate and explain: *How I am growing in Kenya.*

Section Three: How I am growing in Kenya

In this section of the dissertation I will focus on my life in Kenya over the last nine years. I will highlight how I have transformed myself through the experience of living and working here. I will reflect on my family and social life, the socio-economic and educational context (Chapter Six) and particularly my professional practice at Strathmore University where my development has been especially evident (Chapters Seven and Eight).

Chapter Six: Kenya as my new life context

My family and social life in Kenya

When I arrived in Kenya on 8th October 2004, I did not realize that it would take me over a year to settle into my new country. I had challenges ahead of me such as adapting to my new work situation, my new home, the people I would live with, making new friends and becoming accustomed to everyday life for a Kenyan. I was no longer a visitor. I had come to make Kenya my home, to become “more Kenyan than the Kenyans themselves”, paraphrasing an idea St Josemaria used to help his children understand how they needed to adapt when moving to a new country to help with the work of Opus Dei there. It was like starting life all over again in some ways.

I was collected from the airport by Lina and Joy who were now the Directors in Roshani where I would live. It was around 10pm when I arrived which is quite late in Kenya. On the drive home we talked and they gave me some chocolate. When we reached Roshani we went to the kitchen for a hot drink and more chocolate. I was touched by their thoughtfulness and how they had remembered the things I like. They certainly made me feel welcome and “at home”, as did the flower and welcome card which I found in my bedroom. I observed the same warmth in the following years when my parents and siblings came to visit me on different occasions. The people of the Work always welcomed them with affection, interest and hospitality. My parents, who came in 2005, still remember Lucy who came with me to collect them from the airport and help them settle into the hotel where they were staying. Lina really connected with them and still asks me about how they

are. When my siblings came I was living with Winnie, who took a great interest in each of them and also continues asking me about them and praying for their needs.

The day after I arrived in Kenya I met the other people living in the house and I realized that people had moved around because a new centre had been opened near Strathmore University. Half the people I had lived with the previous year had moved there and now there were five new young professional women in the house, some of whom I hardly knew. This was a bit of a shock as I had counted on living with the same people as in 2003. These changes are part of life in the Work however I was not very accustomed to them as I had been living in a fairly stable situation in Rome. Here in Kenya I have learnt to be open to these changes and to accept them with trust in God's plans. I rely on His love for me to help me learn to love the new people with whom I live.

Since I arrived in 2004 I have lived with over 25 different people in Roshani. Most of them have been young professional women in the early years of their working life, facing the usual challenges of anyone in this situation. Family life in the centre has been a learning curve for me. The Irish are a warm hearted people who manage to express their affection in many ways, without excessive show. In Rome I had learned to come out of myself more, and to take an interest in people, remember details about their families, their likes and dislikes, etc. I was accustomed to people talking about their daily activities, bringing news about family and friends, etc. When I came to live in Kenya I discovered that while the Kenyans are warm hearted, initially they are not very expressive. As I tried to be myself and make the people I lived with feel at home as I had done in Rome, I realized that I was not so successful because of differences which I had not been aware of. On reflection I discovered a whole new context rooted in family and educational backgrounds, cultural diversity, personality types, professional challenges etc. which meant that my ways of showing interest and affection were not familiar to the younger people I was living with, and so they did not know how to respond.²⁴ At the same time, I was not aware of how they

²⁴ For example, many people do not speak in public about what they did during the day, whereas I would often ask what they had done as a way of showing interest. Usually people do not speak much while eating, whereas I was accustomed to telling stories and listening to other people's stories at mealtimes. This meant that at times I would talk and feel that people were not interested or if I asked someone about some story the response could be silence. It has taken me years to learn to be comfortable with silence when we are together, if the situation arises. I have also learnt not to ask questions. I wait until someone is ready to start telling their stories. I am learning to appreciate a simple smile or nod of the head, a glance or a gesture as a manifestation of interest and affection.

were accustomed to showing affection and so I did not always perceive it which meant that at times I felt “left out”. Usually this did not happen when I interacted with non-Kenyan people of the Work who were living in Kenya or with some of the older Kenyans. The challenge was with younger Kenyans, some of whom had less exposure and did not know me. We were all trying to get to know each other. I was dealing with a real case of diversity where I was the “odd one out”, yet I wanted to foster unity amongst us all as I had studied during my Masters (Chapter Four).

Over time I have learnt that the sense of family is currently not very strong in young Kenyans while there is also a tendency towards individualism, independence and competitiveness, especially in the professional world. These factors make it more difficult for the young Kenyan professional women of the Work to understand and appreciate the family spirit and warmth which is characteristic of the spirit of Opus Dei. My personal background and experience has been very different in this regard. In my personal prayer I have realized that God wants me to develop a much bigger heart to accept, understand and love the people I live with, in a generous and selfless manner. I try to adapt myself to their ways of showing affection, not impose my way of doing things and foster a sense of family warmth, interest and concern for others because this is an essential aspect of the spirit of Opus Dei. I am learning to live this feature of the vocation to the Work in a new cultural context while respecting that culture and yet not losing the spirit of Opus Dei which is universal in nature. The family spirit of the Work highlights its universality because it focuses on the human dimension of Opus Dei’s spirit. The Work is for and about people and people cannot live a fully human life without a family.

Opus Dei’s spirit reflects an important anthropological and theological fact about the human person which is well explained in the writings of John Paul II. In his *Letter to Families* (1994), commenting on a text from Vatican Council II, he states:

Man is ‘the only creature on earth whom God willed for its own sake’. Man’s coming into being does not conform to the laws of biology alone, but also, and directly, to God’s creative will... every man, is created by God ‘for his own sake’... Inscribed in the personal constitution of every human being is the will of God, who wills that man should be, in a certain sense, an end unto himself. God hands man over to himself, entrusting him both to his family and to society as their responsibility (John Paul II 1994, *Letter to Families*, n. 9).

This text highlights the unique value of each human being as wanted and loved by God for their own sake. At the same time it points to the fact that in human terms, the natural “birthplace” for every person should be the family.

a person normally comes into the world within a family, and can be said to owe to the family the very fact of his existing as an individual. When he has no family, the person coming into the world develops an anguished sense of pain and loss, one which will subsequently burden his whole life... Even if someone chooses to remain single, the family continues to be, as it were, his existential horizon, that fundamental community in which the whole network of social relations is grounded, from the closest and most immediate to the most distant. Do we not often speak of the ‘human family’ when referring to all the people living in the world? (John Paul II 1994, *Letter to Families*, n. 2).

John Paul II also emphasized that the family is a communion of persons, founded on love.

The family, which is founded and given life by love, is a community of persons: of husband and wife, of parents and children, of relatives. Its first task is to live with fidelity the reality of communion in a constant effort to develop an authentic community of persons. The inner principle of that task, its permanent power and its final goal is love: without love the family is not a community of persons and, in the same way, without love the family cannot live, grow and perfect itself as a community of persons (John Paul II 1981, *Familiaris Consortio*, n. 18).

Love is a key element in ensuring that any family is a true communion of persons. The family home is of great importance in experiencing that loving communion. In Appendix E I include an extract from a homily by John Paul II about the Holy House of Loreto which draws out this point.

This love for the person, the home and the family is at the heart of the family spirit in Opus Dei. Escriva used the following expressions when referring to this family spirit as lived in the centres of the Work and the homes of every person of Opus Dei:

a Christian family home; the tone and ambience of an ordinary Christian family home; the style of life proper to ordinary Christian families (Rodriguez, Ocariz and Illanes, 1994, p. 188-9).

The authors of the same text explain:

‘We are a family with supernatural ties’. These words ... show the source and origin of the family spirit proper to Opus Dei: it is born of an awareness of cooperating together in a divine union, which transcends human differences, and it opens out to everyone with links of true affection over and above differences of race, social status, and ideological views (Rodriguez, Ocariz and Illanes 1994, pp. 187-8).

These words reflect the experience which I described above. When I moved to Kenya, I had to adjust to Kenyan ways while also contributing by my example to helping those I lived with to appreciate the reality of the family spirit of Opus Dei, which I had experienced in Rome and in Ireland. Now I find family life in the centre much easier and more enjoyable because I have tried to transform myself and become more Kenyan in my way of being and approach to life.

After my first few weeks in Kenya I realized that I needed to make my own friends although I did not know how to go about it. When I started work my contract was on a half time basis which meant that I was at home two or three days a week. Little by little I began to meet people who came to the house to look for information. Often they knew no-one and were not in contact with people of Opus Dei. Some had been sent by friends or had come because of a comment made by a relative, the friend of a friend, etc. I started building up friendships with a number of people who came to the door. I began to facilitate weekend retreats which were held at Tigoni Study Centre. This also gave me the opportunity to meet new people and make friends. As the years passed, these friendships have grown and I have met other people. My friends helped me to get to know the city of Nairobi by meeting there, going shopping together, etc. We also visit each other at home. Sometimes we organize excursions to places outside the city which has given me the chance to get to know Kenya more.

Through building my friendships I have learnt more about the characteristics of the various ethnic groups. I also discovered that my friends became true friends when they realized that my friendship was disinterested, not based on their cultural, social position, or their beliefs. We share our interests and concerns, spend time together and try to support each other in different ways. I enjoy spending time with one friend or another. It always helps me to forget my worries and come out of myself as I try to give myself to them.

I have also visited the families of the people I live with which is a wonderful experience and an opportunity to learn about the varied Kenyan culture. I have discovered that the altitude of Nairobi is too high for me to play tennis but I often swim when the weather is good and I also enjoy walking. At times I travel to Mombasa or Limuru for a change of air and a break.

I got involved in facilitating seminars and workshops for individual families, professional women, single people, students, married women, etc. The topics have ranged from university life, to anthropology, personal identity, fashion, various aspects of freedom (which gave rise to the publication of three booklets on the topic), femininity and the role of women, etc. These sessions have given me the opportunity to meet a broad range of people from different backgrounds. When I was invited to facilitate these seminars I saw it as an opportunity to open new horizons to my audience regarding their value and worth as persons, the meaning and power of their personal freedom, etc. I was motivated by my conviction based on my own experience and study that each of us can always grow and develop ourselves as persons. Usually these sessions are well received, although I have no evidence regarding actual change in the people who have heard me over the years. However, the three booklets on aspects of freedom are still being sought. When they were first published in 2006 a number of times I was told that people had seen them being read on the buses and *matatus*²⁵ around Nairobi.

Perhaps one of the Kenyan features which I appreciate most is the capacity to relax, take life as it comes and enjoy it. I find that the slower pace of life compared to the West is very beneficial both mentally and physically. There is also a greater sense of freedom which may be due to the geographical space. Our population of 40 million is widely spread so one does not need to travel far from Nairobi to enjoy big, broad, open skies, fresh air, etc. At the same time civic life is not yet over regulated by law and one has the impression that everything is possible in terms of business, economic and other initiatives. One senses the dynamism of a country that is still young and vibrant where you see people who are willing to do anything to make a living, from selling a few tomatoes to transporting water in containers on a cart using their own muscle power. Everyone is aware that there is still so much to be done to develop all the potential in the country. Religious and ideological freedom is a reality, there is openness to diversity and little fear of what other people may think or say about one's actions. This creates a sense that "anything is possible" for someone like myself, coming from a more structured society and environment. All these things and many others make Kenya a very pleasant place to live and work.

²⁵ A Nissan van which is used for public transport in many parts of Africa. The name varies in different countries but the vehicle is the same.

The socio-economic context

Since I arrived in Kenya my understanding of the people and culture has grown over the years based on my personal observations, conversations with friends and colleagues, following the local media, etc. I have tried to enrich my knowledge of my adopted country and its people by reading about Kenyan history, culture, the education system, and the socio-economic context, etc. I will show the influence in my own learning of my readings, observations and personal reflection as I seek to know the truth about my living and working environment.

The issue of socio-economic development in Kenya after Independence is complex due to factors such as local political interest and international intervention. Currently Kenya is compared to Korea and other countries which were its peers in the 1960s in terms of economic growth and development. Korea has moved from being far less developed than Kenya to being much more developed financially and in other ways. Kenya has moved from being in a better position than Korea in 1960 to being less developed than Korea today. This bench-marking has created the awareness that Kenya should be able to improve its performance as other countries have done (Owino Otieno and Ndungu 2010).

When I first came to the country in 2001 I noticed the poor infrastructure in Nairobi, the chaotic public transport system, the riots by high school students, instances of corruption, etc. However, from 2003 onwards I saw improvements in Nairobi in terms of cleanliness, infrastructure, models of car available, increased imports of foreign goods, etc. From 2003 to 2007 the government implemented the Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and Employment Creation (ERS). It brought about a great improvement in the Kenyan economy which reached a growth rate of 7% by 2007.

To further economic growth and development, a long-term development blueprint for Kenya was formulated known as Vision 2030. It focuses on three pillars: improved economic, social and political governance to transform Kenya into a newly industrialized, middle-income country providing a high quality of life to all its citizens, in a clean and secure environment by 2030 (Vision 2030 2011). The document is considered to be a good framework for growth, although it does not address the issue of risk assessment and management in the case of scenarios such as high oil and food prices, drought, deteriorating terms of trade and high levels of inflation. Currently our economy is battling

with these issues and people are experiencing a constant rise in the cost of living, with little or no increase in salary. Kenya's momentum for growth has been hit by the post-electoral violence of 2008, the drought of 2008 and the recent global financial and economic crisis which were not taken into account in Vision 2030. It remains to be seen how we will emerge from the current economic situation, which will largely depend on global recovery, the avoidance of drought and the implementation of key structural reforms foreseen in the document (Owino Otieno and Ndungu 2010). In 2012 the cost of living continued to rise. Inflation and interest on bank loans is high (brought down to 18% from 25% in January 2013). Many families are struggling to pay school fees and keep food on the table.

However every day in Nairobi I see wealthy Kenyans who drive cars that are getting bigger or more sophisticated, own expensive housing and wear designer clothing. The dining and entertainment business is doing very well. Some people go on expensive holidays abroad every year, while local tourism is on the rise. The growing middle class, both upper and lower, is evident in the style of homes, the areas where people live, the schools they attend, etc. Outside Nairobi real poverty is not a problem in most localities because food can be easily cultivated nearly everywhere. Many people may not have a lot of cash, but they can survive and make a living. There is space, clean air, fertile soil, etc. although environmental degradation exists in some places, especially due to deforestation (Mathaai 2007). The really poor are to be found in the city slums where disease, filth, and sub-human living conditions are common.

When I came to Kenya, I did not expect to find such a diverse socio-economic scenario. As Kenya is considered to be a developing country I assumed that my students would live in more or less similar socio-economic situations. However this is not the case. Over the years, I have realised that there is a significant level of diversity within the groups of students whom I teach based on their varied cultural identity and their socio-economic backgrounds. I see some driving to school in expensive cars while others use middle of the range cars²⁶. Some come by public transport, while others walk to school. I have students who wear expensive new clothes, others dress well by purchasing clothes in the second

²⁶ This "classification" of expensive or less expensive cars should be understood within the financial context of Kenya. Examples of expensive cars which can be seen on our roads are Pajeros, Land Rovers, Range Rovers, Mercedes Benz, Passats, Audis, Lexus, Prado, etc. Middle of the range cars would be various types of Toyota, Nissan and other less well known brands. Most of these cars are imported 2nd hand from Japan and the United Kingdom. Only the very rich buy show room cars of the same brands.

hand markets around the city (*mitumba*) and some are dressed in a very simple manner. Some students have British or American accents depending on where they went to school or other influences they may have been exposed to, while others speak with the accents of their home areas. Some students live in expensive areas of the city, while others live in middle class locations. Some live in hostels and others live in slum areas. Some students can buy whatever they want for lunch as they have plenty of money, while other students have the exact money they need for lunch and bus fare that week. Some students go to very cheap eating places outside the university as they cannot afford the subsidized rates at the cafeteria. There are a few who don't have lunch at all.

I have discovered that many students have difficulty paying the fees required by the university. Some have to take academic leave to gather the fees and recommence their studies. Others come from wealthy families who have no problems in paying fees. A number of students are benefiting from scholarship programmes which are offered by various institutions and individuals through the university. Now students can get partial loans from the Higher Education Loans Board. Some banks are also facilitating loans to their parents. However, fees are still a challenge for many of our students due to the economic situation in the country. At Strathmore University the main focus of the Advancement Office at present is to increase the scholarships available to our students.

Perhaps one of the biggest challenges to growth in Kenya is the problem of corruption and unethical politics and governance. In Appendix F I discuss the background to this situation and how I have seen it manifested over the last few years. The problems of our political and governance system should be addressed through the implementation of various strategies proposed in the new Constitution of 2010²⁷. These include competitive, issue-based politics, a politically engaged and open society, free from patronage, tribal and regional alliances, along with transparent, accountable, ethical and results-oriented government institutions (Owino Otieno and Ndungu 2010). The election of Uhuru Kenyatta as President in March 2013 has brought hope that Kenya will see many improvements over the next five years. He has a clear agenda for growth and development based on Vision 2030 and seems to be fostering a transparent approach to governance.

²⁷ Available from: <http://www.kenyalaw.org/klr/index.php?id=741> [Accessed 6 September 2013].

When I first came to Kenya and discovered that local politicians, etc. were stealing from their own people and keeping them in poverty due to corruption, greed, self-interest, and the desire for wealth, my sense of injustice was strongly aroused. I would not have been so surprised if foreign powers were responsible for the injustice of taking advantage of the average Kenyan, although this is also bad and still occurs. However, that Kenyans do this knowingly to their own people is even worse. It produced a sense of frustration in me which lead me to ask: what can one do to overcome the problems of local injustice?

My own answer is education. We need to educate honest citizens who are capable of living and working for the good of the nation as a whole, overcoming the temptation to satisfy their self-interest. This has led me to teach Philosophical Anthropology and Principles of Ethics in ways which help my students to appreciate their own dignity and that of others, as well as the personal and social impact of striving to live an honest life. When we discuss ethical issues in class, some students claim that it is impossible to be ethical in the workplace given the challenges in the real world. As I will show in Chapter Eight, some students do discover that it is possible to live in an ethical manner if one is convinced about their personal dignity, the power of their own freedom and the need to respect and help others.

The background and context of education in Kenya

Over the years I have tried to develop my knowledge of the educational context in Kenya to understand the background of my students. Many of the challenges we face together in the teaching and learning process are linked to their prior experience in the education system along with their cultural and socio-economic background. See Appendix G for a summary on primary and secondary education prior to Independence (1963) and an overview of the history of post-Independence Kenya and higher education. Here I will look at some general trends in education from Independence onwards²⁸.

After Independence in 1963, the traditional elite (colonial governors with special powers) was replaced by the new elite made up of Africans who had received an education in literacy and those who had received some form of professional education as clerical workers, cashiers, accountants, secretaries, etc. In the early 1960's Tom Mboya, among

²⁸ Detailed bibliography for education in Kenya is included in Appendix G.

others, began the “airlifts” which brought many young Kenyans to the USA to receive a college and university education, with the aim of returning to Kenya to contribute to developing literacy and education levels around the country.

Since Independence, educational administration has undergone constant change according to government policies and the changing aims of education. In 1968 the first Education Act was promulgated²⁹. It provided an outline for the development of education in Kenya, along with subsidiary legislation, until it was repealed by the Basic Education Act, 2013³⁰.

Following the Education Act (1968), the Ministry of Education was to take over all non-governmental schools, including the missionary schools. Instead of being run and funded by the various missionary groups, these schools were to be sponsored by the local dioceses and run by local school leaders appointed by the State, but without financial support from the government. At the time, the dioceses were in financial difficulties and could not offer much assistance for the running of these schools, where the missionary groups no longer had a role. The result was a financial crisis in the education sector (Njoroge 2000).

The Education Act (1968) also sought to resolve the discussion around the appropriate school curriculum. At Independence, Kenya was still suffering from poverty, ignorance and disease. More skilled manpower than that available was needed to run the economy. The new government formed a commission to study and advise on national policies for education. The Ominde Commission Report (1964) recommended that:

- education should provide manpower for national development and be adaptable at all levels;
- the education system should serve all the people of Kenya without discrimination to foster national unity;
- it should respect the religious traditions and cultural traditions of the peoples of Kenya;
- it should train people in social obligations and responsibility, so that personal goals be attuned to the needs of the country.

From 1964 to 1975, in principle the educational structure, goals and objectives were based on the Ominde Report of 1964. In practice, the focus was on expanding opportunities in

²⁹ Available from: http://www.kenyalaw.org/kenyalaw/klr_app/frames.php [Accessed 6 September 2013].

³⁰ Available from: <http://www.kenyalaw.org/klr/fileadmin/pdfdownloads/Acts/BasicEducationAct2013No14of2013.PDF> [Accessed 6 September 2013].

academic education and doing away with discrimination in education. The emphasis was on academic subjects, passing exams and getting a certificate which would lead school leavers to social and economic advancement by getting a good, well-paying job. By 1975, the government had realized that education was not actually meeting the practical goals and standards set by the Ominde Report and that it was too academically oriented. Education was focused on imparting knowledge for the sake of passing exams (Eshiwani 1993).

In 1976, the National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies produced the Gachathi Report, which attempted to restructure the education system to meet the demands of the country and facilitate employment opportunities for school leavers. By 1980, the government had to change its policy on education as many school leavers were not being absorbed into the work force in spite of the new system.

Under the guidance of the Mackay Commission Report (1981), a move was made towards a more practical and technical education to facilitate self-reliance. This gave rise to the current 8-4-4 system, designed so that all students completing each educational cycle (primary, secondary, higher level), would be able to utilize the skills and knowledge acquired to create self-employment, thus fostering in students the willingness to work independently. The new system was designed to provide life-long education to make individuals self-sufficient and productive in agriculture, industries, commerce and in other services. It was a means of developing a balance between practical and academic learning (Eshiwani 1993).

Although the 8-4-4 system appeared to make economic sense, in some ways it seems like a step backwards in educational terms. It apparently reverts back to a largely technical and practical education system as sustained by the colonial government, which Africans had fought against.

It is ironic that two decades after Independence, most of the African states are stressing those aspects of education that they had rejected before Independence, namely, technical and vocational education (Eshiwani 1993).

Some private schools and universities, such as Strathmore University where I work are trying to offer a broader curriculum in order to facilitate a more all-round education in students. However, there are challenges as most of the teachers or lecturers come from the

current Kenyan system and so tend to implement what they have experienced in issues such as the treatment of students, discipline, etc. At the same time, most students focus on acquiring the knowledge or skills needed to pass an exam or get a job, and do not appreciate the role of more holistic learning opportunities. I will discuss these challenges in Chapters Seven and Eight.

As I have experienced the 8-4-4 system through my students, it seems to contribute to rote learning, low levels of understanding, little critical thinking, poor written and oral communication in English and Kiswahili. Kenyan students today want good grades, to pass exams and obtain their final degree certificates, without much of the pro-active learning required in an effective educative process. A typical question towards the end of any course is “what is on the exam”? or “what do we need to know for the exam?”. It seems that this tendency has a long tradition going back to colonial times, and may partly be due to the on-going use of examinations within the system to validate a student’s progress to the next educational cycle. According to Eshiwani (1993), Kenya suffers from a certificate syndrome which is a result of an adopted examination system whereby one paper certificate may fail to secure an individual a vacancy in the next level³¹.

The education sector in Kenya has also been affected by other challenges which I will simply mention:

- Difficulties in introducing Universal Primary Education which was attempted in the 1970s and again from 2003 onwards (Sifuna 2007; Tooley, Dixon and Stanfield 2008; Keriga and Bujra 2009; Bold, Kimenyi and Mwabu 2009; Kamunde 2010; Bokova 2010).
- School drop outs at secondary level due to poverty (Muyanga et al. 2007; Oketch et al. 2010; Oketch and Ngware 2010).
- Loss of discipline and the political fostering of chaos in schools, particularly from the 1980s onwards (Report on the task force on the student discipline and unrest in secondary schools 2001; Alwy and Schech 2004; Otieno 2008; National Mirror 2008).

³¹ Currently there is an on-going debate in the Kenyan media and within the Ministry of Education about the need to reform the 8-4-4 system.

- The loss of respect for the figure and role of the teacher in society, which had been very high at the local community level, has contributed to diminishing morale and commitment in teachers (Herriot et al. 2002; Odhiambo 2005; Kafu 2011; Mwebi 2012).

The challenges facing the education system have an impact in government run schools, and in private schools to a certain extent. They also affect public and private institutions dedicated to higher education. There is a high level of institutionalization in education and perhaps excessive use of authority and discipline. In my opinion these have been inherited both from the traditional African context and colonial times in which children were taught to learn, obey, etc. by force, and so they did not learn to use their freedom to develop their own lives.

I have seen many young people leaving school who have little or no sense of discipline, based on the use of their personal freedom. When “released” from school, many become confused by their new found “freedom” and cannot direct their own lives effectively. This problem becomes evident when they join university and get caught up in substance abuse, etc. It is also evident in the lack of order and focus in their personal lives. Perhaps my own experience of learning to use my freedom in a responsible manner with the help of my parents, as I explained in Chapter Three, has made me more aware of these issues. In Chapter Eight as I discuss my experience in teaching at Strathmore University I will explain how I try to help my students to discover their own freedom and learn to use it in a constructive manner to develop themselves as persons³².

Summary

These explanations about my family and social life, the socio-economic and educational context in Kenya are based on my personal experience, observation and reflection as well as my readings. The concerns which I express are rooted in my appreciation of family love,

³² Up to the mid 1990s young Kenyans leaving school continued to “obey the rules” in different contexts, based on engrained habit and the custom of not questioning authority. However, with the onset of an ever greater influence of Western civilization, young Kenyans now question authority openly, refuse to obey rules unless forced to do so, etc. This has become a problem for parents and educators who do not know how to handle this attitude because they themselves are part of the old system, and do not understand the value and meaning of personal freedom. This situation has also partly contributed to the violence, rioting and other disturbances in schools around the country, as well as the manipulation of students at second and third level by politicians, etc.

freedom of spirit and openness to my own personal growth and that of others. These are the personal values which I brought to Kenya, thanks to my prior life experience.

As I will show in Chapters Seven and Eight, I have tried to address many of my concerns regarding the socio-economic and educational context in Kenya through my teaching practice and other non-teaching activities at Strathmore University. In the process of living out my commitment to the University mission, my values have become more explicit and I have transformed myself.

Chapter Seven: My non-teaching activities at Strathmore University

In this chapter I will explain the non-teaching activities which I have been involved in at Strathmore University since October 2004. I will dedicate Chapter Eight to my work with my students.

The origins of Strathmore University, its mission and values³³

The main entrance to Strathmore University expresses much of the spirit of the university as this photo illustrates:



Photo 13 Main entrance to Strathmore University

The sense of solidity, academic prowess, and purpose reflected in the stonework, the columns, and the symmetry we see in this photograph partly illustrate the contribution which Strathmore wishes to make to Kenya, Africa and the world. I was surprised when I first saw this entrance as I did not expect to find such meaningful construction in Africa. I still have a sense of being part of an institution which wants to bring about positive change when I walk beneath that portico.

³³ For an overview of the history, etc of Strathmore University see: www.strathmore.edu.

This building was constructed in 1992 when Strathmore College merged with Kianda Secretarial College. At the time both colleges were household names in Kenya. They started in 1961 as multiracial colleges open to people from all cultural and religious backgrounds³⁴, under the inspiration and with the encouragement of Saint Josemaria Escriva, founder of Opus Dei. Strathmore's motto is *Ut omnes unum sint* (That all may be one) which expresses:

Our desire to work together towards the same aim, in spite of personal differences, or opinion, tastes and background (www.strathmore.edu/aboutus).

This building witnesses to fifty years of experience in education and offers the hope of bigger and greater possibilities. Initially, the college offered professional courses in accountancy, information technology and management.

In 2001 Strathmore College began offering bachelor degrees in Information Technology and Commerce in conjunction with Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT)³⁵. In August 2002 the Commission of Higher Education³⁶ (CHE) awarded Strathmore a Letter of Interim Authority to operate as a University with a Faculty of Commerce and a Faculty of Information Technology, awarding its own degrees. In April 2008, Strathmore received its Charter becoming a fully fledged, independent, private university.

Strathmore University currently comprises thirteen Institutes, Faculties, Schools and Centres, offering undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in Information Technology, Management and Commerce, Tourism and Hospitality, Law, Finance and Applied Economics, Business Administration, Educational Management and Applied Philosophy and Ethics. A number of professional courses are also offered in some schools³⁷. The university serves approximately 5,000 full time and evening students.

³⁴ At that time racial segregation existed in Kenya. These colleges were breaking new ground with this policy and struggled to have it respected by the colonial government. They were the first multiracial, inter-religious learning institutions in Kenya.

³⁵ One of the newer public universities in Kenya.

³⁶ In 2012 the mandate of this Commission was extended to include public as well as private universities and its name was changed to the Commission of University Education (CUE).

³⁷ For more detailed information see: www.strathmore.edu.



Photo 14 Library and Auditorium



Photo 15 Strathmore Law School



Photo 16 Entrance to Strathmore Business School

The campus has grown and extended since 1992. New buildings have been constructed such as the Library, the Business School, the Law School, the Student Centre and a block of lecture rooms known as the Management Science Building. The sports complex is currently under development.

When I arrived at Strathmore in 2004, I began to teach for the Institute of Humanities, Education and Development Studies (IHEDS³⁸). The Institute offers core units in Philosophy, Communication Skills and Development Studies, along with electives in Languages, Literature and History to all the undergraduate students. The aim is to help them develop their critical thinking skills, along with a broader and deeper understanding of the human person and the world. This is important given the technological and entrepreneurial focus in most of our programmes.

³⁸ In 2011 IHEDS was transformed into the School of Humanities and Social Studies (SHSS) to pave the way for offering its own Masters and undergraduate programmes.

Vision of Strathmore University:

To become a leading out-come driven entrepreneurial research university by translating our excellence into a major contribution to culture, economic well-being, and quality of life (www.strathmore.edu/aboutus).

IHEDS illustrates the commitment of the University to placing the Humanities at the “heart” of its activity to ensure that our students grow and develop as persons in an all-round manner.

Mission Statement of Strathmore University:

To provide all round quality education in an atmosphere of freedom and responsibility; excellence in teaching, research and scholarship; ethical and social development; and service to Society (www.strathmore.edu/aboutus).

Our Values:

Excellence through the sanctification of work; freedom and responsibility; ethical practice; personalized attention; subsidiarity; collegiality; life-long learning; service to society (www.strathmore.edu/aboutus).

When I came to work at Strathmore I found the mission statement and values inspiring as they resonated with the personal way of being which I had developed in Rome and in Ireland. I was particularly attracted to the respect for freedom and responsibility, personalized attention, the desire to serve, the concern for development, an ethical approach to life and excellence at work. I was enthusiastic about contributing to living out these values and mission personally through teaching Principles of Ethics and Philosophical Anthropology at the University. I also hoped to help my students discover the importance of these values in their own lives. The contents of the two units I would teach were conducive to achieving this aim. I will discuss my response to the Strathmore mission in my teaching practice in the next chapter. Here I will focus on how I have tried to contribute to achieving the University’s mission, vision and values through my non-teaching activities.

Initiatives within my Institute / School

After a few months at Strathmore (October 2004 to March 2005), I realized that we had a lot to achieve in order to develop as a university and implement our mission and values, which are essentially person-centered. Over the years this became a greater challenge

partly due to the entrepreneurial focus of our vision and the nature of the programmes we offer.

Initially I focused on my experience in trying to teach philosophy to undergraduates who were studying Commerce, Information Technology, etc. I chatted frequently with the Dean of IHEDS, Margaret Roche, who shared my concern about how the philosophy units were being taught and the challenges which lecturers faced with these subjects. Occasionally she asked me to write brief reports on my experiences in teaching Principles of Ethics. I submitted my first report in November, 2005, after my first two teaching semesters.

This report highlights my personal challenges in dealing with my students, my concern to help them understand the contents I was teaching, along with my growing knowledge of my students' attitudes to certain ethical problems in society which revealed to me how they think on certain issues. I was particularly concerned about their attitude towards wrong doers, as they approved of mob justice, which seemed to reflect a lack of appreciation for the ontological dignity of every human being, based on the fact that s/he is a person. I write as a lecturer who has realized the weaknesses in my students' theoretical understanding of the human person, based on their response to the practical issues we have discussed in class. At the same time I express my interest in the students and their learning processes.

In January 2007, three semesters later, I presented another report. It illustrates my reflections on my teaching experience, along with my willingness to share that experience within IHEDS. I mention ideas which will continue to be causes of concern to me in the following years, motivating me to find ways of teaching more effectively, for the sake of my students: their possible difficulties with the unit; the need for experience and skill in the lecturer; the need to remind students and show them the meaning and usefulness of these units; the fact that these units can help them to develop their thinking and analytical skills; the need to help them to connect ethical theory with real life so this knowledge helps them to interpret and analyse daily issues from an ethical perspective, etc. I express here my loving concern for my students and their growth as persons, based on my awareness of the importance of helping the students to benefit from their study of philosophy. The report shows the educational values which were evolving in me, within my new context. At the same time, my implicit concern to embody the Strathmore mission is also present in these

reflections: foster excellence in teaching, and ethical and social development in our students so that they and the university itself, can be of service to society.

In June of 2007, IHEDS held a one day workshop at the Panari Hotel (Nairobi) to carry out an intensive curriculum review of the various Philosophy and other units we were offering to the undergraduate students at Strathmore University. I was actively involved in studying the philosophy units along with other lecturers. Our outcomes included³⁹:

- ✓ exchange Introduction to Ethics, which was no longer necessary, for Introduction to Critical Thinking, to foster habits of abstract thinking in our students before they start the philosophy units; we identified possible names for the unit and the course contents;
- ✓ identification and reduction of overlapping topics within the syllabi of the philosophy units;
- ✓ the importance of dealing with sensitive topics in Ethics such as human love and sexuality, bioethical matters, etc. in a positive manner, as these issues have a direct impact on the personal lives of the students; the lecturer needs to establish a climate of friendship and mutual respect with his/her students to ensure that all students feel understood and respected;
- ✓ most of the philosophy units were renamed to ensure more meaningful course titles;

When we received the final report after the workshop, I forwarded comments and clarifications to the Faculty Manager of IHEDS to ensure the precision of the contents of the report. For example⁴⁰:

3. Renaming of units

Renaming the existing units: the suggestions were as follows:

- a) Ethics 1 => Philosophical Anthropology (not Pre-ethical Anthropology)
- b) Ethics 2 => Principles of Ethics (not General Ethics)

³⁹ Internal report on IHEDS Curriculum Review Workshop at Panari Hotel - June 2007.

⁴⁰ Comments on report on IHEDS Workshop at Panari Hotel, June 2007, 10-07-2007, Catherine Dean.

This is just one piece of evidence that illustrates my effort to respond when asked for comments or feedback from IHEDS / SHSS on any issue. Throughout the years I have always contributed to a greater or lesser degree to confidential and non-confidential issues on which I have been consulted (see Appendix H). This was acknowledged by the new Dean of SHSS in September 2012 during a review of my Academic Staff Performance Agreement.

My willingness to take the initiative in making suggestions or in responding to requests for comments, show how over time I began to live more personally values such as excellence in teaching and research, collegiality, and the commitment to providing an all round quality education, as envisaged by the university's mission and values statements.

My involvement in Strathmore as an institution

Library Development Committee

In 2007 I was asked to be the Library Representative for the School of Humanities and Social Sciences on the Library Development Committee (LDC). I have held the position ever since. This involves attending meetings of the LDC, communicating relevant information to the staff in my School and acting as the liaison person with the Library for requests for new books and journals, etc. I have a keen interest in contributing to building up the Library resources and support the initiatives of the Library staff as much as possible. I maintain good relations with each of them and try to collaborate when they ask me to assess possible purchases, check catalogues, etc. This is because I know that the Library is a key element for any university and I have always loved books and libraries. I have contributed to ensuring that classical works in the Humanities are not weeded out from the Library as happens with other technical works, thanks to my understanding of the value of classical texts in contributing to a Library's patrimony. When my parents visited me in 2005, I showed them around Strathmore University, including the Library. Both my parents love books, and my father became enthused with the idea of collecting books in Ireland to send to Strathmore Library. He launched into this enormous task and managed to send over 20,000 books to our Library in a shipment by land and sea. This donation was a great bonus for Strathmore, for which we were very grateful.

Academic Development Unit

In June 2007 I was asked by the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Quality and Research if I would be willing to form part of the committee to run the newly formed Academic Development Unit (ADU), under the chairmanship of the Academic Registrar. Strathmore had a Teaching and Learning Committee which was running the Certificate in Lectureship. However management wanted to move forward in creating professional development opportunities for academic staff. At this stage I had realized that our lecturers needed assistance to be more innovative and professional in their teaching practice. I felt that this was important for our own growth as well as for the quality of the courses which we were offering our students. I agreed to join the ADU committee. As recorded in the Minutes of our first meeting, “the main objective of the committee is to implement and monitor quality of Learning and Teaching at faculty and school level”⁴¹. We gradually grasped the practical implications of this mandate with the help of the Academic Registrar. I worked on the committee from July 2007 to November 2008. During that period we achieved the following:

- create awareness and train lecturers on the use of the E-learning platform, which began to develop in this period;
- establish initial procedures for the Teaching Excellence Award and attempt a first round of nominations; however the Award was afterwards put aside for some time;
- convert the existing Certificate of Lectureship into the Academic Staff Development Programme (ASDP), after focus group consultations with lecturers; the first module of the ASDP was planned for June 2008, however, it did not happen for various reasons;

During the year I worked on the ADU committee, I was proactive in helping to clarify and develop the procedures for the Teaching Excellence Award. I was also involved in creating the new Academic Staff Development Programme. I conducted the focus group discussions on the existing Certificate of Lectureship with other ADU colleagues and prepared the final report and recommendations.

⁴¹ Minutes of the Academic Development Unit (ADU) committee meeting held on Friday, 13th July 2007, in the executive boardroom, at 11.00 a.m.

From August 2008 I was becoming overwhelmed with my work on the ADU committee as I was carrying a lot of the weight which could have been more evenly distributed amongst us (see Appendix I). The other members seemed to think that I knew more than they did about what we were trying to achieve, although this was not the case as I was learning with them. However I often took the initiative with ideas, or preparing material before meetings, etc. I decided that as I was also teaching, working on the Library Development Committee and planning to start my doctorate I could not sustain so many activities. I also realized that the other members of the ADU may become more proactive if I was not on the committee. I spoke with the Dean of IHEDS about being replaced by another member of staff on the ADU committee. She understood the situation and agreed to substitute me. I was released from the ADU committee in November 2008. I was now freer to focus on my teaching and working towards my doctorate.

Action Research Seminar:

Occasionally I discussed my doctorate with Margaret Roche who was interested in Action Research and a living educational theory approach, which I was studying to prepare my research methodology for my doctorate. She had become familiar with Action Research while doing her Masters and wanted to use it as the research methodology for the Post-Graduate Diploma in Educational Management and the Post-Experience Diploma in Educational Management which was starting at Strathmore under the auspices of IHEDS. She proposed that we invite my supervisor Dr. Farren, and Dr. Whitehead to come to Strathmore in 2009 to run a seminar on action research. I agreed to help organize the seminar, which would be offered by IHEDS in conjunction with the Research Services Office (RSO). We opened it to all members of staff and some of the diploma students so that as many people as possible could benefit. Dr. Farren and Dr. Whitehead kindly agreed to give the seminar with the help of Dr. Crotty on a *pro bono* basis, while IHEDS and RSO covered most of the costs of their trip to Kenya.

The Action Research Seminar ran from 1st to 3rd of July 2009 and was attended by approximately 40 people. Dr. Farren, Dr. Whitehead and Dr. Crotty made various presentations explaining the history, development and nature of Action Research and living educational theory. They illustrated the research methodology with many practical examples. They also encouraged the participants to identify an action research problem and

develop a plan to improve a situation using action research cycles. Approximately nine or ten groups were organized and established the details of an action research project to implement once the seminar finished. The facilitators worked with each of the groups to help them fine tune their projects. They managed to actively involve most of the participants in the seminar, which was an achievement given that we were from very different departments within the university.

People enjoyed the workshop and learnt a lot, although some did not fully understand the benefits of learning by doing which was the learning experience offered to them during the seminar. They learnt that action research is a legitimate research methodology, and developed a project to work on based on a real issue within the university. Unfortunately in most cases these projects were not implemented due to the existing demands within peoples' work. Neither did I or anyone else provide effective leadership to follow up the groups and assist in implementing the research projects. However, the lecturers and students doing the diplomas in educational management did learn to use Action Research for their work-based assignments. It became the required methodology for the research projects in these diplomas and in the Masters in Educational Management. Through the work-based assignments of our students in Educational Management, Action Research is being implemented in many schools around Kenya, contributing to improving material and other conditions which facilitate learning for students and teachers.



Photo 17 Before



Photo 18 After

The dumping site on a school compound before and after a teacher used Action Research to bring change to the school

Now Action Research is discussed more frequently within the research methodology courses which are offered in the different schools and faculties across Strathmore University. Although they may seem small, these are important developments as Action

Research is not well known in East Africa⁴², although it is more familiar to researchers in South Africa (Conolly and Pithouse-Morgan 2012).

My involvement in the Action Research Seminar, the Library Development Committee and the Academic Development Unit in its beginnings are evidence of my personal commitment to advancing excellence in teaching, research and scholarship at Strathmore University, in accordance with our mission statement.

My contributions to Staff Seminars

During the year in which I worked on the ADU committee, I made presentations at two academic staff workshops.

Staff Workshop: 12th November 2007

I prepared the programme in agreement with the ADU members for the workshop which took place on 12th November 2007 at Strathmore University. The overall theme was *Quality in Teaching and Learning*. In order to help our lecturers discover ways of enhancing quality in their practice, I gave a session on “Reflecting on teaching and learning”. I focused on the following steps regarding “How do we reflect on our teaching practice?”:

1. Remember / recall / record
2. Identify successes and failures
3. Think: ask WHY?
4. Seek a solution: something to improve on!
5. Implement in the classroom
6. Analyse the outcome

My foundation for discussing these points was my own experience of thinking about my work, along with simple common sense. I had not read any literature, nor had I come into contact with Action Research at this stage. I did not use any particular theory. I just wanted to help the lecturers to find a simple way of reflecting on their work, which would encourage them to start doing so with the aim of implementing the “culture of continuous

⁴² A conference on Action Research in Higher Education and Development in Africa was held at Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, Kakamega, (Kenya) in June 2012. This is the first time I have heard of a conference on Action Research in Kenya, since I came to live here in 2004.

improvement” which was included in Strathmore’s mission statement at that time (it was subsequently included as one of our institutional values in the form of “life-long learning”). Again based on my own experience, I explained four essential factors which can facilitate reflection on our teaching practice:

1. Experience: personal and of others
2. Reflection on experience / practice
3. Learn from that experience => identify possible improvements
4. Put them into practice

I wanted to highlight the importance of actually thinking about experience, our own or that of others, in order to learn from that experience and come up with practical ways of improving one’s practice. I was motivated by my growing awareness of the difficulty that many people have in learning from experience, because of not thinking about that experience and drawing a practical learning point from it. This problem may be linked to a common challenge which I have discovered here in Kenya: difficulty in linking theory and practice. As I explained in Chapter Six, the focus on memorization and repetition of theoretical concepts in the education system probably does not help. If a person understands something, but does not know how to put that knowledge into practice in real life, it is reasonable to assume that the same person will have difficulty in doing the opposite: looking at / reflecting on practical, daily life, to develop an idea that illustrates their understanding of that reality. It then becomes impossible to actually learn something from that experience which could be expressed in a concept and later used to identify the solution to a problem, or a new way of doing something in practice. This challenge makes self- motivated improvement in one’s work very difficult. The practical ideas and suggestions have to come from outside as one cannot develop them oneself. This contributes to reducing the sense of ownership regarding possible improvements, which may well appear to be impositions coming from above, or the relevant “authority”. Motivation for improving practice is then purely extrinsic, which can lead to ineffectiveness and little or no change.

The issue of human freedom lies at the root of these challenges. As I have discussed in Chapter Four, we are free by nature because we have intellect and will, through which we can know, love, want, make choices, etc. If I have not learnt to use my intellect to think

about practical experiences, learn from them and identify things in which I can improve, because I freely want to do a better job and be a better lecturer, for example, I can easily feel “forced” into trying to make changes in my teaching practice simply to please my Head of Department, get the person “off my back” or ensure an increase in my salary. Sooner or later I will feel “imposed upon” and my (extrinsic) motivation will wear off; it will be more likely that I look for another job elsewhere where my life is not “complicated” by these “demands” on my teaching practice.

On the other hand, it is possible to learn to think about one’s experience, identify points to improve on and freely choose to work at improving one’s practice. One then learns to use their freedom to develop themselves as persons, as they strive continuously to do better in their teaching. My aim in the seminar was to encourage other staff members to learn to think and choose to find ways of improving their practice. In that context I briefly discussed the use of teaching journals and teaching portfolios as tools which can facilitate this process. However, I did not go more deeply into the underlying motivation for freely wanting to improve one’s work and oneself, because I had not thought about it. I relied on the fact that as people who work at Strathmore, we were being called upon to actually live the university’s mission regarding the culture of continuous improvement in a real and practical manner. In fact the Strathmore mission statement was one of the first slides in my presentation. I tried to make the session interactive by encouraging my colleagues to discuss this statement, its’ meaning and possible implications. We also discussed factors that can influence the quality of teaching and learning, before focusing on ourselves as lecturers and ways of enhancing the quality of our work (research, training, peer review). As I focused on reflecting on our practice, I tried to get them to reason out the steps in this process, however, it became difficult for them when we reached the point of questioning *why* something had succeeded or failed. As time was moving on, I had to present the ideas as I had worked them out previously. Although I returned to the idea of continuous, life-long improvement, I did not present the attractiveness of this ideal in terms of how it can help us grow, develop and become better persons. This may have been because I had not yet reached that level of depth in my own thought processes and in my understanding of my colleagues’ possible type and level of motivation in their own teaching practice.

I do not recall receiving any feedback on my presentation, other than that Mrs. Omingo was pleased with it.

Staff Seminar: 23rd June 2008

On 23rd June 2008 another academic staff seminar was held to prepare for the new academic year, which would start in early July. Mrs. Omingo asked me to give a presentation on Self-reflection and Peer observation to help the lecturers appreciate how peer observation can facilitate the process of reflecting on one's teaching practice to improve. I was somewhat reluctant as I had already presented at the previous seminar, however I agreed when she insisted. I decided to make the session more interactive by inviting the lecturers to give their experiences on the points I brought up and to think about some things which we may take for granted, such as why people go to work each morning. I wanted to help them discover other reasons for working, beyond the pragmatic ones such as to make money, support a family, because someone has to do it, etc. These reasons are valid, but they keep work within the realm of a means to achieve another end. So I asked questions such as:

- Is it possible to work for other – less pragmatic – reasons?
- Could work have value / be good in itself?
- What would make work good in itself?

I suggested that they consider whether the following ideas could throw another light on the value of work in itself:

- Is the job noble / honourable: thief vs nurse?
- Does the job provide self-fulfilment: enjoyment!?
- Service to others through our work:

- all work involves other people

- through our work we all collaborate with each other

I was aiming to help them discover that by working well, and trying to improve in our work we can benefit personally, as well as serving others by providing for their needs, etc. Underlying this approach was my understanding, based on the spirit of Opus Dei, that work is good in itself as long as it is honest. As Escriva said:

To me, every job that is not opposed to the divine law is good and noble, and capable of being raised to the supernatural plane, that is, inserted into the constant flow of Love which defines the life of a child of God (Escriva 1981, *Friends of God*, n. 60).

I have discussed this point in Chapter Four (Rodriguez, Ocariz and Illanes 1994). This perspective on work is a core aspect of Strathmore's mission, vision and values.

To illustrate the idea graphically and to help the staff discover it for themselves, we watched and analysed a short management video called "Would I follow me?" By watching, reflecting on and discussing the video, I wanted them to learn how we can use observation to improve our practice. The video shows a manager in the workplace who makes a series of mistakes in handling his staff. Eventually he is exhausted and the staff feel that their talents are being wasted. We then see the manager observing or realizing the state that he, his staff and the company are in due to his mismanagement. He thinks about / reflects on what he has been doing and decides to change his approach. He becomes more positive, encouraging and empowering towards his staff, and the results for the company, the staff and himself soon become clear. He is more pleasant to people, the work environment is more peaceful, he maximizes on the knowledge and experience of staff, etc.

Before we watched the video, I invited the staff to look out for the following:

1. Would you agree that he improved his work?
2. Identify improvements.
3. Was this improvement beneficial?
4. Give specific examples.
5. What did he do to improve?

In the discussion, I asked the staff to give specific answers to these questions based on the video. As we went through the points, they were able to respond correctly and I highlighted how the effort to improve one's work is mutually beneficial to all those involved. I focused more on the last question to draw out some practical ideas about how, in practice, the manager went about improving:

- a. observation
- b. reflection
- c. action

We then discussed how we could also improve our teaching work by using these three steps in a cyclical manner:

1. Observe: collect data
2. Reflect: reflect on data to identify weaknesses and create possible solutions
3. Act: implement the possible solution

Then start again:

1. Observe: collect new data
2. Reflect: analyse improvements
3. Act: adjust action as necessary

In this way I introduced the concept of Action Research Cycles as a tool for improving our practice. Particularly in the first two steps we discussed how one can observe and reflect alone, and also with the help of a colleague to enhance the personal learning process. My aim was to bring in peer observation as a non-threatening tool to assist in one's development as a lecturer. I indicated clearly the main ideas which I had wanted them to reflect on and understand:

1. Why do I work?
2. The fact that work can be improved
3. The discovery that improving my work is beneficial
4. How to improve my work

Finally I presented the expected outcomes from the session:

1. To encourage improved lecturing by introducing a small change in what one does
2. The effort to improve should provide greater personal satisfaction or a sense of self-fulfilment at work (beneficial due to the personal growth involved)
3. We would also be offering a better service to our students (beneficial to them)

I know that many people enjoyed the session because they came to tell me so afterwards, however, I have no information regarding real change in particular lecturers.

As I prepared the presentation I knew that I wanted to go deeper than in the previous seminar, so the staff could understand that while the university was inviting us to improve our teaching practice, this was something which could be beneficial to us as persons, as well as to our students. I now realize that I was trying to foster a more intrinsic motivation in my listeners, so that they would be encouraged to implement the requirements not just to comply, but because it could contribute to their own sense of fulfillment and that of others. These developments in my approach and rationale over the two seminars are evidence of my innate desire to develop myself as a person, and to help my colleagues grow as persons. I agreed to make these presentations, and others which I was asked to give in later years, for this purpose and as a way of helping us all to live out the values expressed in Strathmore's mission statement.

At the same time, the development of my own ideas and forms of presentation in these seminars were the fruit of reflection on my own teaching experience at the university. Although by June 2008 I had a basic knowledge of action research due to some initial work on my doctorate, in reality the three steps which I presented to the lecturers were based on my own way of working to improve my teaching practice. I had "discovered" them and developed a systematic understanding of them in my own mind through on-going reflection on my work, and so was able to present them to the staff. I referred to Schön's *The Reflective Practitioner* (1983) to highlight the fact that outside Kenya other forms of improving one's practice have emerged.

In subsequent years I was asked to make presentations at staff seminars on topics such as the importance of living virtues in our working environment because the students see their lecturers as role models in many ways. In order for them to grow as persons and develop ethically, according to our mission and values, they need to see people who strive to live in an ethical and virtuous manner. I also made presentations on the contents of Philosophical Anthropology and Principles of Ethics to the staff so that they would be familiar with what their students are learning. This seminar was quite successful in that some staff, particularly Patrick Shabaya, with whom I had worked on the ADU committee, realized that the students know more than their lecturers in these matters. From then onwards he became very convinced about the importance of the core philosophy units in the Strathmore curriculum. He was very keen that the lecturers in other disciplines also receive

training in philosophical and ethical issues. This is a project which we have not implemented yet, although there is a programme currently under study which would facilitate this kind of training to our staff.

Staff Seminar: 22nd June 2009

On 22nd June 2009 I made a brief presentation at a staff seminar on procedures to assist in reflection on practice. In this session I used photos to help the lecturers distinguish between a teacher-centered approach to learning and a student-centered approach. They identified the difference very quickly.

I was then able to explain some of the requirements to be able to change one's approach as a lecturer. I mentioned the following:

1. The need to be open-minded and foster mental flexibility in oneself.
2. The need to be willing to change one's approach to lecturing.
3. The importance of being willing to learn how to be learner-centered in one's teaching strategy.
4. The need to be willing to reflect on what one is doing in the classroom.

I was trying to challenge my listeners, especially as some had heard me speak on many occasions, to simply launch out and start making real changes in their teaching. I insisted on the need to be willing to learn constantly and then presented some methods that can facilitate the reflection processes which can enhance one's teaching practice.

- Peer-review
- Mentoring
- Focused discussions with colleagues
- Teaching portfolios
- Paired observation and planning
- Video-taping lectures
- Journal keeping
- Personal reflection before, during and after class

We then discussed these ideas amongst ourselves, and I left it at that. I did not gather feedback on the impact of the session.

Staff Seminar: 9th November 2012

The most recent seminar at which Mrs. Omingo⁴³ asked me to make a presentation was in November 2012. As part of her doctoral research she had interviewed me on 3rd October 2012 about my teaching and learning experience since I came to Strathmore in 2004. She was interested in the impact which the Academic Staff Development Programme (ASDP) had on my practice. For various reasons, I have only done the first module when it was initially offered in June 2009. I explained that it had not really given me new ideas on teaching and learning methods, etc. because I was already creating my own ways of trying to teach more effectively. Some points that came up in the ASDP confirmed the effectiveness of what I was already doing, introduced me to some useful literature and gave me an understanding of global trends in higher education. I explained some of my learning based on reflection over the years, along with my discovery of the living educational theory approach and educational values which act as standards of judgement to evaluate one's practice. I gave practical examples, which I will present in Chapter Eight, regarding my educational values and how they motivate me to constantly try to improve my practice. As a consequence of this interview, she asked me to speak on Educational Values at an academic staff seminar on 9th November 2012.

I began my presentation by sharing some of my thoughts about possible approaches to lecturing such as:

- coming to teach, mark, and collect the cash;
- teaching with knowledge and enthusiasm moved by the desire to help one's students but with the focus on what I do to help them.

I explained that eight years of teaching at Strathmore has helped to change my personal approach to my teaching practice. I now try to focus on:

⁴³ Mrs. Omingo is now Head of Learning and Teaching Services, which substituted the Academic Development Unit in 2012.

1. The needs of my students as unique, individual human beings: with regard to my course and their broader needs such as family, social issues, talents, skills, study programme, etc.
2. I try to find out, discover and understand them as persons taking into account issues such as their varying socio-economic and cultural contexts, the complexities of life which they are learning to cope with, possible personal identity crisis, financial challenges, home issues, peer pressure and even the difficulties in using public transport.

As I work with them in the classroom, I try to keep in mind this broad array of possible background circumstances and other unknown challenges which they may be facing, as I know these can influence their learning process. I highlighted the recent death of a student whom I had taught the previous semester (July to October 2012), who had taken his own life just two days before the start of the exams. This made a great impact on me as I remembered him in class, and somehow I felt responsible because we had discussed issues around life, suffering, death and the possibility of life after death just two weeks previously. I could not be indifferent to such an event in the life of one of my students. When I investigated the situation of this student afterwards, I discovered that he had personal and family problems which possibly contributed to bringing about his death. However, the sad incident made a big impact on me. As a result, I spoke very passionately about the importance of being sensitive to our students, seeing them as unique and individual persons, and the fact that we cannot be indifferent to them.

Within the presentation I explained that as I seek to improve my teaching practice each semester I focus on facilitating the learning process for my students by trying to use a variety of teaching methodologies and fostering my personal interaction with my students. I then presented my educational values as the deeper motivation behind what I do:

- My Educational Values
 - Love: build good interpersonal relationships between myself and the students / amongst the students – based on fostering mutual trust
 - Freedom: mutual respect for our freedom and responsibility to each other
 - Foster personal growth in students and myself through the semester

I explained how I live these values, and illustrated my points with some photos showing how I:

- Foster good relationships with my students through helping them with group work
- Help them develop themselves by becoming actively involved in their own learning
- Give them opportunities to grow by learning in new ways

I gave examples of how I have encouraged my students to present their research work at the Strathmore Ethics Conference, do their Continuous Assessment Tests in pairs to learn more in the process, and make a contribution about their group work during a paper which I presented at a conference in Strathmore.

In my final remarks I pointed out that:

1. It helps to identify your motivating educational values;
2. Try to live them daily;
3. Hold yourself accountable by reflecting on how you are living them, make adjustments in one's practice, and try to assess the outcomes to see if there is an improvement;
4. Your teaching practice will improve and your students' learning experience will be enhanced!

I also explained that I seek feedback from students on my teaching methodologies and on myself as a lecturer and try to improve based on their suggestions. I did not show the staff some of the comments in the student feedback from my teaching in the July to October 2012 semester as I did not want to "blow my own trumpet" amongst my colleagues, however I include some comments in Appendix J as evidence.

At the end of my presentation I encouraged the lecturers to approach me later with their feedback as time had run out for questions. When the seminar was over various staff members came to comment on my presentation. Some had found it encouraging and stimulating. Others had doubts as to the real effectiveness of using what they felt was a

“soft” approach to dealing with my students and asked about how I handle students who are noisy, come late, use their mobile phones in class, etc. I explained how I try to listen to their issues, and encourage them to use their freedom to develop self-mastery precisely in those areas. I also encourage them to be truthful and honest, and explain that I trust them. If they tell me lies, they lose out, not me, as they develop a negative habit that can do them harm and prevent their development as persons, etc. Some lecturers were interested in this approach however I think that others were still a bit skeptical about its effectiveness. This experience confirmed my intuition that many of the lecturers at Strathmore use a more authoritarian style in managing their students, and that what I try to do in the classroom is still quite a novel approach here. At the same time, I know there are some lecturers who try to treat their students in a considerate manner. When I have discussed the issue with colleagues, they say that the lecturers themselves are influenced by the Kenyan education system which they have come through and so tend to take an authoritarian and disciplinarian approach to students. This confirms much of what I have explained in Chapter Six based on my readings and observations. In Chapter Eight I will focus on how I have developed my approach to teaching since I came to Kenya and offer evidence of my attempts and the students’ response.

I also asked Mrs. Omingo for feedback on the presentation. She sent a mail to all the lecturers on 12th November 2012 requesting their feedback. I received a mail almost immediately from Mumbi, a past student of mine who is now a Graduate Assistant at Strathmore (see Appendix K for both emails). She made two points which I found particularly interesting on reflection:

- The need for lecturers to be aware that each student is unique, with their own special needs: this is one of the points which I was trying to transmit in the presentation and which she clearly picked up.
- My efforts to “be real”, letting the students know who I am as a person: this was a new idea for me. I never realized that my efforts to reach out to my students in a loving manner, and fostering freedom, led me to actually make myself known to them as the person I am, who I am.

An Irish friend Muireann Ní Dhuigneáin, who was doing some consultancy work at Strathmore at the time, came to the staff seminar and heard my presentation. Afterwards she commented that she was impressed by my courage in speaking so openly about myself

and what I do. Based on her experience working at Strathmore, she was able to sense that much of what I had said could be quite revolutionary for those who heard me. She mentioned that I had clearly been deeply affected by the death of my student. She could see that I had spoken from the heart in my comments about the importance of seeing our students as unique, individual persons. When I reflected on her observations I realized that she was right, although while preparing the presentation, I hadn't grasped the full impact of that student's death on me.

In retrospect, as I thought more about her comments, Mumbi's feedback, what I had said at the seminar, and the passion with which I spoke, I realized that there is a core element which brings together my educational values of love, freedom and personal growth. That unifying factor is the human person, seen from two perspectives:

- Myself as a person who opens up and reaches out to others (this is reflected in both sets of comments)
- The person or persons to whom I am opening up, be they my students or other lecturers.

I discovered that my values had been simplified further through reflection on my teaching practice and the effort to live according to those values. I have become passionate about the person. My concern for my students' freedom, their growth etc, is rooted in my love for each as a unique and special person. I try to lovingly receive, accept each person as they are, as a gift of love and offer each person the gift of my own personal love, manifested in different ways according to their needs.

To confirm that I had understood Muireann's comments correctly, I sent her the above account of my presentation to staff on 9th November 2012 for feedback purposes. Her reply by e-mail may be seen in Appendix K.

In the various staff seminars, I have shared my own experiences although at times it was inconvenient for me. I wanted to help other lecturers freely choose to embrace Strathmore's mission by improving the quality of their teaching, being open to life-long learning and seeking to serve society through their work. I am convinced that Strathmore can only live out her mission and embody her values if each and every staff member is committed to doing so. We all need to work together in the same direction, under the

guidance of Management, to achieve our true “bottom line”: provision of an all round quality education, in the service of our society. We will live our motto “That all may be one” by fostering unity amongst everyone working or studying at Strathmore, while respecting our legitimate diversities.

I have also contributed to living Strathmore’s mission by my defence of the role of the Humanities within the University which I explain in Appendix L.

Summary

In this chapter I have shown how I try to live out Strathmore’s mission statement by:

- Enhancing awareness of student needs within my school;
- Contributing to academic and administrative matters with my suggestions and feedback;
- Action Research Seminar; Library Development Committee; Academic Development Unit;
- Facilitating academic staff development seminars;
- Fostering awareness of the role of the humanities within the University;

In these activities I am motivated by my implicit values: love for the person; respect for human freedom; fostering of personal growth. As I finalized this chapter, it became clear to me that the unifying factor in these values and underlying my activity has been my love for the person in himself or herself. This love for the person resonates with and reflects the impact of the Strathmore University mission in my life and practice.

In Chapter Eight I will show how my implicit values became explicit as they emerged through my reflection on my teaching practice at Strathmore University. My commitment to the University mission helped me to adjust my life and practice to the needs of my students.

Chapter Eight (A): My work with students at Strathmore University

In this chapter I will focus on my transformation process while working with my students at Strathmore University from October 2004 to October 2012. I will provide evidence of how the experience and understanding of family love, freedom and personal growth, which I brought with me from Rome, gradually became explicit educational values in my teaching practice and have become part of my way of being in the world, as I try to *create a spiration of love in freedom for personal growth*.

In this part I present the units I teach at Strathmore, my teaching practice from October 2004 to March 2006 and the first student feedback questionnaire which I designed and administered in March 2006. I show how these experiences led me to accept that I had to change my teaching approach and myself to be more effective in my practice.

The units I teach at Strathmore University

Since I came to work at Strathmore, I have always taught either Philosophical Anthropology (initially known as Ethics 1) or Principles of Ethics (initially known as Ethics 2) to fulltime undergraduate students doing Commerce, Information and Business Technology, Hospitality, Tourism, Business Sciences, Informatics and Telecommunications. Usually these students are in the first or second year of their degree studies when I teach them. My units form part of the core humanities courses which all our undergraduates take with the aim of broadening and deepening their understanding of the human person as I explained in Chapter Seven.

It is not enough to teach a man a specialty. Through it he may become a kind of useful machine, but not a harmoniously developed personality. It is essential that the student acquire an understanding of and a lively feeling for values. He must acquire a vivid sense of the beautiful and of the morally good (...) He must learn to understand the motives of human beings, their illusions and their sufferings, in order to acquire a proper relationship to individual fellow men and to the community (Einstein 1952).

This quotation from Einstein is included on the website of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (<http://www.strathmore.edu/iheds/einstein>) because it summarises what the School wants to achieve.

I was initially enthusiastic about teaching Philosophical Anthropology and Principles of Ethics, because I realized that the contents could help our students to discover who they are as persons, and want to act respecting their own dignity and that of others.

The main topics to be discussed in Philosophical Anthropology are:

1. Nature of Philosophical Anthropology
2. The Elements of Sensitive Life
3. Human intelligence
4. The dynamics of the will
5. Human affectivity
6. Human sexuality
7. Human freedom
8. The person and human dignity
9. The destiny of the person

As may be seen, the course presents the students with the key elements to understand who we are as persons, our intrinsic make-up, and our innate dignity, as well as opening up horizons regarding the purpose of our lives. The unit clarifies the meaning of our personal being in the world. It contributes to the “harmoniously developed personality”, and the capacity “to understand the motives of human beings, their illusions and their sufferings, in order to acquire a proper relationship to individual fellow men and to the community” as described by Einstein (1952). I find the unit very appealing as it relates to my love for people, their freedom and who they can become depending on how they use their freedom to develop themselves. I became explicitly aware of these values through my doctoral enquiry.

The main topics to be discussed in Principles of Ethics are:

1. The Nature of Principles of Ethics
2. How does Ethics relate to: the human person, professional knowledge and practice?
3. Recalling Philosophical Anthropology
4. Human happiness
5. The nature of voluntary acts and self-determination
6. The parameters of the moral order (Human nature; Natural law; Right reason)
7. The moral conscience
8. Towards the moral evaluation of free acts
9. Moral evaluation of simple actions (Object; End; Circumstances)

10. Moral evaluation of complex actions
11. The good life: Human activity and the virtues
12. The nature and acquisition of moral virtues: habits of choice

Principles of Ethics discusses our personal actions, how we should act to be true to ourselves, and so respect ourselves and others as persons. It appeals to me because it helps students to distinguish good acts which if freely chosen can help a person develop themselves and grow in good habits (virtues), from bad acts which could lead to the fostering of bad habits (vices). It also opens their horizons to understand that the reference point for good or bad acts is not what society thinks, but rather our own nature as persons. Ethics helps to foster “an understanding of and a lively feeling for values” as well as acquiring “a vivid sense of the beautiful and of the morally good”, as suggested by Einstein (1952). These contents also relate to my personal educational values and highlight the impact which the use of our freedom can have on our growth as persons, although I only became explicitly aware of this in 2010.

The two units are closely related as Philosophical Anthropology deals with our personal being, who we are, while Principles of Ethics deals with our personal actions, how we should act to be true to ourselves, and so respect ourselves as persons. At Strathmore, Philosophical Anthropology is a prerequisite unit for doing Principles of Ethics as it provides the necessary foundations regarding philosophy of the person. I always understood this connection and would have preferred to teach the two units, one after the other, to the same group of students. I was sure that this would provide greater continuity for the students in terms of the teaching approach. It would also be an opportunity to see how effectively I could help them to build on their learning in the previous unit which we had worked on together. However I have rarely had this opportunity due to a constant increase in the number of students which required me to teach one unit or the other depending on administrative needs.

When I reflected on the philosophy studies which had the greatest impact on me while I was in Rome (Chapter Four), I realized that they were related to these two units: human freedom (Frankl; St Josemaria); human affectivity (Quiroga); and being and becoming in Aquinas as the metaphysical basis for the development of the virtues. Evidently these

themes have resonated with me strongly from early on in my intellectual development, perhaps because they provided rational explanations for my personal experience of love, freedom and the virtues in my parents' home and in the family of Opus Dei.

My first three semesters of teaching at Strathmore

First Semester: October 2004 – March 2005

As I mentioned in Chapter Four, I had taught in Rome for ten years before coming to Kenya. I had learnt to teach by teaching, trying to avoid what I perceived as the “errors” in methodology which I had experienced personally as a student, and slowly trying to move beyond a traditional lecturing approach. My main aims were:

- ✓ Make the contents interesting;
- ✓ Relate the contents to real life by drawing out their practical implications;
- ✓ Try to make my students enjoy their learning experience;

During my first semester at Strathmore I tried to bring these values into my practice. However, I soon began to have the impression that I was not very successful. My intuition was based on the fact that my students were not responsive and participated very little in class. I continued working through a tough semester in which I was preparing notes without much material available in English, teaching almost simultaneously and trying to adjust to the system of three Continuous Assessment Tests (CATs) per semester, as required by the Ministry of Education. This meant that each month I had to prepare a test paper for 174 students, mark each set and return it to the students within two weeks.

As may be seen in Appendix M, the mean exam grades for my first semester are not available. The only evidence is the official feedback from the group of Business and Information Technology students, based on a questionnaire which was administered by the Faculty of Information Technology⁴⁴. I was disappointed by the assessment as I had received an overall average of 3.56 over 5. I had faced challenges in adjusting to the new

⁴⁴ See the summary in Appendix M. The Commerce students were not given the feedback form to fill in that semester.

circumstances during my first semester at Strathmore, yet I felt that I had tried to overcome them. In my opinion, this rating did not reflect much success regarding my teaching values.

My lowest rating was for *Punctuality in setting, marking and returning Continuous Assessment Tests (CATs) / Assignments* (3.10). This did not surprise me because I was not accustomed to setting and marking the required monthly test. It was also the first time that I was teaching a total of 174 students, and it had taken me a long time to mark and return this work to the students. However, I had been rated highest for a category called *Has right attitude towards students* (3.85). This sounds somewhat ambiguous but it reflects how students feel about the lecturer and his or her rapport with them. Although it was not a high score, I was pleased that the best rating was in this category because it reflected that my students had noticed my effort to reach out to them.

Knowing that I would probably be disappointed, and also knowing the previous experiences in the student assessment of Principles of Ethics as taught by previous lecturers my Head of Department, Margaret Roche, wrote on the form in March 2005 that the assessment was good for an Ethics subject, as the students usually have reservations about Ethics.

I appreciated her encouragement, but I wanted to get better assessments in the future as I realised that they reflected the students' impressions of my performance as a teacher, and so could provide me with information beyond my own perception of my work.

Second Semester: July – October 2005

During my second semester at Strathmore I taught Principles of Ethics again to three groups of 2nd year Commerce and Business and Information Technology students (see Appendix M). I did not make radical changes in my teaching methods although I still tried to reach out to my students.

The students performed well in the final exam (Appendix M), which shows their effort to prepare and do well in the exam. Their feedback reflects an improvement in terms of student assessment of myself as the lecturer. The higher rating in specific and overall assessments from the three groups (Appendix M) indicates that I was now more familiar with the contents of Principles of Ethics. They also reflect better management of the course and improved delivery on my part. Along with improved punctuality and setting clear

objectives for the course, the three groups of students also concurred on my expertise in the knowledge of the subject matter and a good attitude towards them.

Regarding the values which interested me:

- ✓ Make the contents interesting;
- ✓ Relate the contents to real life by drawing out their practical implications;
- ✓ Try to make my students enjoy their learning experience;

It is hard to know how I was doing as the official feedback questionnaire dealt with technical issues, and did not measure these personal concerns. In November 2005 I presented my first report to the Dean as I explained in Chapter Seven, in which I reflected on my challenges in engaging the students and helping them to follow the philosophical reasoning process. I discussed their reactions to certain ethical issues which reflected the views of Kenyan society at the time but which did not capture the dignity of the human person. I also mentioned my efforts to connect theory with real life issues in class discussions.

Third Semester: November 2005 – March 2006

During my third semester at Strathmore I taught Philosophical Anthropology for the first time (Appendix M). As the unit was new to me I was still becoming familiar with its contents as I taught. I was also teaching first year students for the first time. I discovered that they did not have foundations in philosophy as they had only done an introductory course to Ethics, which did not prepare them sufficiently for philosophical reasoning. I realized that, in spite of the challenges which I had in teaching Principles of Ethics to second year students, at least they had already done Philosophical Anthropology, and so had some basis in the type of reasoning used. This time I had to introduce the students into philosophical reasoning and provide solid foundations through Philosophical Anthropology for their later studies in Principles of Ethics.

The overall low mean grade in the exam for both groups may have been due to my inexperience in teaching Philosophical Anthropology at the time (Appendix M). Regarding the student assessment, that semester the Commerce students were not given the form to provide feedback. Only the Business and Information Technology students filled in the questionnaire. Their assessment shows a drop in students' perceptions of my performance.

It is still better than my first student assessment, but perhaps my lack of expertise and familiarity with the contents of Philosophical Anthropology was noticeable (3.85).

Punctuality, clear course objectives and logical, orderly presentation of the contents were relatively alright. My attitude towards students was fairly acceptable (4.11). However, the overall average (4.01) is much lower than the assessments of the previous semester.

This assessment was carried out in January 2006, before I actually finished the unit. The students had not yet done the exam, but it led me to think that I was still not achieving my proposed teaching aims:

- ✓ Make the contents interesting;
- ✓ Relate the contents to real life by drawing out their practical implications;
- ✓ Try to make my students enjoy their learning experience;

At this point I was becoming concerned about the effectiveness of my work. On reflection, I realised that teaching the contents of Principles of Ethics and Philosophical Anthropology mainly using my traditional lecturing style was not enough for these units to have an impact on, and to help my students understand themselves as persons, the importance of their free actions in determining their own lives, etc. These were outcomes that mattered to me as their lecturer because I wanted to help them as persons. At the same time I found it hard to accept that my teaching was apparently ineffective, as in Rome I did not have difficulty in communicating with my students and opening up horizons for their lives through my practice. I experienced inner resistance at the thought of having to make changes in the way I worked with my students in Kenya. Maybe I was tacitly aware that it meant having to change myself, to adjust to the new situation in which I found myself. I remember the struggle within myself as I thought about these issues after having a discussion with my Dean. I can now say that I was experiencing myself and my practice as a “living contradiction” (Whitehead 1989; Whitehead and McNiff 2006, p. 25-26) at that time. For my analysis of the contrast between my teaching circumstances in Rome and those at Strathmore see Appendix N.

The March 2006 Questionnaire

I soon realized that if I wanted to help my students through my teaching practice, I needed to try to make some changes in myself and my way of doing things. After getting more

accustomed to the idea of taking on this challenge, I decided to do so. My choice was based on my strong desire to be effective in helping my students to benefit from the units I was teaching. It was a manifestation of my implicit values, although at the time I was not aware of them:

- ✓ my love for my students as persons
- ✓ my own freedom in choosing to change
- ✓ my openness to developing myself as well as possibly helping my students to grow as persons

I decided to find out directly from my Philosophical Anthropology students before we finished the unit what were the problems with my teaching practice. This was a difficult decision as I feared the possible outcome. In early March 2006 I designed the first feedback questionnaire which I had ever given to my students in all my years of teaching. This is evidence of my willingness to find out how I could improve my practice for the sake of my students.

I designed different questions to those which the students usually found on the official feedback form from the Faculties. They were open ended, requiring the students to think out their answers, not simply give a score for an item. I wanted to collect information from them about their learning in Philosophical Anthropology, broadly following my teaching aims. I also wanted them to give specific feedback on some issues which were partly included in the official questionnaires, as well as on anything else they may wish to bring up. As in the case of the faculty questionnaires, the students were to respond anonymously so they could say what they really thought, without fear of being victimized by me afterwards⁴⁵.

I administered the questionnaire to my Philosophical Anthropology students in early March 2006, just before we finished the unit (see Appendix O). From a total of 193 students, 124 replied. In general terms 98 responses were positive, reflected student learning and offered genuine suggestions for improvement. 26 responses were generally

⁴⁵ Through my research into the Kenyan education system I discovered that fear of victimization by the teacher is quite strong in many university students in first or second year, due to their experiences in high school.

negative, although they did include valid suggestions for improvement. This is a summary of the most repeated suggestions from all 124 responses.

General Outcomes of Student Questionnaire March 2006 (suggestions)	
Marking too strict	21
Be more interactive/ involve students more	20
Use audio visual aids (other than blackboard)	13
Make it more interesting	10
Use more humour / be more lively	9

Table 1 Outcomes March 2006 Questionnaire

As I reviewed the comments, there were various issues which emerged as being important to the students and which I could do something about. These suggestions could be grouped under two headings:

What I could do in class: teaching methods, etc.	What I could do about myself*
Adjust my marking system	Establish better relations with students
Use a speaker/mike	Be more relaxed
Use audiovisuals	Make students comfortable in class
Explain complex, technical terms better	
Make classes more interactive	
Explain the relevance of / why study the philosophy units	*These are literal comments from some students

Table 2 Suggestions from students

I also analysed the replies in terms of the key issues I wanted feedback on (Appendix O):

- ✓ Make learning interesting / enjoyable
- ✓ Get students thinking
- ✓ Apply theory to real life

When I reflected back on the questions I had asked and the key issues I used to analyse the replies, I discovered that there was a slight evolution in the values motivating my practice.

	My values in October 2004 Used in March 2006 Questionnaire	My values in March 2006 Used in analysis of March 2006 Questionnaire
1.	Make the contents interesting	Make learning interesting and enjoyable <i>Previous Values 1 and 3 are combined</i>
2.	Relate the contents to real life by drawing out their practical implications	Get my students thinking <i>New value</i>
3.	Try to make my students enjoy their learning experience	Help my student to apply philosophical theory to real life <i>Reformulation of previous Value 2</i>

Table 3 My living values 2004 – 2006

This small evolution indicates a slight change of focus from myself as proactive lecturer (October 2004), to my concern as a lecturer to facilitate my students' learning (March 2006). In the March 2006 questionnaire I was trying to assess the nature and depth of their learning. The slight change in values shown in how I analysed the feedback indicates that I had already sensed that the students were not learning to think or apply their knowledge to real life to the extent that I would have liked. This intuition was confirmed by my analysis (Appendix O). Once again I experienced myself as a "living contradiction" in that I felt I was not living my values effectively.

When I look back at the individual forms the replies to the questionnaire are generally positive. However the overall feedback was a shock to me, although I already had an intuition that the students had “problems” with my teaching practice. Perhaps I focused on the more negative feedback to discover how I could improve. I found it hard to accept that there actually were things which I could do better. Personally, I always find it hard to be told things that I could improve on by others; I prefer to discover these things for myself. This is probably due to my temperament and my pride. It also explains why I feared seeking my students’ feedback.

However, I have tried to change myself over the years to be more open to receiving help from other people and so I have continued asking my students for their feedback. I need to hear their voices to adjust my practice to their needs. I have brought their voices into my dissertation and I will continue to do so. This is evidence of their response to my teaching and of my willingness to change myself as a person for the sake of my students. My quest for feedback reflects my respect for my students as persons and my respect for myself as a person who can continue to grow in many ways.

The March 2006 questionnaire confirmed my intuition that although the contents of Philosophical Anthropology and Principles of Ethics resonated with me and my implicit values, just teaching the contents in a traditional manner was not enough to help my students discover the wealth contained in the units. I accepted the fact that I had to change the way I taught which would also help to transform me as a person through self-determination (Debeljuh 2006, pp. 124-128). The way a person acts manifests their way of being. At the same time, this action can also determine who the person becomes by developing their personal way of being.

Summary

In Chapter Eight (A) I have explained the units I teach at Strathmore, my teaching practice from October 2004 to March 2006 and the first student feedback questionnaire which I designed and administered in March 2006. I have shown how these experiences led me to accept that I had to change my teaching approach and myself to be more effective in my practice. In Chapter Eight (B) I will illustrate how I have transformed my teaching and learning practice using a variety of projects and other techniques.

Chapter Eight (B): My work with students at Strathmore University

The following chart summarises how I will cover the time period from March 2006 to February 2013.

Time Period	Focus of my T and L practice	Comment
July 2006 – October 2007	Various practical activities with little unity	I will not discuss these
November 2007 – October 2010	Developmental assignments used as forms of assessment	I will discuss four of these projects in Part II
November 2010 – June 2011	A semester free from teaching to work on my doctoral research	
July 2011 – February 2013	Group assignments; class discussion; small group discussions in class	I will discuss how I used these in Part III

Table 4 Overview of my work from 2006 to 2013

In this part of Chapter Eight I will illustrate how I have transformed my teaching and learning practice using diverse forms of assessment which I designed for my students.

November 2007 – October 2010

This phase began in the context of the post-electoral violence which Kenya experienced from January to March 2008. I was moved to create a practical project for my students to assist them in coming to terms with the situation in the country. As I discovered the effectiveness of the project, I began developing different ways of helping my students apply the theory I was teaching to their own lives, as I will illustrate with three other projects.

Project One: Unity in diversity [November 2007 – March 2008]⁴⁶

In November 2007 I began teaching Philosophical Anthropology to two groups of first year Commerce students who were starting their second semester at Strathmore University.

⁴⁶ In Appendix Z I discuss the concept of “Unity in Diversity” from the perspective of recent theological and social discussion on the matter.

One group was made up of 144 students while the other had 89 students. I soon noticed that in both groups the students were not interacting much among themselves in class and tended to sit with the same people in “cliques”. There also seemed to be a slight sense of antagonism among the students in the larger group, in spite of the fact that the class representative was a friendly, dynamic young man with a lot of charisma, who tried hard to inspire his classmates. He subsequently became the Chairman of the first Student Council at Strathmore.

When I tried to encourage the students to discuss the contents of the unit in class, the response was poor. I had the impression that the students feared each other and the consequences of making a mistake in public. I was concerned about the somewhat negative atmosphere in both groups of students, as I felt that it was detrimental to the learning process. In retrospect, I realize that along with the usual challenges the students may have been experiencing in their first year at University, they may also have been affected by the gradual increase in tension in the country. This built up along ethnic lines from August to December 2007 due to political campaigning in preparation for the general election which was held on 27th December 2007.

Due to delays and confusion in releasing the final results, there was an outbreak of post-electoral violence on 30th December 2007 in parts of Nairobi and other areas of the country, which lasted until 28th February 2008. The Strathmore reopened in mid-January 2008, later than planned for security reasons and had to close again until the end of January, before reopening definitively.

Given the situation in the country I was concerned about the state that my students would be in when they returned to class, especially because of the poor rapport they had prior to the elections. On their first day back in my class, 22nd January 2008, although only about half the students had returned, I asked them to write something brief about their experiences during the post-electoral violence. The exercise was anonymous out of respect for what they may wish to write. My idea was to get a sense of the diverse circumstances which they may have been in, so that I could take this into account in my teaching during the following weeks. It also gave them the opportunity to express what they had experienced and for some, it functioned as an outlet for their emotions. I was moved to do this by my concern (love) for my students and the desire to be able to teach in a way which

would help them, given the circumstances. When I read their notes I realized that the experiences had been very diverse (see Appendix P). Some had only been prevented from leaving their homes due to the curfew which lasted a few days for security reasons, others had been frightened by violence close to their homes, some had lost relatives in the violence and a number had to flee from their homes to save their lives.

The notes are quite strong in terms of language and the experiences narrated. Fortunately the exercise of writing these experiences helped to reduce the tension among the students in class. I also tried to adopt a very friendly, open approach to my students and encouraged them to do likewise. When dealing with the topic on Human Dignity, we discussed the value of diversity and the possibility of harmony and unity among different peoples.

I explained the following key points:

- Unity: love and respect for all human beings as we share the same basic nature
- Diversity: respect for and appreciation of human diversity
 - Diversity is a resource
 - Diversity is our wealth
- Learn to value our diversity and conserve it by harmonizing our differences
- Create unity our diversity

Initially my plan for the unit had been to give the students three sit-in Continuous Assessment Tests (CATs) as part of their coursework. However, given the circumstances around the post-electoral violence and the fact that we had discussed human dignity in this context, I changed my plan. I designed a take-home CAT for the third test which gave my students the opportunity to interact with people who came from a different background to their own. They were to do something for them or with them to foster unity in diversity and to help develop an awareness that our diversity is mutually enriching. The students submitted a report on their experience, explaining what they had learned through it. Very soon this assignment became known as the *Unity in Diversity* project.

When I read the reports, I was very impressed by the variety of initiatives which the students had thought up, along with their willingness to take the challenge of reaching out to people who were different to themselves in a time of difficulty and certain risk. In most cases, their reflections on their experience were also profound and well thought out. Most

highlighted that they had discovered that it is possible to foster unity within diversity and that often this diversity can be a source of mutual enrichment and strength. Their work was so good that I chose ten papers and asked the students permission to publish them on the Strathmore University website. I wanted to showcase what students can do to help improve a difficult situation by trying to foster unity and harmony when diversity becomes a challenge.

The story of Gladys and her Neighbour which I include in Appendix P along with my commentary on her work, is evidence of what a first year student can achieve. Many other narratives reflect similar initiative, enthusiasm to reach out to others, and effective learning based on this practical exercise.

The *Unity in Diversity* project was not the fruit of literature reviews on how to handle similar situations. I created it in the middle of the semester in response to the needs of my students. I reflected on how to help them apply their knowledge of Philosophical Anthropology in a way that could facilitate them in overcoming the challenges created by the post-electoral violence and focus positively on contributing to enhancing unity within our national diversity. The genesis of the project manifests my concern for my students as persons and their needs at that point in time.

As I reflect back on this experience, I see that my approach to teaching was developing in a deeper manner than I was aware of at the time. Although I didn't express it in this way then, my interest in my students was becoming more personal. I began to see each of them as a unique individual with a lot of potential, which I could try to harness in the teaching and learning process to help them grow as persons. The *Unity in Diversity* project brought home to me the effectiveness of learning by doing, which as I have shown in Chapters Three, Four and Seven, has been a constant personal experience in my own life. I also discovered that I could facilitate my students' learning by helping them to reflect on their experience. I began to become aware of the potential for transformative learning hidden in facilitating the personal development of my students through practical projects and personal reflection.

It seems that I was living my implicit educational values through this project:

- ✓ Get my students thinking;

- ✓ Help them to apply philosophical theory to real life;
- ✓ Possibly, made learning interesting and enjoyable through the *Unity in Diversity* project.

Project Two: The first Personal Development Project [July to October 2008]

In July 2008 when the students returned to Strathmore after the annual break, the Commerce students whom I had taught the previous semester were now in second year and had been divided into three groups instead of two. I had been assigned to teach Principles of Ethics to two of these groups: Group A (85 students) and Group C (71 students). This was one of the rare occasions on which I had the same group of students twice. I planned the course in detail to try to maximize their learning in various ways.

For the first time I included a detailed explanation of the Course Delivery Methodology in the Course Outline which I distributed on the first day. It highlights my move towards a more learner centered approach to teaching, based on my discovery during the previous semester that I could find ways of getting the students more actively involved in their own learning, motivated by my desire to help them as persons. It indicates the main elements I had planned for the teaching and learning experience that semester.

One of the key features was the Personal Development Project (PDP) which I had designed to help my students learn Principles of Ethics more effectively by being directly involved in changing themselves through the learning process. I created this project through reflection on what could help my students to achieve this goal. I did not read any literature on the topic but rather, I used my imagination and my knowledge of my students based on the *Unity and Diversity* project to launch them out to another challenge.

The students were required to set a personal goal to achieve by the end of the semester in order to learn to use their freedom to develop themselves. They were to keep a journal which was updated weekly describing specific attempts to develop towards their goal. They were required to reflect on their successes, failures, etc., to learn from them and adapt their strategy to move towards their goal more effectively. Half way through the semester they handed in their journals so that I could evaluate their efforts, and provide encouragement and advice on how to attain their chosen goals. They then continued with

the exercise and handed in a report summarizing their efforts and evaluating themselves at the end of the semester.

In Appendix Q I present the journal entries of one student along with my comments. These are evidence of the students' efforts to identify goals for themselves and to work towards them on a weekly basis, while also reflecting on and learning from their successes and failures. They also show my personal effort to respond to each student in an appropriate and encouraging manner, while also asking more of them where possible and necessary.

By the end of the semester it was clear that some students had taken the Personal Development Project as a genuine challenge and set themselves targets such as growing in humility, being more friendly and open to others, getting up on time in the morning, overcoming peer pressure to follow a study plan, etc. They held themselves accountable in their efforts through their journals, describing their successes, failures and learning based on reflection on these experiences. Some developed themselves quite a lot and were enthused to continue with their efforts once the unit was finished. At the same time, some students had not taken the project so seriously or had chosen easier goals that were not personally transforming e.g. read a certain number of inspirational books per week, learn to speak Japanese or to play the guitar, etc.

During the two semesters in which I taught these students we had developed a good relationship and were friends. However, I found that in the second semester they did not cooperate much when I tried to implement the different learning methods which I have designed, especially those which required them to read before class. I realized during the second semester that their grasp of concepts was poor and very general. As a result, I became more demanding and precise in the questions which I set in the Continuous Assessment Tests. I felt strongly that their learning could improve and that our good relationship was not a reason to justify poor performance on their part or excessively lenient marking on my part.

The experience with this group of students was a real lesson for me as I discovered that along with fostering good educational relationships with my students, I still needed to help them to acquire new concepts and learn in an in depth manner. I owed this to them if I was genuinely interested in their all round development as persons.

If I had been asked about my educational values at this time I would have said they were:

- ✓ Make learning interesting and enjoyable
- ✓ Get my students thinking
- ✓ Help my students to apply philosophical theory to real life

In fact, most of the planning I put into the two units which I taught these students was around helping them to learn to think, apply philosophical knowledge to life and to a certain extent, make their learning interesting and enjoyable. These values were reflected in my teaching methods and the forms of assessment which I designed in both units. However, the previous paragraphs point to a certain evolution in my values through my interaction with these students. I was now interested in:

- ✓ Point 1: Building positive educational relationships with my students to enhance learning
- ✓ Point 2: Helping my students to develop themselves as persons

Point 1 is based on my experience with these students during their first year while studying Philosophical Anthropology, when the post-electoral violence broke out. This context which created tension in the classroom, made me realize how important it was to foster positive, friendly, open relations amongst everyone in the classroom. And so I tried harder to build these relationships with and amongst my students. I also realized that it has an impact beyond extreme situations such as the post-electoral violence, and so I continued with this approach during the second semester, when teaching Principles of Ethics to these students.

Point 2: The *Unity in Diversity* project helped me to discover that I really could help my students to develop themselves as persons through my teaching practice. At the same time by October 2008, I had taught Philosophical Anthropology three times and Principles of Ethics five times, always to at least two groups of students in each semester. I had begun to realize the practical impact which the contents of the units could have on my students. I now appreciated more deeply the importance of helping them to know and understand themselves and others as persons through Philosophical Anthropology. I had also realized that I could help them discover how to use their freedom to develop themselves and become the persons they would like to be through Principles of Ethics.

It was only in February 2009 that I was able to formulate this evolution in my educational values as I show in the table below, although this development actually influenced my teaching practice from November 2008 onwards.

Evolution in my educational values: 2004 to 2009		
	October 2004 – November 2008	November 2008 – February / October 2009
1.	Make learning interesting/enjoyable	Create a conducive learning environment
2.	Get students thinking	Intellectual – practical change in students
3.	Apply theory to life	Personal – behavioural change in students

Table 5 My educational values in evolution 2008 – 2009

Project Three: The Self-Awareness Project [November 2008 to March 2009]

From November 2008 to February 2009 I taught Philosophical Anthropology to two groups of first year students who were starting their second semester at Strathmore University. Group A had 93 Commerce students and 19 Hospitality and Tourism Management students, totaling 112, while Group B had 82 Commerce students. I was challenged as to how to create a practical learning assignment for Philosophical Anthropology as I did not want to repeat the *Unity in Diversity* project.

I began teaching the unit in early November 2008. A few weeks later, I attended a Conference on the Philosophy of Education which was held at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (Nairobi) from 20th – 21st November 2008⁴⁷. The two day conference was a source of inspiration for me as I listened to and reflected on the various presentations. Papers on the first day helped me to reflect on the nature of education and philosophy, the mystery of the human person, issues around moving from theory to practice to bring about real change in students through education, the challenges in education today both globally and in the local context, etc. Another paper addressed relevant and appropriate pedagogies considering the needs of our students. The speaker referred to issues which I had never heard mentioned outside Strathmore University: participatory and interactive learning, the need for feedback to students to consolidate learning, sensitivity to popular culture, different learning styles in students, etc. A few presenters spoke of the need for character education to overcome the tendency of Kenyan students to study for grades and to be able to make money after university.

⁴⁷ The proceedings of this conference have not been published.

I found a paper by M. Schepers on *Intellectual Conversion: the basic project in tertiary education*, to be the most inspiring and practical. The presenter explained “intellectual conversion” as discovering what it means to know in a fully human way. He illustrated how he makes this relevant and accessible to young people in his teaching practice. Starting from what they already know or believe, one can encourage students to enquire into what this actually involves. He provides his students with the opportunity to have a conscious experience of their human interiority, to help them discover what we do when we know. The key instrument in the process was the use of a personal journal where students recorded instances of the operation of their human consciousness. For example, an experience involving reflection, making a judgement, an insight or an intuition. He described how this helped students to become aware of the dynamics of the knowing process through the conscious experience of their own interiority. I found the idea fascinating and as I listened I began to adapt it to my own needs, imagining ways in which I could use a similar type of journal to help my students apply the theoretical concepts involved in Philosophical Anthropology to themselves.

Afterwards I asked Dr. Schepers about how far he brings the journaling process, and links it to his course contents. He explained that he only uses it with students for a few weeks, at the start of a course on Religion and Responsibility, to make them more aware of their thinking processes, without going further into philosophical explanations of the human knowing process. As I had already used journals for the Personal Development Project the previous semester, I thought that I could use them again along the lines described by Dr. Schepers. I wanted to spread the project throughout the semester, to help my students apply Philosophical Anthropology to real life by developing their own self-awareness. For the sake of intellectual honesty I mentioned my plan to him very briefly, so that he would know that I wanted to adopt his idea. He didn’t have a problem with this. I returned home quite excited to have found a clue to enhancing the teaching and learning process for my Philosophical Anthropology students. As we were still at the start of the semester, I had time to develop the idea properly and explain it to my students in class so they could begin to implement the assignment as part of their coursework.

I called this new project the Self-Awareness Project (SAP). The aim of the SAP was to help students apply the concepts in Philosophical Anthropology to real life, by identifying in themselves the features of the human person which we were dealing with in class. They

were to write a weekly entry in an on-line journal describing something which had happened to them or someone else that week. They then had to identify in their narrative examples of some features of the human person, write down and define the corresponding theoretical concept. They then had to explain how the chosen concept/s related to the experience they had described and could help to understand it more deeply. I hoped that this would enable them to become more aware of what goes on in their inner world, distinguish the inner source of different kinds of acts and so understand themselves and other people more and better.

Initially they had some difficulty in following the instructions and were confused about what they were being asked to do. I explained a couple of times in class and after showing some samples, most students could write up their entries well (see a sample in Appendix R). To complete the learning process, I asked them to submit a final report on the SAP at the end of the semester, including their own evaluation of the project. See some questions and the students' replies in Appendix R.

The semester was very intensive as it took a lot of time and energy on my part to keep up with marking and commenting on the student journal entries so they could learn and improve their next entry. I was particularly interested in discovering whether the students had actually changed in any way through the project. The evaluation they made of the SAP in their final report, along with the feedback I requested at the end of the semester (see Appendix R), indicate that the majority of students had developed their understanding of the philosophical concepts (change at the intellectual level), as well as changing their personal behavior to a certain extent through applying their theoretical learning to their daily lives. I was able to discern these transformations while reading, commenting on and grading their journal entries. They also indicated that my efforts to build positive educational relationships were effective. The feedback points to the evolution in my educational values which was actually occurring and which I was able to formulate in February 2009 as follows⁴⁸:

⁴⁸ This discovery was facilitated by a presentation I made to the lecturers of IHEDS in February 2009 on the request of the Dean to explain how I was using on-line journals in the SAP.

Evolution in my educational values: 2004 to 2009		
	October 2004 – November 2008	November 2008 – February (October) 2009
1.	Make learning interesting/enjoyable	Create a conducive learning environment
2.	Get students thinking	Intellectual – practical change in students
3.	Apply theory to life	Personal – behavioural change in students

Table 6 My living values in transition

Interlude: June 2009 – March 2010

In early June of 2009 the Academic Development Unit at Strathmore University ran the first Academic Staff Development Programme (ASDP) for all lecturers, facilitated by an expert from York St. John's University, York. This was a wonderful experience and an opportunity to learn about new trends in teaching and learning, share ideas with my colleagues and come into contact with useful bibliography. It was also a stimulus to continue trying to improve my teaching practice. The literature which I looked into after the seminar was:

1. Moon, J. 2000. *Reflection in Learning and Professional Development. Theory and Practice*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.

I found this text interesting because I had never read anything on reflection as a method for professional development, and yet I had been using it to improve my teaching practice since I began teaching in Rome, and especially since I started lecturing at Strathmore in 2004. I had also started using it as a tool to help my students improve their learning processes. Moon confirmed the validity of what I was already doing. However, as I had developed my own style and way of reflection I did not actually take any specific ideas from this text.

2. Biggs, J. 2007. *Teaching for Quality Learning at University; what the Student Does*. 3rd ed. New York: Open University Press.

I found this text interesting as it was the first book I read on teaching and learning. It confirmed the discovery I had made regarding the importance of getting students actively involved in their learning process. Again, as I was already developing my own ways of doing this I did not take up the practical examples given other than the concept of constructive alignment.

After the ASDP, as I designed my course outline in the following semesters I converted the course objectives into intended learning outcomes. Biggs' (2007) concept of constructive alignment was helpful in this. I found it useful for maintaining focus and continuity as I tried to align the learning outcomes with the teaching and learning activities (for the classroom and in the coursework) and the systems of assessment and feedback. I also used the educational values which I was trying to implement in my teaching practice at the time as the unifying element in the process of constructive alignment. I have tried to illustrate the idea as follows:

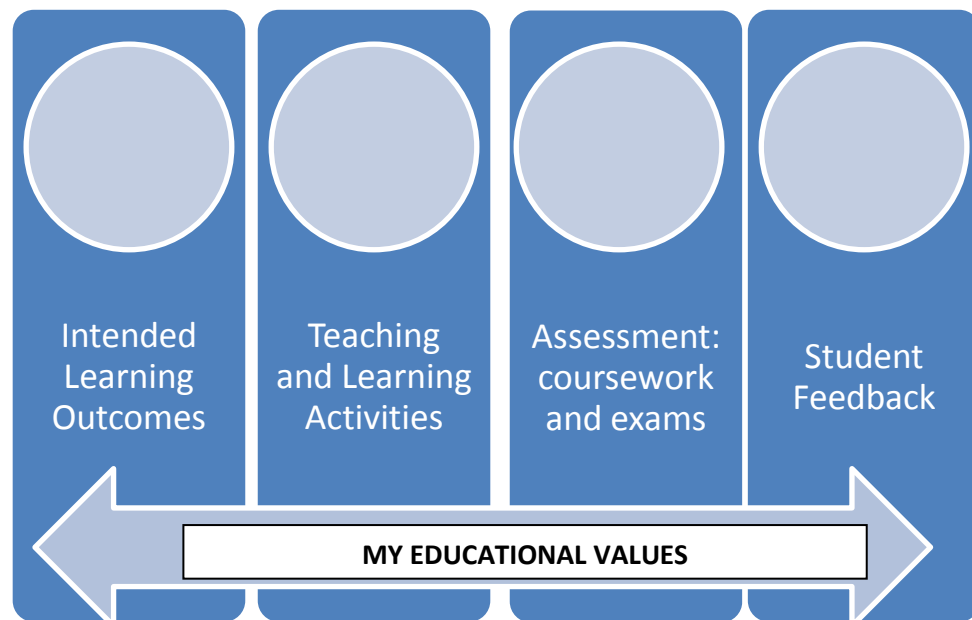


Figure 2 How I use my educational values to align the elements in my course designs

In September 2009 I took part in a conference in Pozega (Croatia), where I presented a paper on *Bringing Philosophy to Life through Development Projects. Towards a Living Theory in philosophical education*. I presented the SAP and through my reflection on the experience as I prepared the paper, I clarified these values further in mind. At this point I began to understand that the deepest motivation in my teaching practice is actually love, the desire to create an open and free learning environment fostering mutual love and respect for each others' freedom, in order to facilitate personal growth and development in both my students and myself. These elements would soon become a new focus point in my teaching practice.

By November 2009, I had internalized more deeply the change in my educational values which began with the Self-Awareness Project. As they had evolved once again, I needed to make them explicit for my own sake and that of my students. The following table expresses the developments as I have tried to illustrate them above:

Evolution of my educational values from November 2008 to September 2012	
November 2008 – February/October 2009	November 2009 – September 2012
Create a conducive learning environment	Foster love for my students and amongst my students
Intellectual – practical change in students	Respect our mutual freedom
Personal – behavioural change in students	Facilitate my students in their efforts to transform themselves as persons

Table 7 My living values from 2009

This evolution reflects a move away from my activity and that of my students in the classroom, towards my personal way of being and the influence which this may have on my students if they freely choose to take on the challenge of transforming themselves as persons.

From July – October 2009 and November 2009 – March 2010 I taught Principles of Ethics to four groups of students. I continued using personal growth plans, on-line journals, on-line forums, and personal evaluations of learning as part of my students' coursework. I also formulated the Intended Learning Outcomes according to my educational values, and aligned them with the teaching and learning activities, assignments and exams. I assessed the achievement of these outcomes and the implementation of my values through specific student feedback questionnaires. I cannot provide all the evidence of this work here.

I will focus on one unit in which the nature of the coursework changed more radically as I continued seeking ways of implementing my educational values.

Project Four: Intended Learning Outcome 4 [July to October 2010]

From July to October 2010 I taught Philosophical Anthropology to two groups of students. Group 2A (108) was made up of second year Business and Information Technology students, along with second year Tourism Management students. Group 2B (101) was also made up of second year Business and Information Technology students, along with second year Hospitality Management students. I had a total of 209 students.

I wanted to encourage the students to foster one of the Intended Learning Outcomes on the course outline in particular which we called ILO 4 (Intended Learning Outcome n. 4):

Use (BT 3⁴⁹) their freedom to create (BT 5) a spiration of love for their own personal development and that of others by developing or improving (BT 5 & 6) their relationship with the people with whom they work on the group presentation throughout the semester.

ILO 4 includes the three educational values which I was trying to live in my practice, with the hope of encouraging my students to do the same:

- Foster love for my students and amongst my students
- Respect our mutual freedom and use it to develop oneself
- Facilitate my students in their efforts to transform themselves as persons

ILO 4 also included a suggestion made by various students in feedback from the previous semester, which was to give students a group research project. I designed a plan whereby students would divide themselves into groups, and work together during the semester to prepare a presentation on one of the sub-themes on the course outline. Towards the end of the semester, each group would present their work in class and be assessed by all the other groups and the lecturer.

ILO 4 brings together my educational values and the group research as it asks the students to try to use their freedom to create a spiration of love for their own personal development and that of others while preparing their group presentation. I was trying to align my Intended Learning Outcomes with the teaching and learning activities, which were linked to one of the forms of assessment for the unit (Group research and ILO 4), and which I

⁴⁹ BT refers to Bloom's Taxonomy, which we are using at Strathmore to assist lecturers and students in understanding different possible levels and types of learning.

would later evaluate in student feedback.

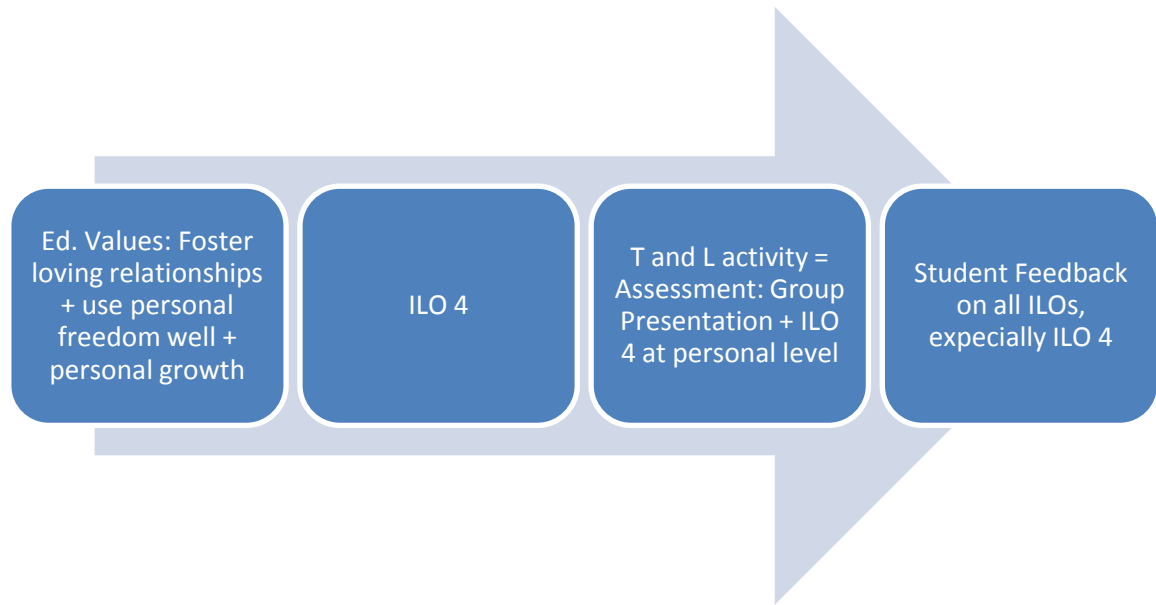


Figure 3 How my living values unify my course design

I provided an explanation of the whole plan on the e-learning platform. I asked the students to form their own groups with people who are different to them in one way or another, or with whom they do not usually work, using their freedom and initiative. The purpose of this requirement was to encourage them to be open to diversity, and learn to work in unity while respecting their differences. I took this idea from my experience with the *Unity in Diversity* project which I described above.

I gave forms to each student to record how they were going to try to build their relationship with each of their group members from week to week, and evaluate themselves and their group members on ILO 4 at the end of the semester. Each one was to identify specific ways of fostering loving, friendly relationships among their group members and keep a weekly record of their successes and failures. Initially some students had difficulty in understanding the “spiration” or “flow” of love that they were to try to establish with each other. However we discussed it in class and I gave them practical examples of things which they could do, so little by little they managed to implement ILO 4.

Among all the groups, the one which performed best in terms of their achievement of ILO 4 was Tomodachi⁵⁰. This group had nine members from a variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds. They were quite original in the ways they tried to foster good relations amongst themselves. Some of their action plans were related to how they would work together on their research presentation to be made at the end of the semester. Their presentation on *The Value of Sports* was interesting and well done. A summary of their individual action plans along with some spontaneous final comments made by the team members made be found in Appendix S.

On the last day of class I asked the students to fill in a Lecturer's Evaluation Form which I had designed so that they could assess to what extent they had achieved each of the Intended Learning Outcomes for the course. 129 students out of 209 replied to the questionnaire. I was particularly interested in their personal evaluation of ILO 4. As may be seen in Appendix S, many students indicated that through the ILO 4 project they had learnt to understand, accept and love themselves and other people better, leading to improved interpersonal relations, etc.

Perhaps the observations made by two students sum up the learning achieved through this project:

Question 4: Do you think that you achieved ILO 4? To what extent? Give reasons for your answer, with real examples from your own life, if possible:

Student 1: Yes to a large extent. The group we formed has now become the default discussion group for other units. We continue to do things together such as having lunch, celebrating birthdays... I think we have developed a genuine friendship. This part of PA was the most fun for me (DM).

Student 2: Yes. Greatly. I learnt that it is love that motivates one to wish others good things. Knew them too (NMA).

The comments capture and summarize perfectly the essence of ILO 4, which expresses the core of my own educational values.

The feedback from the students regarding ILO 4, along with the experience of the Tomadachis in implementing this project provide evidence that I can find ways of helping

⁵⁰ I had asked each group to invent its own name. This group chose *Tomodachi*, which means "friends" in Japanese, because some of the group members were studying Japanese as an elective and they all wanted the name of the group to express what they were trying to achieve with the ILO 4 project.

my students to identify with my educational values and assimilate them personally, if they freely want to.

Another step for the Tomodachis

In October 2010 I presented a paper on Transformational Learning at the Strathmore University Ethics Conference. I decided to ask the Tomodachi group if they would be willing to support my presentation by coming to give their testimony about the ILO 4 project which they had just finished. I met Jani one day on campus and put the idea to her. She told me that she would ask the other group members. A couple of days later she told me that the whole group had agreed to come (during their short holiday) to participate in the Conference with their testimony. On the day of my presentation, the whole group turned up. They told me that Daniel had been chosen to speak, while they would all be on stage with him as support and to further illustrate what they had achieved. I was very impressed that they had all decided to come.

In the following video clip you can see how I interact with them using smiles and gestures, as I invite them to come up to the stage. You can hear Daniel speaking on behalf of the group as the camera focuses on each student.



Clip 1 Tomodachis Presentation at Ethics Conference 2010

For the transcription of Daniel's testimony see Appendix S

A few days after the Conference, a friend of Daniel who I did not know came to ask me how I had managed to get him to make the public presentation as, his friend said, I know him and he is not the kind of person who speaks in public easily. I told his friend that I had

done nothing, but that the work which the Tomodachis had done together had enabled him to take this role. His friend was very impressed by the change in Daniel. Another student also came up asking why I had not chosen their group to speak at the Conference. He had been there and seen the Tomodachis and felt that his group had achieved similar friendly relations among themselves and should also have given their testimony. I explained that I had not grasped this when marking their work but that I would look for another opportunity, if possible, for them to give their testimony. These encounters illustrate that the project was evidently successful and beneficial in the students' learning process.

Summary

In this part of Chapter Eight (B), I have shown how I transformed my teaching and learning practice using diverse forms of assessment. In this process my educational values have evolved as I illustrated above. I will now show how I have tried to live my educational values coherently using simpler forms of coursework and fostering proactive participation of students in class.

Simple coursework, student participation and feedback

In this part of Chapter Eight, I will illustrate how I have tried to live my educational values coherently using simpler forms of coursework and fostering proactive participation of students in class. I will show how analysis of student feedback regarding my values has become an important reference point in evaluating how I am living them.

- Creating a spiration of love = fostering loving interpersonal relationships with my students and amongst themselves
- Love for freedom = respect for one another's' freedom
- Facilitating my personal growth and that of my students

These are the same values which emerged through my research from 2009 onwards. However, my focus in living them has changed:

- From: what I get my students to do to help them develop themselves
- To: how I personally live out my values in the hope that my personal way of being in the world may help them to discover their own worth and transform their lives

July 2011 – October 2012

When I returned to teaching in July 2011⁵¹ I realized that I needed to adjust my teaching and learning practice to spend more time working on my doctoral research. I had also accepted that while the various development projects were effective in facilitating transformative learning in my students, I could not sustain them due to the large numbers that I was teaching and the time factor involved. I decided to look for simpler ways of keeping my students actively involved in the learning process and promoting their personal growth.

Philosophical Anthropology: July to October 2011

From July to October 2011 I taught Philosophical Anthropology to two groups of second year students. One group (BBS 2) was made up of second year Business Science students (86), while the other group (BBIT 2) was made up of second year Business and Information Technology students (68). I had 154 students in total.

I included the following Intended Learning Outcome in the Course Outline which illustrates my educational values and my desire to sensitise my students to them.

Students will be expected to use (BT 3) their freedom to create (BT 5) positive interpersonal relationships for their own personal development and that of others through proactive collaboration in the term paper.

The key elements in the coursework were:

- Term Paper (20%)
- Continuous Assessment Tests (2 x 5% = 10%)

I designed the Term Paper as a research activity for the students. They were required to form groups of three people from different ethnic, cultural, or other backgrounds. They were asked to carry out research on certain aspects of the Philosophical Anthropology curriculum in relation to their cultural backgrounds. The aim of the group research was to offer the students the chance to discover their own and other cultural traditions, and the possibility of living in unity with one another, while respecting their cultural diversity. I

⁵¹ From November 2010 to June 2011 I was granted a semester free from teaching in order to work more systematically on my doctoral research.

also encouraged them to present their term papers at the 2011 Ethics Conference at Strathmore University⁵² as their research findings could possibly fall within the scope of the Conference. The groups submitted an abstract of their research plan by mid-July, which I assessed and used to help them streamline their work. Four groups of students presented their abstracts to the Ethics Conference and were accepted. The Term Paper was an opportunity to develop themselves in various ways, in harmony with my living educational values.

I introduced a change with the Continuous Assessment Tests (CATs) by implementing immediate peer marking. I had learnt about this procedure during the Academic Staff Development Programme (2009) although I had never used it. I decided to try it out because:

- I liked the idea of giving students immediate feedback on the CAT
- I thought it may reduce the time which I would spend checking through the peer marked CAT papers, although this was not actually the case
- It seemed to be a good way of using the remaining time within the double lesson in which I gave the CAT

I explained the process to the students after they had done the CAT, to prevent the possibility of them leaving space to fill in answers as they appeared on the marking scheme. I asked them to exchange scripts and to use a different colour pen for marking purposes. I also explained that they should assess their peers in a positive and encouraging manner. On a previous occasion when I had done a similar exercise with another group, I found afterwards that they had written jokes, jeering comments, etc. on each others' scripts.

Through immediate peer marking of the CAT papers I wanted my students to learn to use their freedom to mark the scripts of others in an honest, fair and encouraging manner. It could contribute to fostering positive relationships amongst them and help them to develop as persons by living these values. It was also my way of living my educational values of fostering loving relations, students' freedom and personal growth. I was thus implementing a point I had made in the Course Delivery Methodology in which I explicitly explained my

⁵² The theme for 2011 was: *The Role of Ethics in Nation Building: The Balance between Unity and Cultural Diversity*.

educational values to my students for the first time, so they would be aware of my approach to teaching and learning. I also expressed my interest in receiving their feedback on how I actually live these values.

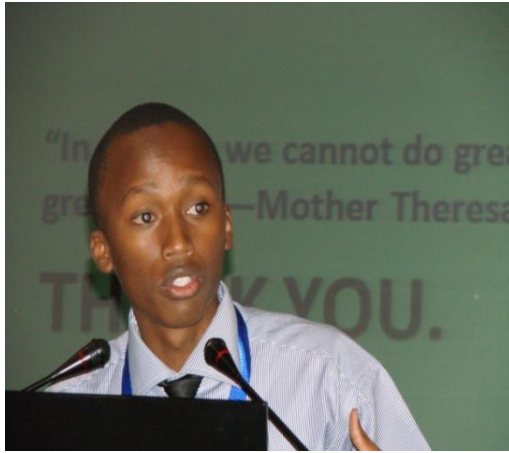
Unfortunately, during that semester no feedback was sought from the students by their Faculties using the official student evaluation forms. In spite of my intention, neither did I provide a feedback questionnaire to the students. None of the students offered feedback spontaneously. When I asked the Module Leaders⁵³ they only had vague, more or less positive comments to make.

In Appendix T I narrate some of the challenges I experienced in my teaching during this semester. These contributed to my sense of frustration particularly in dealing with one of the groups. At the time I felt that I had failed to live my educational values because I had not managed to engage that group effectively. I allowed myself to be influenced negatively by the situation. This was the reason why I did not ask the students for their feedback using a questionnaire as I had done before. I now see this as a failure to live my values in that context. However, on a positive note, four groups of students from BBS2 actually presented their research papers at the 2011 Ethics Conference.



Photos 19 BBS2 students presenting at Ethics Conference 2011

⁵³ Students chosen by their peers to represent the class in the unit.



Photos 20 Other BBS2 students presenting at 2011 Ethics Conference

In July 2012, some of these students came to tell me that they wanted to present papers in the 2012 Ethics Conference. They were looking for my help in fine-tuning their abstracts, although I was not actually teaching them at the time. As my time was limited, I suggested they speak with one of the organizing committee members who I knew would assist them. They prepared and made presentations in October 2012. I was happy that after the experience which I had offered them the previous year, they had taken the initiative to do research independently and present a paper at the 2012 Conference without any instigation from me. It is evidence that I helped them to discover their potential while I was teaching them, and this influence continued in their desire to develop themselves further through their research beyond the sphere of my classroom. Although these are only four or five students, they show that in spite of the challenges I have mentioned, my effort to live my educational values when I taught Philosophical Anthropology in 2011 effectively facilitated their self-transformation.

Philosophical Anthropology: November 2011 to March 2012

During this semester I taught Philosophical Anthropology to two groups of second year Commerce students: BCOM 2B (93) and BCOM 2C (93), totaling 186 students. The course outline included Intended Learning Outcome 4:

Students will be expected to use (BT 3) their freedom to create (BT 5) positive interpersonal relationships for their own personal development and that of others through proactive participation in class.

Once again my educational values are expressed in this ILO. I tried to live them personally in various ways to help my students.

I fostered class participation by asking questions, encouraging students to answer and inviting them to comment on each others' ideas. We used some small group discussions in class to encourage them to share ideas and gain confidence to explain the ideas to the whole group afterwards.

I designed the unit to include the following coursework:

- Research Week Questionnaire (5%)
- Two CATs (2 x 10% = 20%)
- Five Random Tests (5 x 1% = 5%)

As I was making a presentation during Research Week early in the semester I decided to involve my students in the event. I gave them the choice of attending any 2 hours of presentations during the two day event (17th – 18th November 2011)⁵⁴. They had to fill in a questionnaire in which they indicated the sessions they attended, the contents, an explanation of their preferred ideas, and how they may apply to Philosophical Anthropology. I was attempting to foster my students' growth by using the event to help them learn new things and apply them to what they were learning in the unit. It was challenging as we had not covered much material given that the semester had only started two weeks previously. However some students did manage to think creatively and connect what they had learnt during Research Week with Philosophical Anthropology.

I also tried to live my educational values by allowing my students to do the first Continuous Assessment Test (CAT 1) in pairs. I informed them of this just before they began the CAT to ensure that they actually studied beforehand. They could then choose with whom to work or in cases where students preferred to work alone, I allowed them to do so. This had never been done before at Strathmore as far as I am aware. I wanted to see if it could enhance student learning.

⁵⁴ I made the detailed programme of presentations for Research Week available to the students on the e-learning platform so they could have an overview of the event and choose which sessions to attend.



Photos 21 Both groups of students doing the Cat in pairs

Some students told me afterwards that the system had helped them to learn more and understand concepts better while doing the CAT. They also had to manage their time in order to stop discussing and agree on the answers to write within the time allowed.

This CAT was marked in class by the student/s who did it or someone they chose. They commented that they liked receiving immediate feedback on how they had performed. They learnt more as we explained the correct answers and clarified issues based on questions that came from the answers the students found in the papers they were marking. It also helped them to become familiar with my marking system. The system of doing the CAT in pairs along with immediate peer marking enhanced the student learning process. It allowed them to improve their interpersonal relations, exercise their freedom and develop as persons.

I designed the Random Assessment Tests (RATs) because one of the groups had the double session of Philosophical Anthropology scheduled for Friday from 8.15 to 10.15. I realized that students may come to class late because of the day and the time. I tried to

forestall this possibility by scheduling the RATs at the start of this lesson. Usually they involved one or two brief definitions which could be answered quickly. We marked them immediately and I collected the scripts to check and record the grades. In consonance with my love for freedom I do not like to “force” students to be punctual by enticing them with tests and marks. But in this case I felt that the RATs would help the students given the challenges of their schedule. In fact usually most students came to class on time. Very few missed the tests due to lateness.

I did not do any personal feedback surveys for the course because the School of Humanities and Social Sciences organised the course evaluation. Previously the Schools distributed hard copy questionnaires for students to fill in and return for analysis. On this occasion we were requested to ask the students to fill in the evaluation form online, using a link to Google documents. In the case of my unit, only 11 out of 186 students filled in the questionnaire. When I asked the Module Leaders about the poor response, they explained that the students were not accustomed to giving their feedback online and so they did not follow the link to the evaluation form which I had provided on the e-learning platform⁵⁵.

Although the number of respondees was small, it is interesting that I scored highest in the categories which are somehow linked to my educational values:

- ✓ Loving relations = conducive learning environment:
 - The environment was conducive for learning: 4.63
 - Course material was presented in a clear and logical manner: 4.63
- ✓ Fostering use of freedom
- ✓ Facilitating personal growth by applying theory to life
 - The course was very practical: 4.45
 - The course provided; Ability to relate theory to practice: 4.72

Among the few students who did the evaluation, some made interesting comments (see Appendix T) which indicate that they had grasped the relevance of Philosophical Anthropology for their personal lives.

⁵⁵ See my reflections on the unit and a summary of the course evaluation in Appendix T.

One of the new elements introduced by the University during this semester was that each lecturer should fill in an official self-evaluation form on the units which they taught. My comments reflect much of what I have already explained about the course. Three of my replies illustrate how I lived my educational values during the semester:

How would you describe your own performance in terms of student's acquisition of knowledge, skills and their attitudes?

I tried my best to help students learn, however they were slow to participate actively in class and on the e-learning platform. However, within one of the exam questions many did say that they had learnt a lot about life and practical real life skills.

Here I express the fact that I tried to help the students learn (develop themselves) through the unit, along with the challenges I faced and the positive outcomes which some students expressed in the written exam.

What teaching methods did you apply in teaching the course? Comment on the effectiveness.

Lectures; forums on the e-learning platform; random assessment tests at the start of class to encourage on-going study and punctuality. One of the sit-down Cats was done in pairs; the students learnt to work together and learnt from each other while doing the Cat; they also learnt time management skills, etc; small case studies; guest couple to speak on Human love and sexuality; assignment based on attendance at 2 hours of research week; I think that in all these activities the students learnt one thing or another, depending on how seriously they made use of the opportunity offered to them.

Along with indicating the various methods I used to help the students learn, I also highlight an aspect of my love for freedom which at times I forget: the students need to want to learn (develop themselves) by making free use of the opportunities which I offer them moved by my love and respect for them. I cannot force them to learn and develop themselves.

Please be free to make any other comments, suggestions, or recommendations about this course, class characteristics, learning environment, peer and faculty/school/institute support.

I found it difficult to teach because of lack of feedback from and interaction with the students in both the groups I taught, although I tried to be friendly, approachable and reach out to them. The groups were also slightly large (96 and 98 respectively).

I refer to the difficulties I experienced in my teaching and I explain my efforts to reach out to my students as I lived my value of mutual love and respect.

Regarding the two units which I taught from July 2011 to March 2012, it could seem that I was not very effective in my teaching and learning practice. This may be because:

- I was accustomed to the extensive feedback in the practical projects
- I dedicated less time to class preparation and design as I worked on my doctoral research
- The groups of students were more difficult to manage and less easy to motivate

However, I lived my educational values by using simpler forms of coursework and fostering proactive participation by my students in various ways as I have shown.

Philosophical Anthropology: July to October 2012

I taught Philosophical Anthropology from July to October 2012 to one bigger group of students instead of the usual two smaller groups due to difficulties in timetabling. The makeup of the class was diverse:

• Business and Information Technology 2 nd year students:	54
• Business and Information Technology 3 rd year (exempt) students:	39
• Tourism and Hospitality Management 2 nd year students:	18
• Informatics 2 nd year (exempt) students:	6
• Total students in the group:	116

Two of the Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO 4 and 5) I included in the Course Outline were more relevant to my educational values:

ILO 4: Students will be expected to use (BT 3) their freedom to create (BT 5) positive interpersonal relationships for their own personal development and that of others through group work (small group discussions in class), etc.

ILO 5: Students should discover (BT 3) the relevance of Philosophical Anthropology for daily life, academic studies, professional work, etc. through personal reflection, group discussion and interaction on e-learning forums

I planned to use frequent small group discussions in each topic along with the coursework to achieve these Intended Learning Outcomes. Coursework consisted of:

- A group assignment on the topic of Sensitive Life
- Active participation in the online forums for the unit
- Random Quiz

Small group discussions and interactive learning

From the start of the semester I used small group discussion or brief pieces of group work in each topic to get my students working and learning together. For example, in the first topic on the Nature of Philosophical Anthropology I tried to build on their prior knowledge as they worked out the definition of the term.

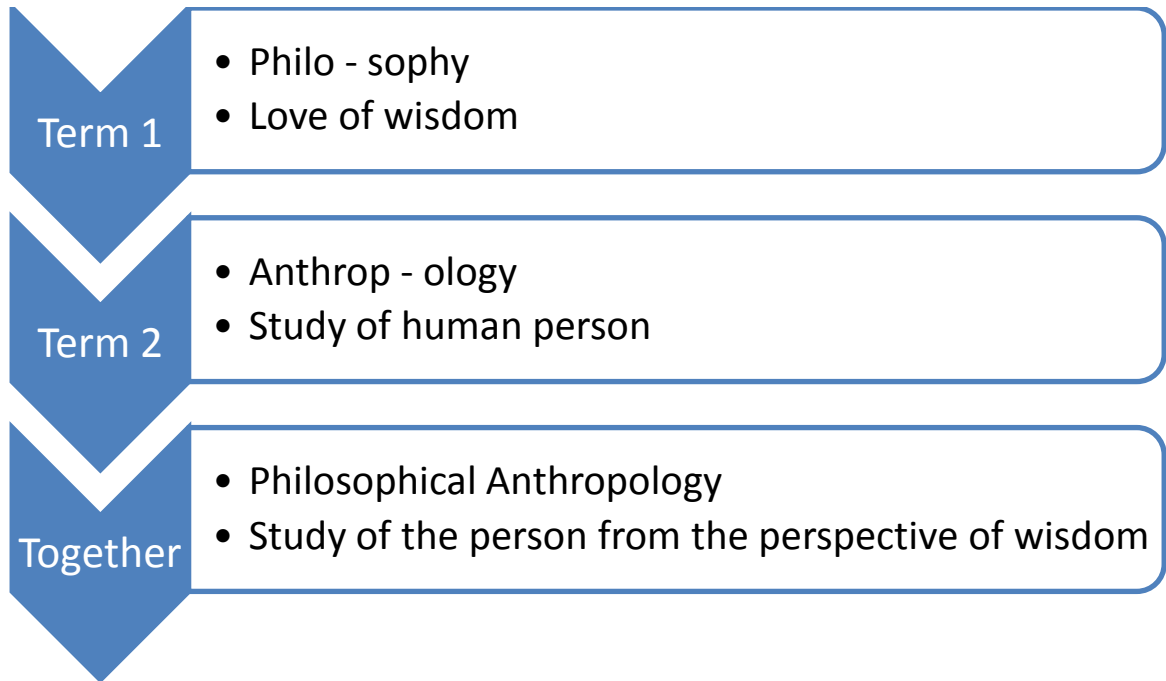


Figure 4 Discovering the meaning of Philosophical Anthropology

We then looked at *Why study Philosophical Anthropology*. I gave the students time to think out the answers in small groups and then make some brief class presentations, following these guidelines:

- If we know what PA is about, can we reason out WHY we can or should study it? What could it relate to?
 - Discuss this in groups (10 minutes): take notes; choose a presenter!
 - Each group will have 2 minutes to present their ideas briefly to everyone!
 - Think creatively as your presentation should not repeat ideas given by a previous group!

The small groups made very interesting presentations of their findings after this discussion. I then asked them to upload their ideas onto the e-learning forum, indicate the names of their group members and continue discussing the ideas on the online forum.

This is just one example of how we worked, however I tried to ensure that every week we did similar activities in class.

As may be seen in the above sample, I lived my educational values moved by my love for my students using these small group discussions and interactive learning:

- I provided opportunities for them to build their interpersonal relationships
- I encouraged them to listen to and learn from each other
- I gave them freedom to form their own groups
- I challenged them to speak in public, to reason out ideas, think creatively and apply their knowledge in different ways

Group assignment on Sensitive Life

I posted the study guide for the topic on Sensitive Life on the e-learning platform. In class I presented the project to the students:

- Week 2 of class (9th to 15th July)
- Come to class with text by Mimbi, with laptops and with Study Guide for Sensitive Life (download from ELP)

I try to help my students learn to use their freedom well by requiring that during class the laptops should be closed, and the mobile phones should be silent and visible (on the desk), to reduce the possibility of distraction. However, at times I ask them to use their phones or laptops to search the Internet for a definition or other information. In this way, they learn to use these instruments for study purposes too. In this project they would do part of their study and research in class, using the textbook and their laptops.

- Divide into groups of 8 people: I encourage you to create study groups with people whom you have not worked with before.

Again, the purpose of this request was to encourage the students to open out to people they do not know, learn to build new relationships and overcome peer pressure. I was

particularly interested in it this time as the class was made up of four diverse groups of students.

I then gave indications about the assignment, the output and the marking scheme. As the contents of the class presentation which they had to prepare were easily accessible, I emphasized the importance of creativity in the form of presentation of their work through the distribution of marks. They were challenged to use their creativity to develop this aspect of their personalities.

As I have shown, my love for my students moves me to find new ways of helping them to develop good interpersonal relationships, foster their freedom, and develop themselves as persons.

A new approach to student feedback

At a Faculty meeting on 3rd August 2012 we were asked to take ownership of the course evaluation process as lecturers, instead of it being done by the School. We were given a model course evaluation form and it was agreed that each lecturer could adjust it to suit their requirements. We were also asked to carry out the analysis of the student evaluation and submit a report to the Faculty at the end of each semester.

As I reflected on this approach, I thought that I could make it work better for me and the students by carrying out a mid-semester evaluation, which I would analyse and use to identify a few points to improve on in the second part of the semester. I would then do an end of semester evaluation on these particular points, to ascertain whether the students perceived any improvement on the issues which they brought up in the middle of the semester.

When I received the course evaluation form from SHSS I designed another set of questions using the same format, to evaluate student perception of how I was living my educational values. I collected useful information which both my Graduate Assistant and I analysed. During the second part of the semester I tried to improve on certain points based on the students' comments especially regarding teaching methods. At the end of the semester I asked the students to complete a final course evaluation form⁵⁶.

⁵⁶ See Appendix T for these evaluations and analysis.

I included a summary of the student response in the final report which I submitted to the Faculty at the end of the semester (see Appendix J). Other comments made by students indicate that they observed a considerable overall improvement both in the lecturer and themselves during the second part of the semester. They also provide evidence of how I lived my educational values:

1. Create a spiration / flow of love between the students and myself, and amongst themselves:
 - More conducive / comfortable learning environment created; improved encouragement for mingling between courses; improved lecturer – student relationship; eventually became easy going and funny; paying more attention to students seated at the back benches in class; she teaches more positively; more understanding; she has been able to actively involve us in class activities; increased comfort with students;
2. Sense of freedom:
 - The lecturer is open minded and receptive and she allowed students to express their views without bias; creates a free learning environment; I feel free to answer questions in class; students willing to give their contributions during class sessions; they are more free in class to debate therefore grasping a concept better; people have learnt to use their freedom while in school to hit their goals and also how to respect the other students;
3. Personal growth / development:
 - How have you improved? more open minded; I have learnt how to express myself as a human person and I have learned my role as a person; attending all classes; I have gained valuable life skills and knowledge (more about love, sexuality, dignity, etc.); I now understand myself better and how I should relate with others; I am able to think more openly and independently and I have also learnt to understand and interact with others; I now try to understand other people; I now know the bad habits that I used to do unaware they are wrong and I have changed; I have learnt more about the human person and through that, I have learnt how to respect everyone;
 - How do you think that others have improved? More participation and enjoying the classes; more friendly and approachable; more meaningful contributions during group discussions; some have learnt to interact with others, some slightly; they have become better people as they relate well with others; more concentration and class involvement since they are involved more in the class by the lecturer; people have improved by being able to interact better with students from other courses as encouraged by C. Dean; improved appreciation and respect for others.

In Appendix T I include a Final Comment in the Exam Report which illustrates my own learning as well as that of the students during the semester.

To evaluate my impact on student learning more directly, I distributed a random survey to the above students on the same day they filled in the end of semester course evaluation (24th September 2012). The questions were focused on two of my educational values:

1. Creating a spiration / flow of love:
 - Questions 1 – 4: between the students and myself
 - Question 5: Amongst the students
2. Facilitating students' growth as persons (by applying theory to life, etc.):
 - Question 6

I included another question referring to an issue which I had started to reflect on more explicitly:

- Question 7: What helps more in student learning: the lecturer's attitude to students or the teaching methods which the lecturer employs?

The replies clearly indicate student satisfaction regarding how I live my educational values. I also learnt that I could still use a greater variety of teaching and learning methods to suit different student learning styles. I provide a sample of the questionnaire and a detailed analysis focusing on my educational values in Appendix U.

The evidence in the official student feedback indicates that I improved in living my educational values during the semester and that this had an impact on my students. Feedback from the random survey further confirmed student satisfaction with the course and with myself as a lecturer.

Summary

In this part of Chapter Eight (B), I have shown how I tried to live my educational values using simpler forms of coursework and fostering proactive participation of students in class. I have illustrated how analysis of student feedback regarding my values has become an important reference point in evaluating how I live them.

Chapter Eight (C): My work with students at Strathmore University

Transforming myself through my practice

In Chapter Eight (C), I will explain my process of self-transformation as I tried to change myself through my teaching practice

Initial considerations

As I mentioned in the first part of this chapter, through the experience of teaching Philosophical Anthropology and Principles of Ethics at Strathmore University from October 2004 to March 2006, I discovered that the course contents in themselves resonated deeply with me. I also realized that it was not enough to teach these contents in order to bring about change in my students. Along with finding teaching methods which could help my students to assimilate the contents better and facilitate their personal development, I had to be willing to change myself. I had an intuition that, because the person is at the heart of Philosophical Anthropology and Principles of Ethics, the way I treated my students and how I am with them, could help them to discover their own value and that of others as persons.

In Chapter Eight (A) and (B) I have shown how my educational values evolved from October 2004 to October 2012, as I sought ways of teaching more effectively. I express them as:

- Foster love for my students and amongst my students
- Mutual respect and love for our freedom
- Facilitate personal growth and development in my students and myself

I can now see the convergence of two approaches which, over the years have been coming closer and closer:

- My efforts to improve my teaching and learning practice was motivated at the deepest level by my love for my students as persons and the desire to manifest that love in ways that would help them to discover their value as persons.

- The evolution of my educational values through my teaching practice has allowed my implicit values to become explicit. Each of the values indicated above is directly related to my appreciation of the worth of every person.

Foster my love for my students and amongst my students: Each of us is a human person who is capable of, needs and will only be happy when giving and receiving love.

Mutual respect and love for our freedom: Our freedom distinguishes us from animals and establishes us as persons. Using our freedom we can determine ourselves to become the person we want to be.

Facilitate personal growth and development in my students and myself: Each human being is capable of endless personal growth and development. We need to follow this path to achieve self-fulfillment and happiness as persons.

As I indicated in Chapter Seven, through my doctoral enquiry I can summarize my educational values in one, all embracing and motivating force: my love or passion, for the person.

I will now show how I have changed myself as a person over the years and discovered this passion in the context of my teaching practice, by striving to reach out to my students as persons.

Starting from the beginning

As I explained in Chapter Eight (A), my first semester at Strathmore University ran from October 2004 to March 2005. I taught Principles of Ethics to two groups of 120 second year Commerce students and 54 second year Business and Information Technology students.

At the time, my teaching style did not facilitate learning because I simply lectured to my students and used the blackboard to highlight my points. I would stand at the front of the lecture theatre on the podium, without moving to where the students were seated. I was using rooms where the layout made it difficult to reach the students and to see them properly especially if the place was full.

My implicit educational values were:

- ✓ Make the contents interesting;

- ✓ Relate the contents to real life by drawing out their practical implications;
- ✓ Try to make my students enjoy their learning experience;

However I now realise that I was basically talking at my students, in spite of my efforts to interest them in the unit. I soon noticed that, although there were students in the front rows who took notes and listened, many others were not interested. Most of them did not seem to look at me or listen. They were slow to respond to questions in class and there was a lot of background noise caused by people talking, etc. When I asked questions to start a discussion, there were long silences until one or two people, usually the same students each time, replied or made comments. I felt uncomfortable as I was not accustomed to these silences. I tried to control the large group of Commerce students by requesting students at the back to stop talking, etc. However, they usually did not keep quiet for long and the murmuring would start again. I did not try to break up the “cliques” of students who always sat together. I felt intimidated by the size of the group and unable to handle the situation. As a result, I became frustrated as it seemed that I was not reaching my students in terms of learning, nor bonding with them personally. Unawares, I was experiencing myself as a “living contradiction” (Whitehead 1989) because I was not living the educational values which implicitly motivated my teaching at the time.

The critical incident of November 2004

Towards the end of November 2004, I had an experience which was the detonator for my initial attempts to adjust my teaching practice to the needs of my students. Moved by my sense of being ineffective, one day I decided to try to reach out more directly to my students in order to build a rapport little by little. During the ten minute break between the first and second class in a double session with the second year Commerce students, I approached a girl seated in the front row. I smiled and greeted her. There was no reaction. I tried to get a conversation going by asking what seemed to me to be innocent questions such as her name, and what she had done over the weekend. Although I tried a few topics, the girl sat with her head down in complete silence. There was no reaction. I realized that some students seated behind were watching the scene in amusement. Given her lack of response I decided not to insist any further, so I made some pleasant remark and returned to the desk at the front of the room.

This experience of rejection of my friendly effort to reach out to a student was a total shock to me. I had never experienced anything similar while teaching in Rome. I had never seen students respond like that to their teachers while I was at school and university in Ireland and Rome. I must have sensed the denial of another of my implicit values, that of a friendly rapport between lecturer and students. I began to think about what had happened, to try to understand the situation.

My reflections on the incident

Initially I realized that teaching in Kenya meant that I was being confronted with something very different to the classroom environment I was accustomed to. I had sensed that girl's fear and wariness in her refusal to reply. When I asked Kenyan colleagues and friends about why the girl may have reacted in this way, I began to learn more about the education system in Kenya⁵⁷. I was told that she was probably afraid of me as the teacher and that this was common in students because of the way they are treated in school. I learnt that in many schools students are not allowed to ask questions in class or to address the teacher. In some cases students are physically punished for asking questions or other similar "misdemeanors". Students may be ridiculed if they answer mistakenly when asked a question in class. Such practices seem to have contributed to inhibiting students almost completely in school, creating an atmosphere of fear and tension in the classroom. This situation may have developed as a consequence of the traditional system of informal education described by Gichure (2009), which I referred to in Chapter Six. In this context, one can understand that by approaching my student I was probably breaking the non written rules of teacher-student communication which she was accustomed to, thereby disconcerting her greatly. At that time in Strathmore University lecturers were still using a traditional lecturing approach to teaching, with a relatively authoritarian attitude towards students. The gesture which I have described above was probably unusual even in Strathmore, which may have added to the girl's confusion.

My natural inclination to reflect on my experience helped me discover that I should improve my rapport with my students. I looked for ways of acting to improve our relationship by reaching out more radically to my students. I realized that building up a

⁵⁷ As I explained in Chapter Six my understanding of the Kenyan education system also developed through my study of authors such as Eshiwani (1993), Bogonko (1994), Mugambi (2008) and Gichure (2009).

good rapport in the classroom could help in the learning process as students would feel more comfortable with me and each other. Since then, I have constantly tried to identify and implement ways of improving our educational relationships in the classroom and beyond. This is an example of how I reflect on my experience to adjust my actions (Whitehead and McNiff 2006, p. 65).

After this critical incident I tried to learn about the typical lifestyle of the average Kenyan student through my own observations and by asking younger friends or listening as they spoke about their times at school and university, etc. This gave me ideas about the various means of transport our students often use, the food they eat, the music they like, the movies they watch, their love for weekend entertainment, how they were taught, what they would do at school, etc. I used this knowledge to find practical examples which I hoped they could relate to, in order to illustrate and explain the theory involved in Principles of Ethics. I also tried to smile more in class, and use some humour to reach out to my students.

As I explained in part one of this Chapter, the student feedback at the end of this semester was limited to the Business and Information Technology (BBIT) students. The highest ranking they gave me was for ““Has right attitude towards students” (3.85/5). Although the score was not particularly high, I was pleased that the best rating was in this category because I felt that it reflected my efforts to reach out to my students. The BBIT students seem to have responded to these efforts to a certain extent. Unfortunately, the group of Commerce students to which the girl I had encountered belonged and which had moved me into taking positive action to improve our rapport, did not do the assessment that semester.

My self-transformation: July 2005 – March 2009

Each semester I sought ways of reaching out to my students to foster positive educational relationships. For a summary of my personal development in this period see Appendix V.

I have more explicit evidence of this from July 2009 up to October 2012 which I will present below.

July to October 2009: reaching out to students during Principles of Ethics

During this semester I taught Principles of Ethics to two groups of students. One group (111 students) was made up of second year Business and Information Technology students and second year Hospitality and Tourism Management students (BBIT 2A / BHT 2). The other group was made up of 57 second year Business and Information Technology students.

During the semester, the Director of the Centre of Applied Philosophy and Ethics (CAPE), which functioned within IHEDS, offered lecturers the possibility of having some classes videotaped so that we could study them afterwards to improve our teaching practice. I decided to use this opportunity to identify how I try to foster good relations with my students. On the 4th August 2009, with the help of an assistant from IHEDS, I recorded a double session with the larger class of 111 students.

In this clip we are beginning to cover the topic *What is virtue*. I ask the students to discuss the definition of virtue among themselves. As they discuss, you can see how I interact at an individual level with a student who calls me.



Clip 2 POE class 4th August 2009

In the following clip I move around the room, speaking with the students, inviting them to speak and waiting for their answers. I listen to one point, draw it out and then listen to another point, and the class discussion develops through the replies. I build up on the ideas which the students offer, repeat them so that everyone can hear, and begin to deepen their understanding of virtue. I reach out to the students with gestures, my smile, looking at them closely, inviting them to speak, I make positive comments on their contributions, I join in and laugh at their jokes, etc.



Clip 3 POE class 4th August 2009

These clips illustrate the reasonably comfortable atmosphere which we managed to create with this particular group of students as we worked together. I am aware that I was trying to reach out to the students in an open and positive manner, encouraging them to learn from one another and be willing to share their ideas. When I started lecturing at Strathmore in October 2004, I did not teach like this: moving around the room, using gestures to keep students' attention, waiting patiently for their replies, joking with them, smiling, etc! It is only through years of teaching, and with a lot of effort, that I have developed this manner in the classroom.

Based on my teaching experience and reflection from November 2008 to January 2009, by February 2009 I was reformulating my educational values, although it was November 2009 by the time I had fully incorporated these new values into my teaching practice.

Evolution of my educational values from November 2009 to September 2012	
November 2008 – October 2009	November 2009 – September 2012
Create a conducive learning environment	Foster love for my students and amongst my students
Intellectual – practical change in students	Respect our mutual freedom
Personal – behavioural change in students	Facilitate my students in their efforts to transform themselves as persons

Table 8 My living values continue to emerge

Since November 2009, up to October 2012 these values have remained constant in my life and practice, signifying greater unity between my understanding of what I want to live by in the classroom and my personal way of being in the world. I will now offer further evidence of how I have tried to live by these values over this period of time.

Principles of Ethics: November 2009 to March 2010

This semester I taught Principles of Ethics to two groups of second year Commerce students: BCOM 2B (68) and BCOM 2C (76). When planning the unit I decided that I would encourage my students to consider the whole course as an opportunity for personal development. I included Intended Learning Outcome (ILO 5) in the course outline which stated:

ILO 5: Create a spiration of love in freedom to facilitate our own personal growth and that of others.

This formula expresses how I had summarized my new educational values. By including it in the Intended Learning Outcomes for my students I am showing that while living them myself, I also wanted to encourage my students to live these values. I designed the coursework to provide a variety of opportunities for personal growth to the students (see Appendix W).

The coursework included a Final Evaluation of the course as a Personal Development Project. Its purpose was to allow the students to assess themselves in terms of how they have developed personally in intellectual, practical and life skills throughout the unit (see the Questionnaire in Appendix W).

Question 6 links back to ILO 5 so the students and I could evaluate how they had implemented it:

Have you tried to create a spiration of love in freedom that facilitates your personal growth and that of others during POE?

Some students provide evidence in their replies to this question of how they tried to live my educational values during the semester (see Appendix W).

I also sought feedback from my students regarding how I had lived ILO 5 during the semester. The replies are evidence of how students perceived that I was creating good relationships between myself and them. They use specific nouns to describe my attitude towards them: helpful; approachable; gave freedom in class; made the class comfortable; accommodating, etc. Their comments also support my intuition that if I can establish good relationships with my students, the teaching and learning process is enhanced as there is a conducive learning environment in which they feel free to ask questions, discuss, approach

the lecturer with their issues, etc. Other replies confirm the open relations amongst the students and their willingness to learn from each other, while highlighting how my attitude encouraged them to develop these positive relationships. They also indicate that the positive student relationships enhanced the teaching and learning experience (see Appendix W).

During the unit we recorded a few classes with both groups. However, some recordings were lost so I have just one video which shows my work in the classroom to reach out to my students and build a friendly learning environment.

The recording below starts shortly after the class began and the students had already done some group discussion. As the clip starts, you see me in a static position with my arms wide in a gesture of open receptiveness to what the student is saying. I am looking at him and listening attentively to him (min 0.00 – 0.50). When he finishes his point, I take it up and summarise the idea so that all can hear. I am smiling and trying to achieve eye contact with the whole group as I speak.

You will notice that I stay at the top of the room and only move up and down at the top. This is because the room has an unusual shape. It is practically a triangle, within which rows of desks have been placed very close together, so that it is practically impossible to walk around the room or get close to the students⁵⁸.

In previous classes I had tried to move around the room but it was uncomfortable and distracting for the students. In this recording you can see that I am trying to make up for the difficulty in moving around by keeping the students' attention using my facial expressions, gestures, body language such as reaching over to one student or another (min 2.50), etc. I feel that the first couple of minutes of this class (00.00 – 02.00) are very slow as I have to keep asking questions, wait for students to answer, use bits of Kiswahili, etc. to get their attention and encourage them to speak about the points they had come up with in the earlier discussion.

⁵⁸ In the video clip above of the class on 4th August 2009 with a different group of students, you can see how I move around the room to keep the students' attention and to reach out to them, listen to their comments, etc. in a more conducive classroom setup.



Clip 4 POE class 3rd December 2009

In the next clip (below) footsteps can be heard at 00.04 seconds, as two or three students come in late. As I continue speaking, I look at them, clear my throat, and check the clock at a glance. Another student can be seen watching them and one of them can be seen walking in front of the screen. At this point I am feeling a bit angry because they are coming in late and causing some disturbance, after I had made quite an effort to get the class going. However, internally I make an effort to control my annoyance, as I turn back to the computer with a smile, and glance at them while they sit down as the noise can be heard in the background. If you move the cursor slowly up and down at this point you will in fact see my facial expressions in more detail and perhaps perceive my inner struggle (00.05-00.10)! By this time most of the students are distracted, so as I ask them another question and I realize that they are not following me, I click the fingers of both hands in the air, smile at them and humorously try to bring their attention back to the issue we are discussing (00.55). All this is an effort for me, however, my educational values of trying to maintain a loving, friendly atmosphere in the classroom help me to control my annoyance and look for a funny way of getting the class started again. My respect for their freedom, and also the desire to prevent myself from speaking harshly makes me wait to speak to the latecomers after class, to find out why they are late and encourage them to be punctual so as not to distract everyone if they come late.



Clip 5 POE class 3rd December 2009

In the next clip, a student has asked a question which I repeat so all can hear. In order to give them all a chance to think and not to offer a quick and easy answer, I throw the question out to all the students and wait for a reply. As there is none forthcoming, I then ask them to discuss the issue briefly (00.19). This is one of the ways in which I try to keep my students actively involved in the class, as well as giving them the chance to think for themselves (and so develop themselves) before listening to their thoughts, taking them up and making use of their ideas to make some point.



Clip 6 POE class 3rd December 2009

In the following clip below you can observe how I follow a student's explanation from afar using facial gestures, a smile, eye contact, etc. to illustrate how I am paying attention to what they are saying. These are the ways I try to establish the friendly classroom environment, in spite of the difficult physical setup of the room.



Clip 7 POE class 3rd December 2009

As I have shown above through the feedback from these same students, they have grasped and responded to my efforts to establish a warm, friendly learning environment, although their response is not very obvious in this particular recording, which was made within the first 4 weeks of the semester.

I have included these clips because they illustrate my efforts to live my values in the face of difficult physical conditions, and with a group of students who were harder to motivate in class at times. My teaching practice over the years has taught me that although I strive to live my educational values in the classroom, the actual impact does not depend on me alone. A lot also depends on the actual group of students and their group dynamics. They have to freely respond to my efforts for the overall positive outcome. Here again my value of respect for human freedom is revealed. I could attempt to force my students into collaborating, however I would probably need to threaten them in one way or another. I do not believe in forcing people to learn, nor in threatening them to make them participate. Learning is a two way process, the encounter of two freedoms, so to speak: my freedom and that of each of my students. I choose to offer them diverse learning opportunities, and also to respect the freedom of their response. These reflections are the fruit of my evolving understanding of and personal adjustment to the dynamics of the teaching and learning process, while interacting with different groups of students.

In particular, this group of students was less proactive in general, with the exception of four or five students who usually tried to interact with me and facilitate learning in the classroom. One of these was AnnElsie, who agreed to give a brief presentation of her

learning experience with me during the 2010 Strathmore University Ethics Conference, in which the Tomodachis also spoke, as I described earlier in this chapter.



Clip 8 AnnElsie presenting at the Ethics Conference 2010

The transcription may be found in Appendix W

AnnElsie explains the contents of the Self Awareness Project and the Personal Development Project and gives an example of how she has changed through these projects. She is now able to stand in front of 400 people and speak about her learning experiences. She offers clear evidence regarding the impact on herself of my efforts to transform myself and my teaching practice to help my students develop themselves as persons.

Philosophical Anthropology: July to October 2012

When I began teaching Philosophical Anthropology in July 2012⁵⁹, I planned to use the unit to illustrate the change in my teaching practice over time by showing how I teach now, using photos and video clips as part of the evidence. As my Graduate Assistant was available, she took charge of most of these recordings, except on one or two occasions when we requested someone from the department for university communication to help us.

These are photos of the two lecture rooms where I taught from July to October 2012:

⁵⁹ For a summary of my activity from November 2010 to March 2012 see Appendix W.



Photos 22 Lecture Theatre 5 (Lt 5)

Difficult to teach here because of the size and hard to reach students



Photos 23 Room 34

A bit easier to teach in as one can move around more to reach the students, but still hard to see all the students when it is full

As I considered how I would try to live my educational values during this semester, I decided to continue with my usual efforts to manifest love and respect for my students and foster the same attitude in them. I would try to respect their freedom mainly through how I treat them. Finally, I would try to help them develop themselves as persons through the unit by using small group discussions in class, a group assignment on one of the course

topics and foster the exchange of ideas using forums and glossaries on the e-learning platform. I discussed these aspects in part three of this chapter.

I will now present evidence of how I live my educational values currently using video clips from the July to October 2012 semester. These, along with my explanations earlier in this part of the chapter, illustrate the transformation I have made in myself and my teaching approach over the years.

1. Love for my students:

This semester, as in previous semesters, I introduced myself to my new group of students on the first day of class. I told them a bit about my background and at times I used personal stories to illustrate something we were discussing in class as may be seen in this clip.



Clip 9 Telling students about my niece (24th September 2012)

Over the years, I have discovered that my students become interested when I bring in this personal touch. My Graduate Assistant confirmed this when I spoke to her after class about what I had said in the above clip. I asked her if I had gone too far with my stories, but she replied that precisely this made the class interesting. When I made a presentation to staff members in November 2012 and spoke about this experience, a couple of them told me later that they would find it very hard to speak about personal or family matters in class. This feedback helped me to confirm not only that I have changed, because I never

did this in my first two or three years of teaching at Strathmore, but also that I am now doing things in class which other lecturers at my university do not do.

Now when I teach, I move around the room as much as possible. When necessary, I use a mike and make an effort to reach out to listen to quieter students as they give answers. I try to smile a lot, give a positive response to every comment from students and see how I can use their points while clarifying issues where necessary. In the following clip I have just asked a question and I am waiting for someone to freely offer a reply. You can see me looking around to check if anyone will answer. When someone offers the word “personality”, I repeat the word so all can hear and I explain the point briefly. I then move towards another student who I think may have something to say so as to make it easier for him to make his point. As I come closer to him, smiling, you can see him respond, with empathetic resonance, and smile too.



Clip 10 PA class 5th July 2012

In the photo below I am offering the mike to the same student so he can respond. He didn't want to use the mike but he did make his contribution to the discussion. In the photo you can see how he and the other students are smiling as I offer him the mike. I think this reflects the empathy which was building up between myself and the students on this second day of class. I have learnt over time to work and interact with my students like this from the first day of class, to move more quickly towards creating that comfortable learning environment.



Photo 24 PA class 5th July 2012

I also try to look at my students individually and be available to help with their group discussions as may be seen in the two photos below. At times I simply listen, so they continue sharing ideas. Sometimes I ask them something and listen to their reply. I may make some suggestion to open up their discussion further, or simply confirm that they are on the right track and encourage them.



Photos 25 PA class 5th July 2012

In the clip below you can see how I try to move and interact with the students during group discussions. As I ask the first group how they are doing and if they have someone to take notes of their discussion, if you move the cursor slowly you can see how the students do not actually respond but look at each other. In these cases, where students seem shy to answer me, I make an encouraging remark and move on. This is my way of showing that I

am there for them, but that I also respect their freedom and will not force them to speak if they are not ready to do so. With the second group of students, you can see how they do respond to my query, and we end up smiling and joking together before I move on.



Clip 11 PA class 5th July 2012

A few weeks later, on 9th August 2012, my Graduate Assistant brought the camera to class unexpectedly, although I realized she had it before class started. I had asked her to do this on some occasions, based on a suggestion I received when presenting my teaching practice at a conference in York in July 2012. In the clip below you can see how, while the class is doing some group work, I am speaking with a student, smiling, meanwhile another student is calling me to ask a question about the work they are doing. His manner and my gestures express the mutual confidence which had continued to build up between the students and myself as the semester advanced.



Clip 12 PA class 9th August 2012

We had been asked by our Faculty to give the students a course evaluation form at the end of the semester. As I explained in part three of this Chapter, I decided to start with a mid-semester course evaluation by the students, so that I would have time to implement their suggestions before the end of the unit. On the 9th of August 2012 I began the class by giving the students the evaluation form and asking them to fill it in and return it to me before the end of the lesson.

In the following clip, which is not very audible because the mike had not yet arrived when class started, you can see me explaining the form to the students who had arrived a bit late and handing them to a student to the left at the front of the room, so that they could be distributed. One of the students in the foreground of the clip already has a copy of the form and is filling it in as I speak. This clip also shows how I ask the students to put away their laptops during class to reduce the possibilities of distraction! Finally, you can hear me ask about how we Kenyans have performed in the Olympics in the previous days and if we had any races that day. This was one of the current issues which I used to win the students' attention at the start of class and also to illustrate practically some of the topics we covered. For example, I included images of many of the Kenyan athletes who were participating in the games in the power point presentation for the topic on the Human Will.



Clip 13 PA class 9th August 2012

My decision to offer the students the opportunity to evaluate the course mid-way through the semester is another manifestation of my love and respect for them, as well as my willingness to transform myself based on their feedback. I wanted to give them the chance to give their opinions while there was still time to listen to their comments and suggestions, and make adjustments to my practice to improve their learning experience. At the same time, I too would be learning about things I could do better within the same time span. As I explained in part three of this Chapter, I did implement their suggestions and seek further feedback at the end of the semester to assess if they had perceived any improvement in my practice. As I indicated there, many of their comments show that I changed aspects of my practice based on their suggestions.

2. Respect and foster my students' freedom

I am passionate about personal freedom, both my own and that of other people. As I have shown in Chapters Three and Four, this is largely due to my experience at home, in Opus Dei and through my studies. Strathmore's mission statement refers to fostering freedom and responsibility in students and staff members. However, my experience in Kenya is that, mainly due to historical reasons and educational background, it is not easy for people to understand the real meaning of freedom and to act knowingly and willingly. In general, Kenyans are accustomed to following rules, especially in an institutional context. I have seen some changes in this attitude in recent years among young people, due to influences from abroad which are pushing them to seek the reasons why they are required to do one thing or another. I find this tendency positive as, if it is understood and young people are

taught to think about why they do what they do, they will be able to make better informed and more willing decisions, thus acting with greater freedom and personal conviction.

I try to foster an atmosphere of freedom and respect in class in various ways. For example, some lecturers at Strathmore are very strict with students who arrive late. At times they scold them publicly, or refuse to let them enter the room, or require them to do a song or a dance to be allowed to enter, etc. Personally I find this approach rather humiliating for the student, and often they are not allowed to explain why they have come late. This is partly because people think that students will always tell lies about why they are late and perhaps this may happen in some cases. However, when I have the chance to do so in class because of the contents of a topic or for other reasons, I encourage students to be truthful and honest always. I give the example of coming late and explain that I would prefer that they tell the truth about why they are late, than to tell a lie which benefits no-one in the long run. I tell them the story of how, when I was a child, I told my mother the truth about taking money from her purse and that she had praised me for telling the truth. At times they don't believe that one can be praised when telling the truth about something one did badly. I explain that I will listen to their reasons if they come late and that I trust them to tell me the truth. I explain that I would rather give them the chance to tell the truth and apparently be "fooled" if they do not, because ultimately, they are the ones who lose out, not myself. So I challenge them to use their freedom to be truthful about the reasons for their lateness.

In the past, when students have come late and I have asked why, I know that some may have lied to me, but others have told me simply that they didn't get up on time. In conversations like this, when they pause before explaining their lateness, at times I remind them that I prefer to know the truth, to encourage them. Many will then give an answer which I can sense is true. In these cases, I thank them, ask them to try to be punctual in future and proceed with the class as they sit down. When it seems that a student may not have given the real reason for their lateness, I still allow them to enter, unless it is very late, and encourage them to be punctual. If the same people are habitually late, I try speaking with them more seriously to explain why punctuality is important to prevent distractions to others, facilitate their learning, etc. Often they improve over time.

Basically, I try to react gently to lateness, not get annoyed and find out the reasons for it, fostering a sense of trust in my students. On 5th July 2012, as I was teaching Philosophical Anthropology, two students entered class later than the usual time allowance. In the photo below you can see our discussion. When I asked why they had arrived so late they explained that they are Hospitality students and that they had been asked to acts as hosts for a breakfast meeting at the Strathmore Business School (SBS). The breakfast had ended late and so they had not been able to come to class on time. I realized that this was true as I knew that at least one of them is a student of Hospitality and I had seen that SBS had an event that morning when I was going to class. In the photo I am gesturing to indicate that the class was doing group work, and that they could take a seat and join the discussions.



Photo 26 PA class 5th July 2012

I also try to foster my students' freedom by listening to them and encouraging them to listen to each other in class. At times they laugh at another student's reply or make fun of each other. However I try to help them overcome this habit, which may partly be due to nervousness, because I am aware of the power of peer pressure on these students. If one speaks out in class and the others laugh, it is very possible that the student will not speak in class again. So I explain that we cannot laugh at another person's ideas, but rather we need to learn to listen and to respect each others' ideas, and try to see what we can learn from them. In student feedback at the end of various units I have found that they comment on how this approach has helped them to listen, respect and learn from their peers. They also comment that my willingness to accept everything people say, and try to draw something positive from it, has contributed to this process.

Another way of fostering the sense of freedom is my effort to be relaxed, patient and calm in class, so that the students also feel relaxed and not under pressure. I try to bring in a bit of humour, to tease them nicely, or to laugh at myself in class. When they feel comfortable and not “stressed” by the lecturer, they can learn more effectively. So I have to leave my own personal issues or concerns outside the classroom and not let my students suffer because I am worried, tired, or feeling unwell. This is another clear example of how I have changed, given that in early student feedback which I have recorded in part two of this Chapter, students commented that there could be more humour in my class.

In the following clip we are discussing the spirituality of the human soul using our capacity to love in a way that transcends time and space. I use the example of a girl and a guy who are in love with each other to explain that love can exist beyond the limits of a particular place or time. You can hear and see the students laughing, replying, commenting among themselves, as they follow my explanation. I often use examples like this, which they can relate to, and also enjoy.



Clip 14 Love and humour (24th September 2012)

When I want to do some activity in class, I try to offer it to them rather than impose it on them. This is why I often ask if something is “okay” with them and try to listen for their

response. In the clip below, we are near the end of a double session, the students are getting a bit tired as they have worked quite a lot, so I try to introduce the final exercise in a friendly, challenging and encouraging manner. I start explaining from the podium but as I speak, I move slowly towards where the students are seated as a way of expressing that I am reaching out to them as I invite them to freely implement the challenge, which they accepted rapidly, as you hear in the clip.



Clip 15 PA class 5th July 2012

Another technique which my colleagues sometimes use to get students to participate actively is to award marks to students for answering in class. Again I feel strongly that this is a form of coercing students into learning something, to say it in class, and so get the marks. I have never given marks for class participation because I am firmly convinced that students should speak in class and offer their contribution because they want to, not because they will be awarded marks. At times depending on the group of students, or the day, I find it difficult to achieve voluntary class participation. I may ask questions, and then wait quite some time before someone offers a vague answer in a low voice. Sometimes I cannot catch what they have said and they do not repeat it. At times, a student eventually gives a more audible reply which can get the discussion moving. I have learnt to

accept these silences, which are quite characteristic of the Kenyan context, peacefully, waiting without hurry. If eventually there is no reply, I may try another question, or perhaps approach a student whom I know usually has something to say or looks as if they have an idea, and then offer them the opportunity to speak, with a smile or a gesture. In the following clip I have just asked a question and people are not responding. So I move up the lecture theatre looking for someone who may want to reply. You can see that the students look away from me as I pass by, and then turn to look at me as I move up. I turn back to look at a student who seemed to want to speak. Eventually I find one who offers a point, which I repeat and comment on briefly. But the atmosphere in the room is one of silence!



Clip 16 PA class 5th July 2012

I discuss the theme of human freedom with my students in Philosophical Anthropology, to help them discover its different facets, implications, characteristics and consequences. One of the key concepts which I try to transmit is the awareness that we make ourselves who we are through how we use our freedom, through our own free acts. It relates to the power of the human person to determine his/her self, through using one's freedom.

The following clip is from the second day of class. The students had discussed the relevance of studying Philosophical Anthropology in groups and then made brief presentations of their findings. The student speaking in the clip explains how her group had linked the relevance of the unit with human freedom, although I had only mentioned the topic briefly in the first class. We had not yet covered the topic formally, yet she describes

interesting ideas which they have come up with. Perhaps the most interesting, in my opinion, is the idea of exercising our freedom, not because others are doing something, but because it is a right we have been given, and we should use it because we want to, not being pushed to do things.



Clip 17 PA class 5th July 2012

Already the students are showing an awareness of freedom as something personal, which we have to use in an individual manner, without “following the crowd”. This is important as it is a key aspect of what I would like them to learn about their freedom so that they can make free choices about who they want to become. This is necessary for them to be able to develop themselves as persons throughout their lives. This brings me to my third educational value.

3. Help them develop themselves as persons

My final value involves trying to help my students to grow and develop themselves as persons through the units I teach. Each semester I look for different ways of facilitating this aim. As mentioned earlier, the personal development and self-awareness projects which I carried out between 2008 and 2010 were very effective in this regard. However, now I need to simplify the type of assessments that I offer to my students and identify techniques which I can use in class.

For example, at times I ask them to try to link a specific topic to their lives and reflect on the implications which it may have. As described above, I used this approach in class on 5th July 2012 to help students think about the reasons for studying Philosophical Anthropology and how it may be of use to them in life. This exercise aims at addressing

the on-going challenge of helping students understand WHY they are required to study certain philosophical units in their degree courses. One group of Information Technology students came up with some excellent points which illustrated their creative and intellectual capacities, given that that we had not mentioned them in class prior to the discussion. The clip below shows part of their presentation.



Clip 18 PA class 5th July 2012

Another technique which I use is not to explain everything, but rather to start a topic getting students to use prior knowledge. This is linked to the idea of helping them to build up their knowledge little by little, based on what they already know and then taking them a step further.

In the clip below I have joined a few shorter clips together to illustrate the dynamics of gathering data from the group discussions which the students had just completed, on features of the human person. I was counting on their prior knowledge and bringing it together on a slide while later allowing them to compare their findings with points which I had already placed on the slides. In the clip you will see and hear how the students answer my questions, how I comment and move around. If you move the cursor slowly up and down from minute 02.17 to 02.19 you will see how I smile and reach over to the students to hear them better and to encourage them. This activity was the building block for moving on to discuss possible definitions of the human person based on general knowledge and later, from the philosophical perspective.



Clip 19 PA class 5th July 2012

In the clip you may have noticed that I keep moving back to the desk and that I do not move up the room. This is because I needed to move to the slides to write in the points which the students were making. This was a challenge which continued throughout the semester when we did this kind of work. It was only in the last week of class that it occurred to my Graduate Assistant and I that she could stay at the desk and write up on the slides the points which came from the students, while I moved around with the mike listening to their points, and commenting on them. We did this in the last few classes and it worked well as we got through a lot of material and saved time. I was also able to reach the students more directly and personally, which I prefer. Unfortunately I do not have this system recorded on video as my assistant was the person taking the video on some occasions and the days we used the new system, we did not have another cameraman in the room.

Other ways I create a spiration of love in freedom for personal growth

After the experience with one of my students in November 2004 which I described above, I have tried many ways to improve the quality of my relationships with the students, and among themselves. This has involved transforming myself and my way of doing things in class.

Among others things, I try to show through my gestures, way of moving around the classroom, tone of voice, etc. that I am open to them as they are and want to create a friendly atmosphere in the classroom where they can learn in a comfortable environment. Sometimes I invite them to get to know each other if they are doing different courses, etc.

The following is a clip of my first class with a group of students on 2nd July 2012 which illustrates the approach I take now. I had invited them to stand up and greet at least one person they didn't know. The class was made up of various smaller groups of students from different courses so I thought that this would help to break the ice. As I discovered through the exercise, some already knew each other as they had shared a unit during the previous semester. However, at least it helped to get them communicating with each other again. You can also hear parts of my conversation with some of the students. I had decided to take the initiative in moving around to greet them, so that they would do likewise. I shake hands because this is the usual and traditional form of greeting in Kenya, even amongst peers. You see in the clip how some students shake hands with each other. I also try to put warmth and interest into my tone of voice as I speak with three or four students. This is very different to the scene from November 2004 which I described earlier. Here I approach the students with warmth and friendliness, and they respond in a similar manner.

Time has passed, students' attitudes are changing, some of these students knew each other although they did not know me. But I too have changed because I can now create an atmosphere in the first class with students unknown to me, in which they are willing to stand up, greet me and each other. This is evidence of how I have transformed myself during my eight years of teaching at Strathmore University.



Clip 20 Students greeting each other PA class 2nd July 2012

At times I have to explain explicitly to my students in the first class of a semester, that my intention is to create positive relationships amongst us, and that I will not shout at them, nor ridicule them. I explain that I want them to feel able to open up and give their opinions, to encourage them to participate in class for their own sake, so that they can learn from

each other and overcome possible fears, shyness, etc. I try to tease them a little, talk about what is happening on the football scene or the music scene, etc. in Kenya, or about things that are happening at the university.

As I move around the classroom I go up to individual students to hear them better or encourage them to reply, and make sure I respond positively to their replies while opening up further horizons if necessary as may be seen in the following clip:



Clip 21 Listening and responding to a student PA class 2nd July 2012

In the clip below I ask students to try to work out in small group discussions, the meaning of the term “wisdom”. I move around the classroom as a way of encouraging them to actually carry out the task, although they begin slowly. This is one of my ways of getting them to actually do class work, particularly if they are a bit sleepy, reluctant or slow. In this clip I ask one group of students to include a student behind them who is alone. These are the kind of details I try to be attentive to, in order to show concern for each student and help them to be involved in what is happening in class.



Clip 22 Discussing Wisdom PA class 2nd July 2012

The following clip shows part of the feedback from students on their understanding of “wisdom” after the small group discussion. I try to listen attentively and respond positively to the students’ input, let them complete each others’ ideas and accept ideas they suggest

which I had not thought of. This is evidence of my way of being in the classroom as I try to live my educational values now.



Clip 23 Feedback and discussion on Wisdom PA class 2nd July 2012

The response from these students to my way of being in the class room and efforts to live by my educational values are reflected in their mid semester and end of semester feedback, which I have incorporated into part three of this Chapter.

Am I any different to other lecturers at Strathmore University?

In Chapter Seven I explained the evolution which has taken place at Strathmore in academic staff development while I have been working there. We have had many seminars and training workshops on teaching and learning methods. However, the experience is that not many staff members are actually implementing the things they have learnt. After I made the presentation at a seminar on 9th November 2012 which I discussed in Chapter Seven, a part time staff member approached me in the cafeteria. He wanted to talk about my session. He explained that he participated in a workshop organized by the Developing Research Capacity among African Environmental Scientists (DRECA) Project, in Kampala (Uganda) in August 2012 where he had learnt about a variety of student centered, interactive teaching methods. He was excited to discover from my presentation that someone at Strathmore is trying to implement the things which he had learnt about at the workshop. When I asked, he said that he is trying to use some of the methods in his classes now. Later he sent me a soft copy of the material which had been distributed at the workshop.

A couple of our staff members participated in the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PCAP) which was run at Strathmore by York St. John University with funding

from the British Council in Kenya, for academic staff from five Kenyan universities (2010). The staff from Strathmore have been trying to incorporate a more student centered approach to their teaching as a result. However, those of us who are working in this way are still in the minority.

From November 2012 to February 2013 I was assigned to teach Philosophical Anthropology to two groups of students. However, I only taught in November and December as, in January and February my Graduate Assistant did her teaching practice with these groups. The groups were BCOM 2B, which was made up of 100 second year Commerce students and the Mixed Group (40 students), which was made up of first and second year students doing Commerce, Informatics and Telecommunications. In order to try to ascertain whether my work in the classroom is perceived by students to be different to that of other lecturers at Strathmore, I gave these students a feedback questionnaire in February 2013.

The student feedback was very interesting and generally very positive (see Appendix X). It provides clear evidence of how I stand out from other lecturers at Strathmore as a person, in my teaching and learning style, in the classroom environment which I create and in terms of the impact I have on students. They have identified, independently, important aspects of what I try to do and be in my life and practice:

- ✓ My attitude towards them as students
- ✓ My professional skills in the classroom
- ✓ My personal qualities
- ✓ The teaching methods I use
- ✓ Qualities of my teaching style
- ✓ The environment I try to create in the classroom
- ✓ Effective learning processes linked to this environment
- ✓ The impact I have on them as persons, in their learning, in understanding the relevance of Philosophical Anthropology, etc.

These students explain very clearly what they have perceived in me. This evidence confirms that I really do what I have said I try to do in my practice, and also highlights the fact that my practice stands out from that of other lecturers at Strathmore University.

At the same time, in comparison with that of March 2006, this student feedback indicates that I have definitely transformed myself as a person and my practice through my commitment to living my values over time, while also allowing them to evolve. The feedback above indicates that I do live these values:

Foster love for my students and amongst my students
Respect our mutual freedom
Facilitate my students in their efforts to transform themselves as persons

Table 9 My living educational values now

As I mentioned at the start of this part of Chapter Eight, I have also discovered that these values are rooted in something deeper: my love for the human person. Ultimately, this passion for the person has been growing ever stronger in me as I tried to reach out to my students and improve my practice for their sake, by living the various values which motivated me at different moments and which I have explained throughout Chapter Eight. The three values indicated above have become part of who I am and my way of being in the world. However I would say that, in spite of my failings, essentially I have become passionate about the person.

Summary

In Chapter Eight (C) I have provided evidence of how I transformed myself over time as I tried to improve my teaching practice, based on my students needs at Strathmore University.

In Appendix Y I present evidence of how living my values in my practice has had an influence on some lecturers at Strathmore University, and a significant ripple effect through one of my students in particular.

In Chapter Nine, I will explain my living educational theory regarding my passion for the person, using my understanding of the intimate life of interpersonal love which characterizes the mystery of the Blessed Trinity.

Section Four: In Search of Meaning

In this Section I will present my living educational theory (Chapter Nine) and the contributions to knowledge which I offer in my doctoral enquiry (Conclusion).

Chapter Nine: Creating a spiration of love in freedom for personal growth

In this Chapter I will draw out my living educational theory, which has emerged from reflection on my life and practice throughout most of my life and particularly during my doctoral research.

A living (educational) theory is an explanation produced by an individual for their educational influence in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formation in which they live and work (Whitehead 2008, p. 104).

In this Chapter I will explain how I understand my influence in my own learning and that of others during the last nine years of my life, in Kenya. Through living my evolving values in my life and practice, I have transformed myself and tried to facilitate the transformation of those with whom I live and work. In this process, I have developed a body of knowledge which expresses my understanding of myself, others, and our interpersonal relationships in my life and practice.

I will summarise some of the key ideas in my methodological approach. I will recall the emergence of my implicit values through my research. I will offer a brief philosophical explanation of my living educational theory as it has emerged in practice. I will then explain it from a deeper and higher perspective, using my theological knowledge of the mystery of the Blessed Trinity and the practical implications of this mystery in the life of the Christian. In this process I will show that my passion for the person is a unifying synthesis of my three living values.

Drawing on my ideas in Chapter Two, to move forward

In Chapter Two I explained how I developed my methodology. I expressed my understanding of practitioner research and how it is manifested particularly in Action Research. I also indicated that the living educational theory approach inspired some

elements of my methodology. As I explained my methodological approach I highlighted the following:

- The constant interplay between action and an ever deeper understanding of the meanings of the experience which that action gave rise to, through reflective self-questioning;
- The values I use as living standards of judgement are a key element in motivating me to improve my practice (action) and to know and understand it better as I try to live those values in real life;
- Understanding one's motivating values in the context of one's practice leads to formulating ideas and principles which help to explain and guide one's action (theory);
- This theory is not purely abstract and intellectual, it is alive or living, because I strive to live it out in my practice each day;
- Through on-going reflection on my practice, changing circumstances and new challenges, I adjust the way I live out my motivating values. This in turn gives rise to a new and deeper understanding of these values and how to live them coherently in each context;
- My living educational theory is truly "living" because although it has a stable foundation, my understanding and way of living out my educational theory develops over time, as my life and circumstances evolve.

I can now add that my methodology has contributed to my quest to discover the meaning hidden in my life experience. It helps me to draw out my understanding of my experience in intellectual terms, and to make it explicit by expressing that meaning in ways which illustrate the knowledge contained in that meaning.

Now I will show how the emergence of my living values has enlightened my understanding of the meaning of my life and practice.

My emerging values and their convergence

In my dissertation I have described my personal background and particular moments which influenced me in a decisive manner: the family life and love which I experienced growing up in my parents' home in Ireland, and in the Centres of the Work in which I lived after I

discovered my personal call to Opus Dei; my initial love for freedom and truth; my desires for personal growth and development (Chapter Three).

I have shown how my experience of family love, freedom, truth and personal growth were further developed and acquired a more intellectual basis through my study of Philosophy and Theology in Rome. My years of teaching experience in Rome were also important foundations for my professional practice in Kenya (Chapter Four).

My initial visits to Kenya were touch stones in identifying possible challenges to my still fairly implicit values, caused by the radical change of circumstances, cultural diversity, professional challenges, etc. My decision to live and work in Kenya was made with the knowledge of these challenges, and was based on my loving desire to do God's Will for me. Ultimately it was a manifestation of my commitment to Him thanks to my vocation to Opus Dei (Chapter Five).

I have brought this sense of commitment to my life and teaching practice in Kenya over the last nine years.

In Chapter Six I reflected on and analysed my family and social life in Kenya, along with the knowledge I have developed of Kenyan culture, particularly the education system. I concluded that this learning experience and my response to it was the fruit of:

my appreciation of family love, freedom of spirit and openness to my own growth, along with my willingness to help others develop themselves as persons. These are the personal characteristics which I brought with me to Kenya, thanks to my prior life experience.

In Chapter Seven, I explained the development of my non-teaching activities at Strathmore University, mainly in terms of the University Mission Statement, and in the context of academic staff development over the years. I concluded that:

I was motivated, in all this activity, by my implicit values: love for the person; respect for and development of human freedom; fostering of personal growth. As I finalized this chapter, it became clear to me that the unifying factor in these values and underlying my activity has been my love for the person in himself or herself. This love for the person resonates with and reflects the impact of the Strathmore University mission on my life and practice.

In Chapter Eight I analysed my work with students at Strathmore University while teaching Philosophical Anthropology or Principles of Ethics over a nine year period.

- In Chapter Eight (A) I discussed the contents of the units I teach and how they link to my love for the person, his / her freedom and personal growth. I showed how I grappled with the challenges in my teaching practice during my first three semesters at Strathmore and discussed the implicit educational values I had brought with me from Rome and their evolution in that period:

	My values in Rome and Kenya: October 2004	My values in March 2006
1.	Make the contents interesting	Make learning interesting and enjoyable
2.	Relate the contents to real life by drawing out their practical implications	Get my students thinking
3.	Try to make my students enjoy their learning experience	Help my student to apply philosophical theory to real life

Table 10 Remembering my values in 2004 and 2006

- In Chapter Eight (B) I presented some of the forms of assessments which I designed to enhance my teaching practice and student learning from July 2006 to September 2010 and the on-going evolution of my educational values:

Evolution in my educational values: 2004 to 2009		
	October 2004/March 2006	November 2008 – February / October 2009
1.	Make learning interesting/enjoyable	Create a conducive learning environment
2.	Get students thinking	Intellectual – practical change in students
3.	Apply theory to life	Personal – behavioural change in students

Table 11 Recalling how my values evolved 2006 – 2008

Evolution of my educational values from November 2008 to October 2010	
November 2008 – October 2009	November 2009 – October 2010
Create a conducive learning environment	Foster love for my students and amongst my students
Intellectual – practical change in students	Respect our mutual freedom
Personal – behavioural change in students	Facilitate my students in their efforts to transform themselves as persons

Table 12 Remembering my values 2009 – 2010

- I also showed how I used small group and class discussions to enhance my teaching practice and live my educational values from November 2010 to September 2012. During this time, I expressed my values as follows:

Create a spiration of love, in freedom, for personal growth.

For purposes of simplification of language, I also expressed them as shown in the above chart, on the right hand side.

- In Chapter Eight (C) I illustrated my personal self-transformation in the classroom, starting with a shock encounter with a student in November 2004, shortly after I started teaching at Strathmore, up to December 2012. I discuss my transformation following the evolution of my values. My underlying concern was to continuously improve my rapport with my students, although I had new groups each semester.

As I stated at the end of the Chapter:

I have discovered that these values are rooted in something deeper: my love for the human person. Ultimately, this passion for the person had been growing ever stronger in me as I strove to reach out to my students and improve my practice for their sake, by living the various values which motivated me at different moments and which I have explained throughout chapter eight.

- In Appendix Y I illustrated how living my values in my practice has had an influence on some lecturers at Strathmore University and in one of my students in particular. I conclude that my values may be summarized in my *passion for the*

person, which has grown, spread and extended itself to other people through my efforts to live my values in my life and practice.

I have summarized here the source and origin of my living values at the implicit level based on my early life experience and my studies. I have indicated which values were motivating me while teaching in Rome and when I started teaching in Kenya. I have recalled how these values evolved through my life and teaching practice in Kenya to the point of making explicit, the implicit values which I had assimilated earlier in life. I have expressed these as:

- Foster love for my students and amongst my students => create mutual loving relationships
- Respect our mutual freedom => love for freedom
- Facilitate my students in their efforts to transform themselves as persons => personal growth and development

As I have carried out my doctoral research, and reflected more deeply on these values and how they move me in my daily life and professional practice, I have discovered that they are all facets of one, unifying passion or purpose which has emerged through my commitment to adjust to my new life and teaching practice in Kenya. That is my love, or passion for the human person.

A philosophical explanation for my passion for the person

I can explain the meaning of my passion (or love) for the person thanks to my study of the human person from the philosophical perspective and my many years experience in teaching Philosophical Anthropology. As I discussed in Chapter Four, the thinkers who made the greatest impact on me in terms of the human person and freedom were: Quiroga, Frankl, John Paul II and Thomas Aquinas.

My passion for the person expresses itself in different ways. It involves reaching out to other people to accept, understand and love them as they are. This is possible because human beings are capable of genuine, interpersonal relationships, based on knowledge, love as an act of the will, and the emotion of love when it arises (Mimbi 2007, pp. 240-244). It means recognising the value of each and every person, as unique human beings with infinite potential and possibilities (Burke 2007, pp. 72-79). This requires selfless

loving on my part. I strive not to seek the love of others in return, nor to love them as I think they should or need to be loved, but as they want to be loved. I must respect the freedom of others, as well as my own, which is rooted in our personal way of being (Mimbi 2007; Burke 2007; Frankl 2000). My passion for the person moves me to give myself to others for love, and to accept the gift of the other person as he or she is, for love. I try to live my life as a personal gift of love to others, while being open to receiving each person as a gift of love. In this process I develop as a person because as I try to know and love other people more and better, while respecting our mutual freedom, I actualize my personal potential and move closer to self-fulfilment and happiness (Mimbi 2007, pp. 320-322 and p. 335).

I have been particularly influenced by John Paul II's writings on the meaning of the family, human life and love as the context for understanding the mystery of the human person, perhaps because they resonate with my personal experience. As he wrote in *Familiaris Consortio* (1981, numbers 17-18):

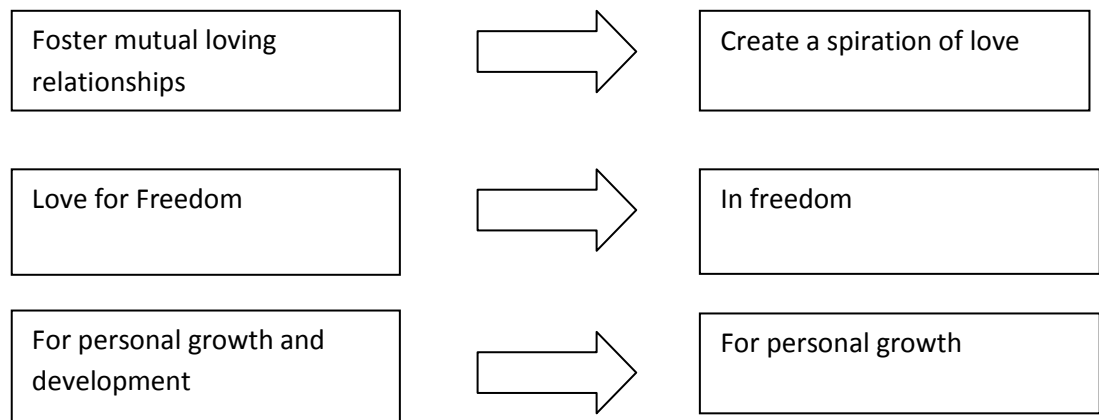
Love is therefore the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being (...) The family, which is founded and given life by love, is a community of persons: of husband and wife, of parents and children, of relatives. Its first task is to live with fidelity the reality of communion in a constant effort to develop an authentic community of persons. The inner principle of that task, its permanent power and its final goal is love: without love the family is not a community of persons and, in the same way, without love the family cannot live, grow and perfect itself as a community of persons. What I wrote in the Encyclical *Redemptor hominis* (n. 45) applies primarily and especially within the family as such: 'Man cannot live without love. He remains a being that is incomprehensible for himself, his life is senseless, if love is not revealed to him, if he does not encounter love, if he does not experience it and make it his own, if he does not participate intimately in it.'

The human person is made for love, but s/he will only discover that this is the meaning of his / her existence if they have the opportunity to experience love and so, learn to love. It is within the family as a community of persons that each human being can and should be offered the gift of love so they can discover the true meaning of their lives.

The living theory of my life is rooted in my personal experience of being loved by my parents and learning to love others at home, as well as in my experience of being loved by others in Opus Dei and striving to love each person in my spiritual family as they are. This has fostered in me the passion for the person which is present in my life and practice and which has become my way of life, my personal way of being in the world.

A theological explanation for my living values⁶⁰

I can explain my living theory from a deeper and higher perspective, using my theological knowledge of the mystery of the Blessed Trinity as the central mystery in Christianity. I have explained that my passion for the person is a unifying synthesis of my three living values, which I have expressed in two parallel ways:



The expression *Create a spiration of love in freedom for personal growth* is inspired in my understanding of the intimate life of interpersonal love which constitutes the mystery of the Blessed Trinity.

Catholic belief regarding the Blessed Trinity may be known because God Himself has revealed it to mankind (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1993, n. 261), and because it has been accepted as true by the individual person with the help of the gift of supernatural faith (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1993, n. 150).

This mystery is summarised in the *Athanasian Creed*, as quoted in the Catechism of the Catholic Church 1993, n. 266:

Now this is the Catholic faith: We worship one God in the Trinity and the Trinity in unity, without either confusing the persons or dividing the substance; for the person of the Father is one, the Son's is another, the Holy Spirit's another; but the Godhead of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is one, their glory equal, their majesty coeternal (Athanasian Creed).

It may be broken down as follows:

⁶⁰ In Appendix Z I provide an analysis of recent literature on the Blessed Trinity. I discuss the concept of “Unity in Diversity” in more depth using recent theological and social discussion. I offer an explanation of the term ‘spiration’.

- God, the One Supreme Being, exists in three different Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit => there are three different Persons in the One God;
 - God is a mystery of unity in plurality or plurality in unity
- These three persons are really distinct from each other
 - There is real diversity in God
- The radical oneness of the divine substance is not divided by or amongst the three persons
 - The real diversity of the divine persons does not destroy the radical unity of God
- The mystery of the Blessed Trinity is a mystery of unity in diversity or of diversity in unity
 - The source of diversity in God are the three divine Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit
 - The source of unity in God is the one divine substance or nature

The three divine persons are radically different from one another due to their mutual, interpersonal relationships. The key to the preservation of the radical unity of God lies in the fact that through these relationships, the three divine persons communicate the one divine nature amongst themselves (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1993, n. 255). In this process, they communicate the divine life, which is made up of perfect knowledge and love (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1993, n. 231; Aquinas 1947, ST I, q. 27, a. 3)⁶¹. In number 10 of his encyclical *Dominum et Vivificantem* (1986), John Paul II explains that the intratrinitarian life is a communication of mutual love amongst the Persons (Aquinas 1947, ST I, qq. 37-38). The core of the mystery is that the Blessed Trinity is a communion of diverse persons united in one nature, life and love.

As such, the Trinitarian mystery has been presented as the model and source of various created realities, particularly of the human person and the family (John Paul II 1994, *Letter to Families*, n. 6 and numbers 9-10; *Familiaris Consortio* (1981), n. 11). They are images of the intimate life of the Blessed Trinity, due to their innate call to love and self-giving in a communion of persons (Ibid.).

⁶¹ These eternal acts, which remain within God, have been used to explain the origin of the divine persons, through the divine processions of generation-knowledge and spiration-love.

The Blessed Trinity and my spiration of love

I understand, and have often explained the mystery of the intimate life of the Blessed Trinity as an absolutely free, eternal spiraling (or spiration) of love amongst the divine persons, who subsist in the total communion and perfect harmony of the Triune God.

My living value create a spiration of love is inspired in this mystery. It expresses my conviction that people who are different, can establish loving interpersonal relationships when united in a common activity. The unity in the diversity of persons which characterizes the Blessed Trinity can be lived out by us human beings as unity within our diversity, when we are moved by interpersonal love. I have shown in Chapter Eight how some of the projects which I assigned to my students had this underlying motivation, and achieved this goal.

The Blessed Trinity and my love for freedom

As I mentioned in Chapter Four, Walter Kasper wrote about God as absolute freedom in his work *The God of Jesus Christ* (1984). He refers to God as “perfect freedom in Love” (p. 157). We can then argue that Trinitarian life is the absolutely free communication of love among the divine persons. My living value love for freedom is inspired in the freedom of the three divine persons as they communicate their love through their interpersonal relationships (Kasper 1984, p. 308).

Just as the mystery of the person touches on the mystery of the Blessed Trinity, so too the mystery of our freedom touches on the freedom of the three divine persons. As the core of their interpersonal relations is freedom in love, so too, freedom in love is the key in our interpersonal relations with other human beings (Kasper 1984, p. 316). As a consequence, we should respect our personal freedom as a gift which makes us capable of giving and receiving love freely, like the three divine persons. We should also respect the freedom of others and, if we truly love them, it is only natural that we want to help them to discover the gift of their own freedom so that they too can learn to love in freedom.

In Chapter Eight I have shown how I try, in various ways, to lovingly respect my students’ freedom. I have provided evidence of how I use assignments and teaching methods to make them aware of the power of their personal freedom. Some have discovered that they can use their freedom to take ownership of their lives and to transform themselves. I have

also shown how I have used my freedom to transform myself for the sake of my students throughout my nine years of lecturing at Strathmore University. All these efforts have meaning in terms of our personal being and our relationship with God, who is perfect freedom in love.

The Blessed Trinity and my personal growth

In the Blessed Trinity, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit live out their life of love, freely communicated and received in an absolute and perfect manner, without any development or growth in the quality or degree of their interpersonal communion of love. This is because each divine person, as God, is absolute and perfect fullness of Being. There is no potency to be actualized in any of the divine persons, and so we cannot speak of personal growth or development in the Blessed Trinity as such. However, they do provide us with models of perfect personhood which can guide us in our efforts to develop ourselves as persons, within the possibilities of our nature. Essentially the three divine persons reveal the meaning of personhood as total openness to the “other” through the sincere gift of self (John Paul II 1988, *Mulieris Dignitatem*, n. 7).

It is important to note that biblical revelation regarding the mystery of God uses “anthropomorphisms”, that is human language with references to male and female features, because we are made in his “image and likeness” and he too is like us in some way. This makes it possible for us to know him, and to speak about him, albeit in an analogical manner.

If there is a likeness between Creator and creatures, it is understandable that the Bible would refer to God using expressions that attribute to him both “masculine” and “feminine” qualities (...) In various passages the love of God who cares for his people is shown to be like that of a mother: thus, like a mother God “has carried” humanity, and in particular, his Chosen People, within his own womb; he has given birth to it in travail, has nourished and comforted it (cf. Is 42:14; 46: 3-4). In many passages God's love is presented as the “masculine” love of the bridegroom and father (cf. Hosea 11:1-4; Jer 3:4-19), but also sometimes as the “feminine” love of a mother (John Paul II 1988, *Mulieris Dignitatem*, n. 8).

When revelation refers to God as Father, or Son, it is not claiming that the masculine characteristics which the terms signify in the human world belong to God in Himself. Regarding the eternal generation of the Son by the Father, Scripture is using

anthropomorphisms to communicate the mysterious reality of the eternal “generation” which characterizes the inner life of the Blessed Trinity.

in itself this "generating" has neither "masculine" nor "feminine" qualities. It is by nature totally divine. It is spiritual in the most perfect way, since "God is spirit" (Jn 4:24) and possesses no property typical of the body, neither "feminine" nor "masculine". Thus even "fatherhood" in God is completely divine and free of the "masculine" bodily characteristics proper to human fatherhood (Ibid.).

At the same time, God is the primary model of all generation which in Him is divine and purely spiritual.

Thus every element of human generation which is proper to man, and every element which is proper to woman, namely human "fatherhood" and "motherhood", bears within itself a likeness to, or analogy with the divine "generating" and with that "fatherhood" which in God is "totally different", that is, completely spiritual and divine in essence; whereas in the human order, generation is proper to the "unity of the two": both are "parents", the man and the woman alike (Ibid.).

Another way of explaining this mystery is to consider that generation in God is so sublime and perfect that it cannot be fully manifested in the created world through one gender alone. The existence of man and woman with their capacity for fatherhood and motherhood, together provide a complete image of the mystery of generation in God. We can say that we find both femininity and masculinity in God, in an analogous manner (Burggraf 1997, pp. 108-109).

In the document *Mulieris Dignitatem* John Paul II emphasizes the equal dignity of both man and woman. He also highlights the radical diversity that exists between the two and locates it in the personal capacity for motherhood or fatherhood (1988, n. 17). He discusses the dignity and role of the woman in God's plan of salvation and explains how her motherhood, physical or spiritual is

linked to the personal structure of the woman and to the personal dimension of the gift (John Paul II 1988, *Mulieris Dignitatem*, n. 18).

Each person is capable of being loved and of loving. Woman, as a person and in her femininity (feminine person) highlights the supremacy of love in all interpersonal relations.

A woman's dignity is closely connected with the love which she receives by the very reason of her femininity; it is likewise connected with the love which she gives in return. The truth about the person and about love is thus confirmed (...) Woman can only find herself by giving love to others (John Paul II 1988, *Mulieris Dignitatem*, n. 30).

Woman, in her femininity, reveals every human being's capacity and need to be loved and to love in a generous gift of self to the "other". John Paul II explains that God has entrusted humanity to woman in a special way because of her femininity. She is capable of retaining and promoting sensitivity towards the human person as such.

our time in particular awaits the manifestation of that "genius" which belongs to women, and which can ensure sensitivity for human beings in every circumstance: because they are human! (Ibid.).

When women discover the entire meaning of their femininity they can prepare themselves to make a "sincere gift of self" to others, and actually "find themselves" in this process (John Paul II 1988, *Mulieris Dignitatem*, n. 3) by exercising their feminine genius (John Paul II 1988, *Mulieris Dignitatem*, n. 31).

The following considerations illustrate how the mystery of the Blessed Trinity resonates with me as a woman who knows and feels herself to be loved by God and seeks to respond with the sincere gift of myself to God and to others.

I can discover in God the Father a model of total and perfect giving of self to the other, in love. I have shown through my life experience at home and in Rome, along with the challenge of adjusting to my new cultural circumstances in Kenya, how I have constantly tried to give myself to others, moved by my love for them. This is particularly evident in Chapters Six, Seven and Eight where I show how this loving self-giving motivated me to change my way of interacting with others, get involved in contributing to the mission of Strathmore University in various ways, adjust my teaching methods to the needs of my students and so transform myself. This learning how to give myself to others for love in different contexts is an ongoing process of personal growth and development for me, which at times also has an impact on others who are able to see my efforts and are inspired to develop themselves as persons too.

In the Son I discover the model of the person who allows herself/himself to be loved, by accepting the other person in a totally open, loving and selfless manner. This too has been a learning experience for me as I found myself in different social and cultural contexts, particularly in Rome where I lived with people from all over the world. This learning experience was even greater when I moved to Kenya, where I found very diverse people, attitudes, ways of living and interacting with others, etc. I often tried to understand these different personal ways of being and acting, in order to accept and love the people with whom I live and work. Over time I discovered that the first step for me has to be acceptance of people as they are. I now try to foster in my heart that open, loving willingness to take people as they come, accept and love them as they are for their own sakes, although I may not always understand or agree with them. This is shown clearly in Chapter Eight where I explain how my attitude towards and interaction with my students has developed and changed to the point of radically accepting them as they are, and where they are at, in respect and love. I illustrate this particularly in the way I deal with students who arrive late to class, and how I try to encourage students to participate without forcing them to do so. All this has required my personal effort to develop myself in terms of receiving others in a loving manner.

In the Holy Spirit, I find a model of total and perfect love, personified. In my efforts to love other people more and better, by giving myself to them or accepting them as they are, love grows in me and I become a more loving person. As perfect Love is infinite, I can always become more loving by striving to put more love into my interpersonal relations with family, friends, colleagues and students. My efforts to adjust myself to other people and contribute to achieving the mission of Strathmore University have ultimately been motivated by my love for God and for others. My personal, loving way of being in the world which is specifically feminine has grown and developed and is now manifested in what I call my passion for the person.

I have shown how my living values can be explained by my understanding of the Blessed Trinity as a mystery of free, interpersonal loving communion amongst the divine persons.

My passion for the person as a sharing in the life of the Blessed Trinity

As I explained in Chapter Four, I particularly enjoyed studying the mystery of the life of grace and the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity in the Christian. It helped me to understand

more deeply the call of all human beings to share in the interpersonal life and love of the Blessed Trinity, as children of God, while we live in time and space (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1993, n. 236 and n. 257; Vatican Council II 1965, *Dei Verbum*, n. 2; Scheeben 1946; Dean 1993).

This personal sharing in the life of the Blessed Trinity becomes a reality in the Christian who has been baptized and received the gift of sanctifying grace, along with the mysterious presence of the Blessed Trinity in his / her soul⁶². As God is all powerful he can raise our human nature to his own divine level, by acting in our souls moved by his love for us. In Baptism, the three divine persons come to live in the human person and share their communion of love with him / her, through the mystery of the divine missions (Aquinas 1927, ST I, q. 43, aa. 2, 3 and 8), bringing about a radical transformation of the person⁶³. However, the ultimate goal of this divine action is to bring the human person into the eternal unity of the Blessed Trinity⁶⁴. Through the mystery of sanctifying grace and the presence of the Blessed Trinity in the soul, the human person begins to share in the loving, interpersonal communion of the Trinitarian life beyond the limits of time and space⁶⁵. This is how the Catholic Church understands God's revelation in Christ, of his eternal plan of salvation. It is a supernatural mystery that is beyond the realm of natural knowledge, but which we can access through the gift of supernatural faith in God's Word as he has revealed it to mankind. The Catechism of the Catholic Church clarifies this point (1993, n. 2005):

Since it belongs to the supernatural order, grace escapes our experience and cannot be known except by faith. We cannot therefore rely on our feelings or our works to conclude that we are justified and saved.

As I explained in Chapter One, I am using theological concepts that are based on divine revelation which is accepted with the gift of supernatural faith, to explain my living educational theory.

⁶² The Catechism of the Catholic Church (1993) explains the mystery of grace in numbers 1996 – 2005. See also Aquinas 1947, ST I-II, q. 110, a. 4; ST I, q. 43, a. 5.

⁶³ Scheeben 1946, *The Mysteries of Christianity*, p. 142 and p.156.

⁶⁴ Catechism of the Catholic Church 1993, n. 260; The Bible, John 17: 21-24; Scheeben, 1946, *The Mysteries of Christianity*, p. 178.

⁶⁵ This aspect of the mystery of our salvation has been explained by theologians as the logic of the exitus – reinitus. That is, the Triune God, the Blessed Trinity, has gratuitously “come out” (exitus) of himself and revealed his inner life and the meaning of the created world, especially the purpose of each person. This meaning and purpose is that each person and the created world should “return” (reinitus), with the Blessed Trinity to share his inner life of interpersonal love for all eternity.

I can now show how my passion for the person is rooted in my sharing in the life of the Blessed Trinity. At the same time, this passion is a manifestation of my femininity as it involves sensitivity towards other people. As such, it contributes to revealing the value of each and every person and their capacity to be loved and to love as I explained above. This is part of the mission which God has entrusted to me as a woman and so it is reasonable that my passion for the person be rooted in my sharing in his intimate life of interpersonal, loving communion.

The supernatural source of my passion for the person

My passion for the person has its origin not just in my experience of family love, my studies, my efforts to adjust to my life and teaching practice in Kenya, nor in the philosophical or theological explanations which I have provided above. It is rooted in my struggle to live my life in communion with my Father God, as his daughter in the Son (Christ), moved by the love of the Holy Spirit, through my sharing in the life of the Blessed Trinity who is present in my soul in grace.

I was baptised in the Catholic Church. I freely responded to my personal call from God to return his love for me by living the spirit of Opus Dei. As I explained in Chapters Three and Four, love for freedom is an essential characteristic of the Work. I have experienced this in many ways over the last thirty years. My parents and my family the Work have educated me in the faith and helped me to live my faith freely each day as I try to develop an authentic Christian life. This has been produced in me by the gift of grace and the presence of the Blessed Trinity in my soul, as I have explained above.

The spirit of Opus Dei involves struggling to seek union with God and bring other people to him, in and through my family and social life, my work and daily activities. As the Statutes of Opus Dei explain (Rodriguez, Ocariz and Illanes 1994, Appendix 2), I rely on the support of practices of piety which form part of the tradition of the Church, particularly frequent reception of the Sacraments of Holy Communion and Confession and a constant life of prayer. These practices contribute to maintaining and developing the life of grace in my soul, thus helping me to share more deeply in the intimate life of the Blessed Trinity dwelling in me. As St Josemaria often explained, these practices of piety are very flexible and each person freely adapts them to their personal circumstances.

Try to commit yourself to a plan of life⁶⁶ and to keep to it (...) You should not let them become rigid rules, or water-tight compartments. They should be flexible, to help you on your journey you who live in the middle of the world, with a life of hard professional work and social ties and obligations which you should not neglect, because in them your conversation with God still continues. Your plan of life ought to be like a rubber glove which fits the hand perfectly (Escriva 1981, *Friends of God*, n. 149).

The Father, Son and Holy Spirit live a life in which each person subsists as God because of their distinct and loving relationship with another divine person. This relationship or inclination towards another person, is what makes them be persons. The Blessed Trinity is made up of these relationships, which involve each person inclining towards another person in and through love.

If each divine person is a radical inclination towards another person based on the exchange of mutual love, then we can say that each divine person is characterized by their passion (love) for the other divine person with whom they exist in relation (Burggraf 2000, pp.144-145). At the same time, the divine persons have extended their loving passion for each other to the human person. God, who gratuitously created man to share in his intimate divine life, is truly passionate about the human person.

I personally share in the relations between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as a daughter of God the Father, in God the Son, through God the Holy Spirit (The Bible, Galatians 4: 5-7) due the presence of the Blessed Trinity in my soul in grace. As each of these persons is passionate about the other in their mutual love, and I share in their interpersonal relations, they are lovingly passionate about me. At the same time, I share in each person's passion for the other divine persons, and in their loving passion for the human person which extends beyond the divine life.

The term passion for the person which I use to refer to my inclination to reach out lovingly to other people is actually a manifestation of my sharing in the loving passion for the other divine or human person, which characterizes the life of the Blessed Trinity. As I struggle to love the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the ordinary things of each day, I am sharing in the loving communion of the divine persons. This enables me to reach out of myself and bring

⁶⁶ *Plan of life* is a term which St Josemaria coined to refer to the practices of piety which the people of the Work and many other Christians try to live each day.

their love to others, by creating a spiration of love, a mutual exchange of love amongst the persons with whom I interact in daily life.

Escriva wrote that the adventure of each human life involves the encounter between two freedoms: that of each person and that of God. The way I use my freedom is not a meaningless issue in the way my life unfolds. It leads me to an encounter with the freedom of God. God freely offers me a sharing in the intimate life of love of the Blessed Trinity through grace. If I respond to his love with the full freedom of my own love, I can enjoy the free communication of love amongst the three divine persons.

My freedom is then a sharing in the freedom in love of the Blessed Trinity (Kasper 1984, p. 308). Their loving passion for the person, which I too share, is a free, gratuitous love for the other person, divine or human. In my passion for the person, I reach out to others to offer them the free, disinterested love of the Blessed Trinity which flows through me to other people. They in turn are free to accept or reject that love.

My efforts to freely love and fulfill the will of my Father, as his loving daughter in Christ the Son, with the help of the Holy Spirit increases my union with each of these divine persons. I grow personally because I become freer, more loving and open to others as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit draw me more deeply into their interpersonal relations. My personal participation in their divine characteristics and in the loving communion of the Blessed Trinity becomes more radical. All this contributes to increasing my happiness and sense of fulfillment because I have discovered and I am able to live out the deepest meaning of my personal existence, as revealed by God in Christ.

This experience increases my free and loving passion for the person which I share with the Blessed Trinity. It moves me to reach out to help others develop by discovering themselves, their personal identity, the meaning of their lives, and their greatest destiny. In my growing passion for the person I try to facilitate others in attaining their true goal in life, so that they too may experience the sense of happiness and personal fulfillment which we all desire.

I bring this real, divine passion for the person as I experience and share it in the life of the Blessed Trinity, to my relationships with other people in my everyday life. This is the

deep, unifying factor that influences and explains my way of interacting with others in my life and practice, as I have illustrated in Chapters Six, Seven and Eight.

Summary

In this Chapter I have shown how my living values form the basis for my living educational theory which I have explained using philosophical and theological considerations. I express my theory as my passion for the person which is how I understand my influence in my own learning and that of others in my life and practice over the last nine years in Kenya. As I have shown, my passion for the person is rooted in the reality of my sharing in the interpersonal, loving communion of the Blessed Trinity. It is an expression of my living values *creating a spiration of love, in freedom, for personal growth*.

In the Conclusion I will present my original contributions to knowledge through my doctoral enquiry.

Conclusion

In this Conclusion I will present the contributions that I make to the knowledge base of practitioner research through the theory of practice which I have developed.

My learning through my doctoral research

The first section of my dissertation deals with methodological considerations. This was a learning path for me as in Chapter One I synthesise for the first time my personal approach to research based on my intellectual background. In Chapter Two I discuss practitioner research, Action Research and the living educational theory approach, all of which were new to me. I explain how I designed my research methodology using:

- elements from a living educational theory approach
- philosophical and theological knowledge to draw out and explain the deeper meaning of my living values and living theory
- various forms of meaningful representation
- varied, complementary ways of validating my claims to knowledge

My methodology enriches my doctoral enquiry and draws out elements that may provide light to others seeking to design personalized methodologies which can enhance their research.

In Chapters Three to Six I reflect on my life and practice in Ireland, Rome and Kenya. These chapters express the understanding which I have developed through my research of the impact which my family background, my life in Opus Dei, my studies and my first trips to Kenya have had on me as a person. I discovered that these life experiences, particularly my upbringing by my parents and my life in Opus Dei, are the source of my living educational values.

In Chapters Seven and Eight I reflect on and discuss my life and practice at Strathmore University (Kenya). In this context I explain the personal development projects which I designed to help my students apply their theoretical knowledge of Philosophy to their daily lives. I also show how I fostered positive interpersonal relationships with my students and

amongst them to create a conducive learning environment. Both the applied personal development projects and the meaningful educational relationships which I have facilitated are new features in teaching and learning practice at Strathmore University and may be helpful for other practitioners in a variety of fields.

I recently had further confirmation of the impact I can have at Strathmore University through my efforts to improve my practice.

Julia Methu, one of my colleagues at the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, participated in the first day of a new edition of the Academic Staff Development Programme (ASDP) on 27th May 2013. That evening she told me that I had been mentioned twice during the first morning of the workshop. Our Vice Chancellor, Professor John Odhiambo, spoke of my contribution when explaining the Strathmore University mission and teaching philosophy to our new lecturers. Later in the morning, Mrs. Omingo (Head of Learning and Teaching Services) explained how one interview with me had led her to change her teaching philosophy from making a difference in other peoples' lives (students) to helping parents to educate their children. Through some examples I gave her from my own personal experience during our conversation she discovered that the process starts at home with the parents.

In these chapters I also show how I discovered my implicit living educational values which became explicit as they emerged through my research enquiry. I provide evidence of my personal living educational values which are:

- Create a spiration of love among persons (loving interpersonal relations)
- In freedom (loving and respecting my own and other peoples' freedom)
- For personal growth and development (my own and to facilitate that of others)

In Chapter Nine I explain the meaning of these values and my living theory using my philosophical and theological knowledge. Through further reflection on my values and my life and practice, at times I synthesise them as my passion for the person. As I have shown, the deepest meaning of my living educational theory, *creating a spiration of love, in freedom, for personal growth*, is rooted in the reality of my sharing in the interpersonal, loving communion of the Blessed Trinity. Having discovered the values which give

meaning to my life and practice through my doctoral enquiry, I have understood myself as a person and the purpose of my existence in greater depth. Through making this knowledge public, perhaps others may discover their personal identity and the deeper meaning of their own existence.

Personal knowledge acquired through self-discovery

The deeper knowledge and understanding of myself as a person which I have developed through my research focuses on the following:

- The real harmony that exists between theory and practice in my own life.
- My personal unity of life which moves me to think and act motivated by love.
- The discovery and understanding of the source, evolution and meaning of my living values has helped to explain the continuity of my personal existence, the nature of my values and my living theory.

These elements which express the growth in my personal self-knowledge have contributed to the development of my living educational theory which I also refer to as the theory of my life.

Combining *theoria* and *praxis* in my life work

The knowledge which I have developed through my doctoral enquiry has brought to light another element which has always interested me: the link between theory (*theoria*) and real life (*praxis*). I have mentioned or discussed the relationship between theory and action in nearly every chapter of this dissertation. This concern was confirmed in an email from my supervisor Dr. Margaret Farren on 2nd May, 2013, in which she referred to the *theoria* and *praxis* element of my life work and how I have managed to combine both through my doctoral research.

As I discussed in Chapters Three and Four, I discovered that knowledge for its own sake, even truth, was not enough to satisfy me as a person. Thanks to the education I received, I also understood that action alone was meaningless. My natural tendency to reflect on my experience to learn more, and to seek the practical dimension of the knowledge I acquired to bring it to fruition, guided me towards combining theory and practice in my life. I have always tried to achieve this union between theory and practice in my life work. In my

doctoral enquiry I show how I have tried to help my students discover this link by applying their learning to their own lives.

My personal unity of life

The harmonious combination of theory and praxis in my life is closely related to my personal unity of life. Through my doctoral enquiry I have discovered that this has been a motivating principle throughout my life. It is rooted in my philosophical understanding of the human person and my theological understanding of what gives meaning and purpose to one's life.

In my experience, as human beings we are a unity of body and soul (Aquinas 1947, ST I, q. 76, aa.1 and 3). In everyday life these two key features interact harmoniously in the person. Our thoughts influence our actions and how we feel. The things we come into contact with influence how we think and the attitudes we develop. The continuity is such that at times it is difficult to distinguish whether the source of our personal activity is the body or the soul. In reality it is both, in the oneness of the person. Thanks to this unity in the person, when we know and understand our personal convictions theoretically, we are able to identify ways of living them in a practical manner. The person then develops a deep unity of life in which the one "I" of their personal being (*esse*) is expressed in the "I" of their personal acts. I try to ensure that my actions express how I think and who I am as a person, and so manifest my personal unity of life.

In theological terms, the ultimate unifying element in the life of a person is their sharing in the love which characterizes the interpersonal communion of the Blessed Trinity. As I have explained in Chapter Nine, when a person is in the state of grace and experiences the presence of the Blessed Trinity in their soul, they share in the loving life of the three Persons. This divine love can influence and unify all aspects of their personal existence if they freely choose to allow it to act in and through them. Love then becomes the meaning and purpose of one's life.

My understanding of the unity of life of the person who holds certain values and strives to live them out in their practice is linked to the notion of personal authenticity. My personal authenticity can be recognized by other people. It can contribute to their understanding of

the trustworthiness of my claims to knowledge when they see the link between my findings and my life and practice (Chapters One, Two, Seven, Eight).

The source, evolution and meaning of my living values

In my research I was interested in discovering not just my living educational values and their evolution over time. I also sought the *source* of these values and found it in my experience of interpersonal love within the family (both my natural family and Opus Dei) and my studies. These key influences have provided continuity to my personal existence and constitute the basis of my initially implicit values which have become explicit through my doctoral enquiry. I have shown how knowing and understanding these sources was of great importance in identifying my deepest living educational values and developing my living educational theory.

Perhaps this personal discovery may also be of use to other practitioners who seek to go deeper into their living values to understand their source and how this may influence their living theory.

The deeper understanding of myself as a person which I have acquired through my research helps me to accept and understand other people more and better and to treat them with the love and respect which they deserve by the very fact of being persons.

Final considerations

Throughout my dissertation I have tried to present my claims to knowledge clearly, with the appropriate supporting evidence. I have also tried to offer a clear, scholarly explanation for the living educational theory which emerged from reflection on my life and practice. This has required further time and reflection in my research journey.

These explanations, along with the supporting evidence highlight the academic significance of my research and illustrate the link between my living educational values and my living educational theory.

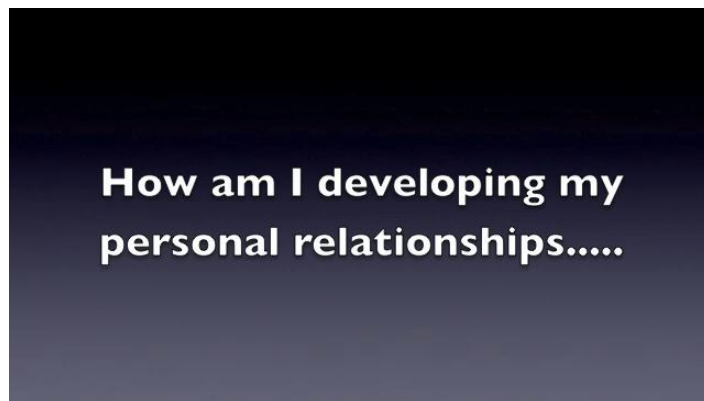
I hope that my doctoral enquiry may be understood as a genuinely *living* educational theory, that is, the theory of my real life and practice.

Epilogue

I bring my dissertation to a close with a video which offers a visual narrative of my living educational theory *creating a spiration of love, in freedom, for personal growth*.

The video was produced by Dr Yvonne Crotty after her visit to Strathmore University with Dr. Margaret Farren and Professor Jack Whitehead in 2009. It illustrates how I relate with the guests who I am showing around the university and introducing to staff and students. It shows how I listen and respond to other peoples' needs, answer questions, etc in various contexts including the Action Research Seminar which was facilitated by the visitors. My eye contact, and physical gestures reflect my openness to the individual persons who I am with.

This video expresses who I am as a person, my way of being in the world. At the same time, it illustrates how I have embodied Strathmore's mission and values⁶⁷.



Clip 24 Video Epilogue: Around Strathmore University (Y. Crotty 2010)

⁶⁷ I take the opportunity to thank Yvonne for putting this video together for me.

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CREATING A SPIRATION OF LOVE IN FREEDOM FOR PERSONAL GROWTH AT STRATHMORE UNIVERSITY (KENYA)

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B.A. (English and Economics), MA (Systematic Theology)

Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Volume 2: Appendices

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Appendix A: Occasions when I have sought public validation for my research work

- Dublin City University: workshops with other doctoral candidates under the guidance of Dr Farren and Professor Whitehead:
 - May 2008: initial discussion of my research focus in which I received positive feedback from Jack Whitehead, confirming that I had a research question and the ability to carry out doctoral research.
 - November 2010: presentation of my research work and findings which was received positively by the participants; I accepted and incorporated their suggestions in my enquiry.
 - May 2011: successful oral transfer exam based on a 20,000 word transfer paper; I responded adequately to the examiner's questions and incorporated her suggestions into my research programme.
 - April 2012: presentation of evidence of my claims to knowledge to the participants, including an external observer; their feedback confirmed my claims to knowledge and guided me in looking more deeply into my living standards of judgement.
- Events at Strathmore University: I presented my research enquiry at conferences, research weeks and academic staff workshops on the following occasions:
 - Strathmore University Ethics Conference October 2010: *Transformational learning: a key to effective education*. As well as presenting my paper, I asked some of my students to give their testimonies as evidence of my work. I explain this in Chapter Eight. I have received an offer to publish this paper in a journal in the USA.
 - Strathmore University Ethics Conference October 2011: *Understanding diversity and seeking unity in the Kenyan educational context*. This paper will be published in the Conference Proceedings which are currently in preparation.
 - Strathmore University Research Week 2011: *How am I using my Christian intellect in developing my living educational theory? Methodological Perspectives*.

- Strathmore University Academic Staff Seminar November 2012: presentation to Lecturers on Educational Values at the request of the Head of Learning and Teaching Services. I discuss the feedback from this presentation in Chapter Seven.
- Other Conferences:
 - Conference on *A Creative Approach to Teachers' Education*, September 2009, Croatia: *Bringing Philosophy to Life through Development Projects. Towards a Living Theory in philosophical education.*
 - HELTASA Conference on *Crossing borders for change in Southern African higher education*, November-December 2011, South Africa¹: *How my multiple border crossings in higher education have contributed to my living theory.* I have received a request to publish this paper in a journal based in Hong Kong.
 - Conference on Values and Virtues, July 2012, UK. Symposium presentation with Dr Farren, Y. Crotty and S. Fitzsimons². My presentation: *Do I have evidence of my evolving educational values?* The abstract for the Symposium may be found below. The feedback on my one hour presentation from the participants, most of whom hold doctorates and are familiar with Living Educational Theory, was very positive. I also received useful suggestions which I introduced into my enquiry.

¹ See <https://nmmu.ac.za/documents/heltasa2011/Comprehensive%20Paper%20Session%204%20-%20Diversity%20-%20Catherine%20Dean.pdf>. [Accessed 14th May 2013].

² See <http://www.yorks.ac.uk/education--theology/faculty-of-education-theo/faculty-events/value-and-virtue/panel-sessions.aspx>. [Accessed 14th May 2013].

Abstract for Symposium, York St John's University (York), July 2012

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The Spirit and Vision of Learning: At the still point of the turning world

In the Symposium we will address the Conference theme 'Articulating our Values and Virtues'. The contributors include three PhD candidates and their supervisor. As higher education educators, we all work with a commitment to lifelong learning and to values that we hold ourselves accountable to as we contribute to educational knowledge and work toward 'the use of research to improve education and serve the public good' (Ball and Tyson 2012). We recognise that each of us has a unique constellation of values and in the course of our practice-based research these values are expressed as explanatory principles in explanations of educational influences in learning (Whitehead 1989) as we work toward the solution of real issues in the workplace.

We are guided by Dadds and Hart's (2001) idea of methodological inventiveness, with an emphasis on innovative and creative modes and methods of research. In our presentation we will make use of multi-media narratives of learning to show the dynamics of inter-relationships; and in this way we hope to show our willingness and courage as practitioners to create enquiry approaches that enable new, valid understandings to develop.

The contributions to this symposium are influenced by *Schön's* (1995) call for a new epistemology for the new scholarship, by the Irish theologian John O Donohue's (2003) Celtic spirituality of a 'web of betweenness', by Whitehead and McNiff's (2006) 'Action Research: Living Theory' and Eisner's (1997; 2005) ideas on different forms of representation, in the new relationally dynamic standards of judgment we use to evaluate the validity of our contributions to knowledge.

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Appendix B: Letter from Coopers and Lybrand (11th August 1989)

Further to our meeting some days ago, I promised to come back to you about your request to discontinue your studies towards chartered accountancy.

I would first like to confirm that we accept your wish to further your studies in languages and that because of this you will not be joining us in October.

We have considered the situation in which you now find yourself, particularly in respect of the investment (approximately 6,000 Irish pounds) which we have made in anticipation of you being with us for the next three years. We appreciate however that to do so would be to involve you in a considerable burden of debt, which you as a student would have some difficulty in discharging in the near future. We have therefore decided to waive our claim to repayment.

We would like to take this opportunity of wishing you well in your new course of studies and to assure you that if after you have completed the course, your interest in accountancy is reawakened, we would be happy to discuss reviving your training contract at that time. Allowing too much time has not passed, your postgraduate diploma should still be eligible for exemptions... In addition, your added proficiency in languages would be of undoubted benefit to you and the firm during your training period...

Appendix C: Christ as a Model of Holiness in three parallel texts:

<i>Gaudium et Spes</i> (Vatican Council II 1965, n.22)	<i>Christifideles laici</i> (John Paul II 1988, n. 34)	St Josemaria Escriva (1974, <i>Christ is Passing By</i> , n. 112)
<i>(...) by his incarnation, he, the Son of God, has in a certain way united himself with each man. He worked with human hands, he thought with a human mind. He acted with a human will, and with a human heart he loved.</i>	<i>Opening wide the doors to Christ, accepting him into humanity itself poses absolutely no threat to persons, indeed it is the only road to take to arrive at the total truth and the exalted value of the human individual. This vital synthesis will be achieved when the lay faithful know how to put the gospel and their daily duties of life into a most shining and convincing testimony, where, not fear but the loving pursuit of Christ and adherence to him will be the factors determining how a person is to live and grow, and these will lead to new ways of living more in conformity with human dignity.</i>	<i>Nothing can be foreign to Christ's care. If we enter into the theology of it instead of limiting ourselves to functional categories, we cannot say that there are things –good, noble or indifferent- which are exclusively worldly. This cannot be after the Word of God has lived among the children of men, felt hunger and thirst, worked with his hands, experienced friendship and obedience and suffering and death. 'For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross' (Col 1, 19-20).</i>

Appendix D: Masters studies at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross

Another subject which influenced me was the *Mystery of God and the Salvation of man*, given by Professor Galvan. The course was challenging as it was not very systematic and the lecturer referred to authors and ideas which were very new to me. I experienced one of the most mind-changing moments of my life while reading a book which had been recommended for the unit: *Dios uno y trino* (Scheffczyk 1973). The author discusses the work of creation and salvation as an *ad extra* (external) work of God. I became intellectually stuck with the idea that the work of our salvation began, not after Adam and Eve fell into original sin, but rather, from the first moment of creation itself. This was mind-shattering for me because I had always understood that original sin was the starting point from which God had to carry out the work of our salvation, to sort out the “mess up” in His original plan, produced by original sin.

At the time, this was probably the most common way of explaining the link between creation and salvation, both at the pastoral and the theological level. As I later discovered, one of the novelties in theological thought during the 20th century involved developing a better understanding of this connection, by reading the works of the Fathers of the Church, along with Sacred Scripture in greater depth.

I spent hours going back over the written statement to make sure I had understood it, and then thinking through all the implications it had for my understanding of the work of creation, salvation, redemption, the figure of Christ, etc. I experienced a certain intellectual resistance to this new idea, and yet, the more I thought about it in a broader context, the more it made sense. Creation for our salvation, before sin, with the Incarnation as part of the original plan, was the challenge I needed to come to terms with. As I continued linking my knowledge together, new horizons of understanding opened up to me along with discoveries about the depth of God’s gratuitous love for us.

One of the key ideas which I grasped during my studies was the importance of a Christcentered focus in my theological work and life. This was an approach to theological

research which was growing quickly when I did my Masters³. It was often combined with a Trinitarian focus in the study of the mysteries of faith (Barrachina Carbonell 1999). The Blessed Trinity is the source of all that exists and Christ, who comes from the Trinity as the Son of God made Man, is the central mystery for acquiring a deeper understanding of the mysteries of God, man and the world. As *Gaudium et Spes* puts it:

In reality it is only in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of man truly becomes clear. For Adam, the first man, was a type of him who was to come. Christ the Lord, Christ the new Adam, in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and of his love, fully reveals man to himself and brings to light his most high calling...by his incarnation, he, the Son of God, has in a certain way united himself with each man (Vatican Council II 1965, n. 22).

John Paul II made the commentary of this text the focal point of his first encyclical, *Redemptor hominis*:

In Christ and through Christ God has revealed himself fully to mankind and has definitively drawn close to it; at the same time, in Christ and through Christ man has acquired full awareness of his dignity, of the heights to which he is raised, of the surpassing worth of his own humanity, and of the meaning of his existence (John Paul II 1979, n. 11).

The Second Vatican Council and John Paul II declare that every single human being, whether they believe in Christ or not, can only find the true and deepest meaning of their own existence in a personal encounter with the mystery of Christ, true God and true Man. The focal point of nearly all John Paul II's interventions even when speaking with non-Christians⁴ was Christ, the source of the fullness of the truth.

As I have had the opportunity to know and love Christ in faith, I recognise the truth in the words quoted above. Ultimately, the "answer" to so many questions about life, suffering, relationships, difficulties at work, etc. is the mysterious fact that Christ is seeking a way into our hearts to show us that only He can fully satisfy our natural longings for perfect love and happiness. Through faith in Christ one discovers that all that happens in our

³ See for example, *Approccio al cristocentrismo* by Inos Biffi (1993). The book explains, within the context of theological opinion and based on scriptural texts, how one can affirm that Christ (as true God and true Man) before the Incarnation, was still the starting point, means and end point of the whole work of creation and salvation, as well as the central point of the new heavens and the new earth, as prophesied in the Book of Revelation.

⁴ See, for example, John Paul II's address to young Muslims in Casablanca (Morocco) in August 1985. The speech may be accessed at http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/1985/august/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19850819_giovani-stadio-casablanca_en.html.

world, be it apparently positive or negative, has meaning in the context of God's providential and salvific plan. As St Josemaria puts it in *The Way* (1953):

I'll tell you a secret, an open secret: these world crises are crises of saints (n. 301).

All that happens at the personal and global level is a call to convert that event or situation into an opportunity to become a better person. To do good and avoid evil, which is the most universal, basic natural moral human inclination⁵, always involves a personal struggle with oneself to overcome smaller and greater "temptations" to selfishness, laziness, pride, arrogance, etc., through exercising the power of our own free choice.

My study of *Living in Christ: fundamental principles of Catholic Moral Teaching. A brief exposition of Catholic doctrine* (Caffarra 1987) opened up new horizons in terms of understanding how my efforts to live a good life as expressed in the virtues was ultimately about living the life of Christ. The author linked the various elements of natural law and the moral teachings of the Church very closely to the life and teaching of Christ Himself. It was a move away from considering moral issues as a list of "dos and don'ts", which was quite common in my native Ireland, and a step towards understanding that, anything the Church asks us to live in moral terms is a manifestation of how we can live the life of Christ, and let Him live in us as genuine Christians. Caffarra was among the theologians who developed a Christcentered moral theology which opened new horizons for many Catholics (Melina 2001) and was adopted in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1993), which gave the title "Life in Christ" to the section on Catholic morality.

Rome: my Master's dissertation

I worked on my Master's thesis under the guidance of Professor Tanzella-Nitti who had taught us the *One and Triune God*. He suggested that I study divine filiation in Scheeben's *The Mysteries of Christianity*. I agreed because I was interested in the text and the topic allowed me to deepen my understanding of the relation between two of my favourite themes: the mystery of the Blessed Trinity and the sanctifying action of God in the human

⁵See International Theological Commission 2009. *In Search of a Universal Ethic: A New Look at Natural Law*.

soul in grace. As I will explain in Chapter Nine, these concepts are important elements in my living theory.

In the conversations I had with my supervisor while I worked on the thesis, I learnt a lot about intellectual work and research. At one meeting he explained to me that the intellect is like a building which one constructs brick by brick. The image stuck in my mind and I understood the wisdom he expressed in the idea that intellectual growth takes time and that one develops knowledge little by little. At this point in my doctoral research, I can reaffirm the truth of his words!

I defended my thesis “An Introduction to the Theology of Divine Filiation according to M.J. Scheeben”, in May 1994. There were two other theologians on the panel (Professor Antonio Aranda and Professor Paul O’Callaghan), along with my supervisor. I made a brief presentation and they asked a few questions regarding the material I had used for my research, gave some advice on how to use Sacred Scripture more effectively and opened up horizons regarding possible themes for my doctorate in Theology. They also commented that the quality of the thesis was well above the standard required for a Masters, while not quite reaching the level of a doctorate.

Marzia, Martha and I took part in a simple graduation ceremony in the Main Hall of the University in June of 1994.

Appendix E: Homily by John Paul II about the House of Loreto

On 12th December 1995, reflecting on a recent visit to Loreto where tradition says that the house of the Holy Family is found, John Paul II commented in a homily in St Peter's Basilica at which I was present:

Loreto: the mystery of the home, which can be linked with the image of the Good Shepherd. Does it not make us think of the sheepfold? Of a safe dwelling? The home is the place of attention, of the care which parents have for their children, of concern for each 'lost sheep'. This care is unique and unrepeatable. The home is witness to many maternal tears, but also to the uncontainable joy of the good Shepherd who lovingly brings the 'lost sheep' back to the sheepfold. Let us reflect on the home... The home is a great good for man! It is the place of life and of love! In a certain sense it is our 'human Loreto' (The translation is mine).

I am convinced that these words resonate with everyone who has been born into a home, a family in which each person is loved for their own sake, not for what they can do or what they actually achieve. The home of the Holy Family of Nazareth has traditionally been understood by the Church as a model of every Christian home, and of every truly human home (John Paul II 1995, *Letter to Families*, n. 2).

Original quotation in Italian

Loreto: mistero della casa, che si potrebbe associare all'immagine del Buon Pastore. Questa, infatti, non fa pensare subito all'ovile? Ad una dimora sicura? La casa è il luogo della premura, della sollecitudine dei genitori per i figli, della preoccupazione per ogni "pecora perduta". Sollecitudine unica ed irripetibile. La casa è testimone di molte lacrime materne, ma anche della gioia incontenibile del buon Pastore, che con amore riconduce all'ovile la "pecora perduta". Pensiamo alla casa. Dappertutto la casa natale ha per ciascuno, e specialmente per ognuno di voi, cari giovani, un'importanza unica. La casa è un grande bene per l'uomo! È un ambiente di vita e di amore! È in un certo senso la nostra "Loreto umana"...⁶

⁶ http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/homilies/1995/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_19951212_universitari_it.html [Accessed 9 January 2013].

Appendix F: Background to the socio-economic context in Kenya

Before independence, most Kenyans within their ethnic communities were in similar financial situations although some had more wealth than others in the form of goats, cows, and land (Mathaai 2007). Large areas of land belonging to different ethnic communities were confiscated by the colonizers upon their arrival in Kenya. Other portions which had become uninhabited due to famine and disease, were declared Crown land and sold or leased to the settlers who began to arrive in the 1900s (Eshiwani 1993). Shortly before Independence, the government organized a programme in which local people could purchase land in certain areas, which was being sold to the government by European farmers planning to leave Kenya. At this time, various political interests influenced land purchase and redistribution among Kenyans, which affected the degree to which the various ethnic communities were able to develop economically. This continues to create problems today (Eshiwani 1993). Karume Njenga, a prosperous Kenyan businessman who passed away in 2012, explains the situation in the autobiography he published in 2009. *Beyond expectations: From Charcoal to Gold* offers great insight into life and development in Kenya from the 1940's, through Independence up to 2006.

Land is still considered to be an important and secure form of wealth, as has been the case traditionally, not just in Kenya or Africa but around the world. Currently wealth in Kenya seems to be concentrated in and around Nairobi in the form of property such as housing, cars and other goods. This is largely due to migration to the city by many people in the 1960s in search of work and a better lifestyle. A highly centralized form of governance after Independence has allowed Nairobi to develop, but has hindered the economic development of other cities and towns around the country. Kenya continues to be a developing country fifty years after Independence, largely due to its political system and governance structure which seems to have promoted patronage rather than issue-focused and development-centered politics. The electoral and political processes are dominated by ethnic biases as opposed to consideration of issues being advanced by political parties, whereas the existing legal framework has also centered political authority and control of resources at the central government level (Owino Otieno and Ndungu 2010).

These issues are discussed by my students in units which I do not teach such as Development Studies and Social and Political Philosophy, to heighten their awareness of how things are and the fact that things could be done differently and better.

The new Constitution of Kenya, approved in 2010, should contribute to changing this situation as it promotes decentralization and devolution of power to the newly created counties in order to enhance local development all over the country. We are now in the process of implementing these constitutional requirements.

Most ordinary Kenyans perceive that the current approach to governance is defective, as I have learnt from my conversations with colleagues and friends. I also witness the consequences of this political approach in the day to day decisions of our government. Kenya was on the verge of famine in August 2011 yet our government was buying insufficient quantities of genetically modified maize (GMO) from Malawi to deal with the hunger. In other parts of the country, not too far from the famine struck areas, farmers had maize which they produced with a guarantee from the government that it would be bought at 3,000Ks per bag. The government then changed its mind and would only buy this maize at 1,800Ks per bag, the cost price for the farmer who needs to make a living from these sales. Our local maize was gathering dust while we were importing GMO maize. Thanks to the “Kenyans for Kenya” initiative to send food to famine struck areas of the country at the end of 2011, the problem was partly solved and ordinary people proved what they can do when they get together to help other Kenyans in need. However the problem of the government refusing to purchase local maize repeats itself each year. Local farmers have sufficient maize to provide for the country’s needs, yet the relevant ministries refuse to purchase their maize and use “special” funding to buy maize from abroad. There is clearly a problem of unaddressed corruption in this case.

National teachers went on strike in early September 2011 when schools should have opened for the last term, because of the government’s failure to keep its promises regarding teachers’ salaries, the employment of more teachers to address the problem of lack of staffing in many schools (Bold et al. 2010), etc. The government claimed there was no money and yet, the same newspapers report that the Contingency Fund would be used to pay the backlog on MPs taxes, which is now being required by the Kenya Revenue

Authority, in application of the law and supported by the Chief Justice. Teachers went on strike again in September 2012 demanding the implementation of what had been agreed in 2011. This strike delayed the opening of schools to the extent that the dates for the national exams had to be delayed to allow time for teaching once the strike was resolved in October 2012.

Practices like those I have described, carried out by people in authority makes it easier for others with less responsibility for the nation to justify themselves in making some extra cash to the detriment of their fellow citizens, some of whom are living in poverty or misery. Such situations make me ask: where are the values contained in the traditional African *ubuntu*⁷ ideal, which philosophers and academics study and write about (Lutz 2008; Charles 2007)? It no longer seems to be alive at the higher levels of society and is being lost at the grass roots.

The problems of our political and governance system should be addressed through the implementation of various strategies proposed in the new Constitution. However, we still need to bring about a change of attitude both among the governing and those being governed (Owino Otieno and Ndungu 2010). As we saw in October 2011, when the head of the Integrity Centre, PLO Lumumba, tried to unmask (perhaps in a somewhat inappropriate manner) a relatively low level form of corruption in which a government minister was involved, there was a public outcry by politicians and Lumumba was thrown out of office. Such events illustrate how deep the need for ethical awareness and accountability is in our leaders.

The Strathmore Governance Centre carries out research and runs seminars on matters related to governance to create a greater awareness amongst those in public office of the importance of efficient and honest practice in this field. A Masters programme in Governance has been designed by the Centre for high level public officers which hopefully will start in the near future.

⁷ The exact origin and meaning of the term *ubuntu* is still a question of academic debate. However, it is generally understood to express the traditional African sense of humanity, which is shown in an appreciation for other human beings, and formulated in phrases such as “I am because you are” and others.

Appendix G: Further analysis of Kenya before and after Independence

Education in Kenya before Independence

The Arabs were the first to introduce formal training in Kenya from 700AD onward, through the Koranic schools attached to the mosques. However both Koranic education and informal African training considered education to be a life-long process. They focused on fostering unity, cohesion and the sense of a common identity among learners, based on normative education systems (Bogonko 1994).

According to some authors (Bogonko 1994; Mugambi 2008), the informal education imparted to children within the traditional African context transmitted the cultural values of their community through imitation of older people, some instruction, correction by the extended family, etc. They were taught their role in the community as they passed through the various stages of learning linked to age groups. Traditional African education trained individuals to fit into their societies as useful members and provided knowledge and values that were relevant so they could participate adequately in the development of that society (Eshiwani 1993). The focus was on learning “for life” and was marked by preparation for the various rites of passage within the different communities followed by the subsequent living out of the given stage in life according to tradition. The main concern was the survival of the community.

Within the traditional system, each individual’s natural impulses were “managed” by a strict code of morality, backed by strong sanctions and taboos. The aim was to protect the welfare of the whole community and discipline was engrained through rules and regulations. In this system, moral values were not based on rationality but rather on local custom or conventionality (Gichure 2009). Many of my students think that ethical values depend on what society considers as good or bad. This view may be the inheritance they have received from the traditional context.

My perspective in teaching Principles of Ethics is based on my understanding of objective and subjective truth and universal guiding principles, as I have explained in Chapter One. As I teach the unit I try to illustrate in practical ways that good or evil depends on how the particular action respects human dignity and human nature. However even at the end of the

subject I find students who continue indicating society as the reference point for establishing the morality of one's actions. This illustrates how engrained the traditional formulation of moral codes is within cultural mindsets.

I appreciate that a system based on rules and regulations established by society must have helped to maintain order and harmony within the traditional context. However, it may have fostered a form of "blind obedience" to the code, based on fear of punishment, with little emphasis on intellectual understanding of the source and meaning of these rules, or free and willing adherence to the code.

I have the impression that, at a deeper level, the informal education system may not have appreciated the value and uniqueness of each individual person who formed a part of the community, as a rational and free being. In particular, personal freedom and responsibility do not seem to have been linked. Yet, experience shows that a person who acts freely (knowing and willingly) is better able to grow and develop as a person and still contribute to the well being of the community. The current problems facing young people and educational institutions due to lack of education in and for freedom may be partly due to this traditional context (Gichure 2009).

Exposure to other value systems and cultures becomes a challenge to young people who may easily cease practicing the customs learnt at home because they do not know the reasons behind them. To help deal with these situations, when I teach Principles of Ethics I try to guide my students towards discovering the foundations of universal moral principles so that they know, understand and can explain rationally how human nature itself is a useful reference point in identifying right and wrong actions (International Theological Commission 2009). As a consequence, they can then make their own informed and free decisions about how to act and become "masters" of their lives.

Bogonko emphasises the collective, social element in traditional African education as the whole community was involved in the practical training of the young (Bogonko 1994; Gichure 2009). Learning was similar to what we would call "learning by doing". As I have reflected on and adjusted my teaching practice over the years I have found that to help my students make the link between theory and action, they need to apply the knowledge acquired in a variety of practical manners. Only then does learning seem to take root and become effective. Perhaps this is partly due to the traditional educational background. It

also resonates with my own personal experience of having learnt many things in life by simply launching out to do them.

Formal education following the Western model was introduced to Kenya in 1846 with the establishment of the first mission school at Rabai, near Mombasa (Eshiwani 1993). From 1910 onwards the colonial administration managed the educational system in Kenya, while missionary education developed parallel to this. As the Europeans arrived and set up schools for their children, the African interest in formal education grew stronger because they perceived that such an education would allow their own children to develop skills similar to those of the Europeans. Africans hoped that their children would eventually get jobs which would bring more wealth to the family and the community (Eshiwani 1993; Bogonko 1994). So they began to press the government to open formal schools.

The government schools which were eventually opened for Africans focused on training children in technical skills and the three “Rs”⁸. In the mind of the colonial government, the role of Africans was to carry out menial tasks and clerical work which Europeans would not do. From the early 1900’s, government Education Commission Reports indicated that Africans were to receive industrial education and carry out manual labour, while the Europeans were to receive an academic education. When Africans perceived that the education system was not designed to benefit all races, they pushed for an academic education which could help them develop socially, economically and politically. They were against education which emphasized technical and vocational skills at the expense of academic learning (Eshiwani 1993).

Africans struggled for many years to get the government to introduce more academic learning in their schools, to little avail. They had developed a thirst for academic education over and above the acquisition of technical skills. Eventually, Africans began opening their own schools sometimes with help from the government through the local councils which used funds assigned to them in each area of the country for development purposes. However even in these schools academic learning was not allowed (Bogonko 1994). Some communities opened independent African schools, which did not rely on government funding, so as to be able to decide on the curriculum themselves. In some cases they were able to introduce academic subjects (Eshiwani 1993).

⁸ The three “Rs” were Reading, (W)riting and (A)rithmetic.

In this context, the need for African teachers became evident. Little by little the government opened teacher training colleges that initially were not of a very high standard, but which improved over time. However, the training offered in these colleges was again aimed at teaching technical skills to young Africans. Only in the late 1950's and early 1960's were Africans in a position to access higher level education at Makerere University College (Uganda), or at the Royal Technical College (Nairobi). The African aspiration for education illustrates an awareness of the need for literacy and intellectual education to enable progress, protection from being imposed upon by communities with superior learning, emancipation from manual labour and the possibility of getting better jobs, thus facilitating a more comfortable lifestyle.

The development of formal education in Kenya before independence was also largely due to the efforts of various missionary groups, both Protestant and Catholic. These organisations set up schools parallel to the government school system. In fact, over 90% of secondary schools founded in Kenya before independence were started by missionaries. The hallmarks of such schools were discipline, organization and high quality instruction (Njoroge 2000). Their success lay in the zeal of the missionaries themselves, the particular charisma of the religious order, congregation or society which inspired the individual missionary to build and develop their schools slowly and patiently, and the financial help from abroad which these missionaries saved and put to good use (Njoroge 2000).

An overview of the post-Independence history of Kenya

The history of Kenya prior to Independence has been discussed in general terms and referring to specific ethnic communities by various scholars such as Ogot (1967), Were (1967), Muriuki (1975), Ochieng (1974), Mwanzi (1977) and Aseka (1989). They show that Kenya was an ethnically complex region even prior to colonization. The colonial era was characterized by various features, including the fostering of ethnic diversity as a way of discouraging Kenyans to join forces against foreign rule (Maloba 1993; Odhiambo and Lonsdale 2003; Elkins 2005; Gatheru 2005; Wekesa 2010). Ochieng (1989) also sustains this opinion while pointing to the initial economic development of Kenya in this period which, however, did not benefit Africans.

The relatively few post-Independence historical works about Kenya which have been written by Kenyans up to 2004 tend to take the perspective of the political leader in power at the time. Adar (1999), Chege (2009) and Gatimu (2009) all refer to the colonial mentality which Kenyans, both those governing and those governed, had assimilated during the colonial era. This mentality created a dependency in citizens on those in power which prevented them from questioning anything which came from a higher authority. The colonial system had been incorporated into the political, educational, legal and other structures and was conserved after Independence in a way which facilitated the control of the ordinary Kenyan by the leader in power, who used the system to serve his own economic advantage. Adar (1999) and Chege (2009) highlight how this hegemony impeded the development of academic freedom and intellectual freedom in general in Kenyans, and contributed to conserving a status quo similar to that of the colonial era. As a result, education, history, publications etc. were always written according to the political interests of the president (Ogot 1981; Gatabaki 1983; D'Souza 1987; Ochieng 1989; Ochieng 1991). This explains the fact that there are few local works dedicated to post-Independence history in Kenya.

I would agree with these opinions based on what I have observed and heard from friends and colleagues regarding Kenyan history. Things only began to change with the end of the Moi regime in 2002 when Kibaki was elected as president and began to introduce a more democratic approach to governance. My experience then was that it took some Kenyans time to adjust to this change. For example they were accustomed to hearing frequently about the president and his involvement in big and small issues through the media. When Kibaki came to power some complained that he did not speak out and was hardly visible in public life. However, others realized that he wanted to allow a more open and free environment to develop. As Kenyans adjusted to this, people began to take more ownership of their lives and work and started developing their own opinions which they could now express freely in private and public.

The historical works available prior to 2002 on post-Independence Kenya have been written by non-Kenyans (Collier and Lal 1986; Widner 1992; Berman and Lonsdale 1992; Miller and Yeager 1994; Haugerud 1995; Kyle 1999; Sabar 2002), or by Kenyans in the Diaspora (Maloba 1993; Ogot and Ochieng 1996; Ndege 2001). Other works were

published after 2002 by both Kenyans and non-Kenyans (Odhiambo and Lonsdale 2003; Odhiambo 2004; Percox 2004; Mwaura 2005; Anderson 2005; Gatheru 2005; Smith 2005; Mbugua 2008; Branch 2009; Ogot 2010).

On 12th December 2013 Kenya will celebrate 50 years of Independence. Since 2007, Hilary Ng'weno a well known journalist, has produced various historical documentaries on Kenya. The first, "Making of a Nation: Kenya's Political History 1957-2007" (2008) is a useful introduction to the complexities of this period, which underlines the political and ethnic issues behind the more important events of the time. Most people consider it to be a relatively balanced account, although some feel that it favours one ethnic community more than others. These opinions are reflected on some Kenyan blogs which commented on the series (A Political Kenya in 2013: Latest Politics and Kenya Economy News 2008; Tumbo 2009; Muindi 2010). Ng'weno followed up this production with a series called "Makers of a Nation" (2010), focusing on key historical figures in Kenya since 1963. He continues producing other documentaries on more recent events and figures in Kenyan life with a historical perspective. In May 2013 he received the *Lifetime Contribution in Journalism Award* during the Media Council of Kenya's 2nd Annual Journalism Excellence Awards. His historical documentaries in particular are an important contribution to understanding the history of Kenya since Independence from a local perspective.

Hornsby (2013) has recently published a large volume on the history of Kenya since Independence. The work contributes to filling the bibliographic gap regarding the period from 1963 to 2011. In positive terms, the author highlights the fact that Kenya has managed to function as a nation since Independence, with regular elections and without military rule or war, unlike other African nations. Hornsby also points to the challenges faced by successive governments regarding economic development and political controversy. He holds that the economy has been damaged by the political elite's struggle to consume state resources, exploiting ethnicity to achieve this aim. As a result Kenya continues to be an unstable nation in spite of efforts to improve security, efficiency and economic growth.

Kenya's history has not been one of war, military rule, mass murder or state collapse; neither has it been one of improving living standards, industrialization, growing national pride and the establishment of a key role in the global economy. It

has been rather a story of endurance: of political and economic structures inherited from colonial days, of unfulfilled promise and weighty historical baggage. It is a story that blends both politics and economics, a struggle to create and consume resources that involved both Western powers and Kenyans in a complex web of relationships; a tale of growth stunted by political considerations, of corruption and of money... This is also a tale of people as communities and their collective behavior, in which ethnicity plays a strong role – a topic that often evokes strong responses. Kenyan politics cannot be understood without understanding Kenyan ethnicity... In Kenya, a certain form of ethnic conflict has been enduring, despite many efforts to build a national identity. It has shaped the political system, and has in turn been shaped by Kenya's politicians and the institutions they inhabit (Hornsby 2013, p.1-2).

I would agree that the history of post-Independence Kenya has been influenced by political self-interest and the fostering of negative ethnicity⁹. By Western standards the rate of economic development has been slow; poverty is still widespread, mainly in the urban slums rather than amongst the rural population who live on subsistence farming. At times security issues have been a cause of concern. At the same time, my knowledge of the average Kenyan's will to work and build their lives, their family and the nation, along with the desire to maintain peace, is a good foundation for the on-going development of the nation over time.

Branch (2013) has also just published in paperback a post-Independence history of Kenya with an illustrative title: *Kenya: Between Hope and Despair*. Again, this work only goes up to 2011 and the focus is mainly on political events with an emphasis on the reality of corruption. It does not capture the recent sense of hope brought about with the on-going implementation of the 2010 Constitution for example. Kramon and Posner (2011) have shown that the Constitution has the potential to transform Kenyan politics because it aims at reducing executive power, devolving authority, and guaranteeing rights to women, minorities, and marginalized communities. They indicate that formal constitutional rules are evermore trusted by Kenyans and that this allows for a cautious optimism. Githinji and Holmquist (2012) arrive at a similar conclusion in their analysis of the 2010 Constitution.

Neither Hornsby (2013) nor Branch (2013) could have discussed recent developments around the March 2013 elections. Long et al. (2013) suggest that Kenyans may have chosen peace over democracy in their acceptance of what they consider may not have been

⁹ Wekesa (2010) points to the same problems and uses them to discuss recent attempts to foster a sense of "Kenyaness" in the wake of the post-electoral violence of 2008.

a totally free and fair election¹⁰. However, the subsequent actions taken by the new President Uhuru Kenyatta and his deputy, William Ruto illustrate their commitment to political, social and economic reform which augurs well for the future in my opinion (The Link April 2013; The Link June 2013). The Crisis Group Policy Briefing published in May 2013 presents a similar view. At the same time the situation was also facilitated by the trust which Kenyans had in the newly configured Supreme Court and the 2010 Constitution itself as Long et al. (2013, p. 150) point out, along with other reasons.

Both Hornsby and Branch conclude that the future of Kenya does not look hopeful given the challenges of the first fifty years of independent history. Both texts stress the effect of politics, economics, power struggles with the West, corruption and ethnicity on Kenya during this period. My twelve year experience living and working in Kenya confirms that these issues are constantly present in the daily life and conversations of the average Kenyan, independently of their financial or social status. I was surprised to find that ethnic bias is still quite strong, particularly in more fundamental matters such as marriage, politics, certain workplaces and social settings. However I have also observed that in spite of political mismanagement, Kenyans are hard-working and entrepreneurial in their approach. As a result, the country continues to function in spite of public sector deficiencies. In my opinion the future of Kenya lies largely with professional people who are willing and able to build the economy through private enterprise from the simplest to more sophisticated levels.

Fifty years is a short time for history. Many of the protagonists are still living, although others have passed away. One needs more time to see and understand those fifty years with greater perspective and in the context of later developments. Kenya is such a young country that its independent history is still “in the making”. One can sense this in the way most people live the present moment and events. Everything has a certain importance because we do not have the perspective of a long independent history to assist in the evaluation of the significance of issues that arise, in the broader context of the country’s life and history.

¹⁰ See Barkan (2013) for an interesting analysis of the challenges experienced by the Independent Election and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) of Kenya as it tried to employ high-level technology before, during and after the March 2013 elections to ensure transparency.

I also think that it is important to look at other aspects of the Kenyan reality. The previous political regime based on the coalition established after the 2007 elections has brought Kenya forward in various areas. For example, infrastructure has been and is improving. We have a clear development plan to be achieved by 2030 (<http://www.vision2030.go.ke/>) on the pillars of political, economic and social reform. The 2010 Constitution is being implemented gradually through changes in law, etc. The elections held in March 2013 were peaceful. The new president and his deputy are working to change the approach to governance and achieve Vision 2030. For example, an effort is being made to ensure transparency and integrity in the appointment of individuals to positions in the public sector. The economic focus of the government is shifting from relying on donor funding to building business partnerships with a global perspective. The President is demanding accountability from the heads of public services while allowing them to do their job without unnecessary intervention. These are a few examples of the change which he is trying to bring about. There are still many challenges but in my opinion this change of regime has been positive and brought a broader perspective to politics, finance and international relations. There is an effort to uproot corruption and foster the awareness of being “Kenyan” while retaining one’s ethnic identity. These are small steps forward that are not yet recorded in textbooks but which may be observed “on the ground” if one is living and working in Kenya.

Overview of higher education in Kenya since Independence

During the first fifty years of Independence the higher education sector in Kenya has developed from not having any university, to the current situation at September 2013: 22 public universities; 17 private, fully chartered universities; 11 private universities with Letters of Interim Authority (Total: 50). There are also many constituent colleges and other third level training colleges (Total: 13). The Kenyan National Bureau of Statistics 2012 presents the following information regarding student enrollment in higher education from 2008 to 2011.

Enrollment	2008		2009		2010		2011	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Public and private accredited universities	73.500	49.300	110.300	67.400	107.700	69.900	117.700	80.600
Training colleges, polytechnics, etc.	56.500	53.100	55.100	52.200	56.400	54.700	68.500	65.300

Source: Kenya National Bureau of Statistics 2012, p. 20.

Table 1 Student enrollment in higher education in Kenya from 2008 to 2011

Of interest in this table is the jump in male and female enrollment in universities from 2008 to 2009 which may partly be explained by the accreditation of five private universities between 2008 and 2009 (see below). Enrollment for women has increased steadily up to 2011. Male enrollment fell slightly in 2010 but recuperated in 2011. Enrollment in training colleges, polytechnics, etc. has been similar for men and women from 2008 to 2010, with a jump in enrollment in 2011. This may have been caused by the knowledge that in 2012-2013 many of these institutions would be elevated to university status (see below).

The data for enrollment in higher education for 2012-2013 is not yet available however it may be significant due to the large increase in public and private universities in this period. The number of public universities jumped from seven in 2007 to twenty-two in 2013 [2012: +1; 2013: +14]. Many of these were training colleges and polytechnics up to 2011. Fully chartered private universities jumped from eight in 2007 to seventeen in 2013 [2008: +3; 2011: +3; 2012: +3]. Again, many of these institutions were operating with Letters of Interim Authority prior to these dates. Private universities with Letters of Interim Authority rose from three in 2007 to eleven in 2013 [2008: +1; 2009: +1; 2010: +2; 2011: +1; 2012:

+2; 2013: +1]. Many of these would have been operating as registered private universities awaiting accreditation.

This data stimulates interest in the development of higher education in Kenya since Independence which I will now explain.

First Kenyan universities

The first Kenyan-based institution to provide higher education was the Royal Technical College of East Africa situated in Nairobi. The East African High Commission assented to an act establishing the college in 1954 after obtaining a Royal Charter for its establishment. The funds for its construction came from the Colonial Development and Welfare Funds. The Asian community in Kenya had in the meantime started an institution of higher learning in memory of the late Mahatma Ghandhi (Ghandhi Memorial Academy). The two institutions were merged into one college in March 1957 (Sifuna 2010). The Royal Technical College of East Africa prepared students for the higher national certificate offered in Britain (Mwiria et al. 2007; Jowi, Kiamba and Some 2008). In 1961 it was renamed the Royal College of Nairobi and turned into a university college, offering Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees in engineering from the University of London (Mwiria et al. 2007). In 1963 it became a constituent college of the newly established University of East Africa based at Makerere College (Uganda) along with another constituent college in Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)¹¹. Makerere (Uganda) offered medicine and agriculture with Dar es Salaam offering law while the Royal College of Nairobi (also known as the University College of Nairobi) offered engineering, veterinary medicine and architecture (Otieno 2007).

In 1970 the University of East Africa was dissolved and Makerere University (Uganda), the University of Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) and the University of Nairobi were inaugurated (Nyaigotti-Chacha 2004). This marked the beginning of the independent development of public university education in each of the three states (Otieno 2007). The University of Nairobi expanded during 1970, adding new faculties and departments (Mwiria et al. 2007; Jowi, Kiamba and Some 2008). It is the first public university in Kenya. From 1970 until

¹¹ In 1922 Makerere College, a technical college, had been set up in Uganda to offer higher education to students from Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania (Otieno 2007). In 1949 it became the University College of East Africa and offered diplomas and degrees in conjunction with the University of London. In 1963 it became the University of East Africa.

1984 the University of Nairobi was the only fully fledged public university in Kenya. However, the United States International University (USIU) established a Kenyan campus in Nairobi in 1970 and so access to private higher education also became available.

Public sector higher education

Education was considered to be very important for the social, economic and political development of Kenya after Independence as was the case in most African countries (Nafukho 1999; Oketch 2004; Aina 2010, p.23). However, initially higher education was considered to be for the elite and for those who were willing to forego the opportunities for immediate employment which existed in the 1960s and early 1970s.

During the 1960s and early 1970s, those who entered university were given government grants and allowances to compensate for preferring to enter further education instead of direct employment, which was readily available after completion of high school. It was compensation for opportunity, cost and income forgone as a result of going to university. At the time, university graduates were scarce; the Kenya government needed to build capacity in the civil service and felt that giving such incentives would motivate the youth to study harder to attain the entry requirements for university education (Oketch 2009, p. 18).

These incentives may have fostered an elite model of university education which has prevailed within public higher education for a long time. Oketch (2009) shows that the elite image of the older universities is still attractive to prospective students in spite of the existence of many private universities, massification in public universities and reports of poor quality of service provision at these institutions.

Initially the University of Nairobi sought to provide for all requirements in higher education in the public sector. To facilitate this in 1970 it elevated the existing Kenyatta Teacher Training College to the level of a University College linked to the University of Nairobi. Chege (2009) claims that during the Kenyatta era (1963-1978) the government sought to control the administration of the University and prevent academic and intellectual freedom.

The University of Nairobi, the only university in the country at the time, became the epicenter of political activity. The university came to be known for vibrant intellectual dialogue and political activism, and radical scholars from its faculty, in concert with radical politicians, challenged the establishment's maneuvers to convert the country into a one-party state... (they) exposed the corruption of the ruling elite and challenged their neocolonial tendencies, especially their land

grabbing, exploitation of workers, and exaltation of foreign cultures at the expense of the native cultural heritage (Chege 2009, p. 60).

This was the beginning of a trend in public higher education which continued throughout the Moi era (1978-2002) and which explains the history of manipulation of staff and students by politicians, students strikes, university closures, etc. which have characterized this sector until the Kibaki regime (2002-2013) came into power (Adar 1999; Ammutabi 2003; Oketch 2004; Aina 2010; Odhiambo 2011; Sifuna 2012). This marked the opening up of democratic space in Kenyan politics and higher education which has developed significantly in recent years. For example Kibaki relinquished the role of the president as the Chancellor of all public universities and has established that the vice-chancellor, deputy vice-chancellors and other positions be filled through competitive advertisement and appointment (Mwiria et al. 2007, pp. 4-5; Sifuna 2012).

Government policy regarding free primary education which began in the 1960s allowed many more Kenyans to access basic education. This contributed to the expansion of the second level sector and increased demand for third level education over time (Nafukho 1999; Sifuna 2010). By the mid-1980s Kenya needed more universities as the existing University of Nairobi and its constituent colleges could no longer meet this demand. According to Sifuna (2010) this situation was exploited by government to politicize decision-making on the future of university education and has led to unplanned expansion and funding crisis in public education, especially in the 1980s and 1990s.

The government has actively supported increased enrollments in public universities irrespective of the institutions' capacity to accommodate increased student numbers.... A corollary with the insatiable social demand for higher education, expansion in education in general and university education in particular is seen in many quarters of government as a symbol of development. Numbers of student enrollment and institutions are very much cherished by the political leadership. Little doubt that on important occasions during President Moi's era, the public were often reminded of the significant progress the country had made since 1978 (Moi's ascendancy to power) through the number of students enrolled at university level and an increase from one to five public universities (Sifuna 2010, p. 418).

At the same time, government funding for public universities reduced in this period due to the implementation of World Bank and IMF policies (Wangenge-Ouma 2008a; Aina 2010). In response to this situation, public universities introduced cost-sharing in 1992 which involved students paying a certain percentage of the full cost for tuition and other

expenses. This was facilitated by government loans which were repayable upon employment (Wangenge-Ouma 2008a; Odhiambo 2011).

Oketch (2004) describes the outcome of the reduction in government spending on higher education over time as follows:

The resultant impact was over-congestion at the public universities, dilapidated buildings due to reduced workforce for maintenance, introduction of cost-sharing tuition, and the suspension of the student pocket money that was popularly known among them as 'boom.' (In 1991, all the public universities in Kenya were shut down following student unrest. This unrest was as a result of the withdrawal of student pocket money allowance, introduction of direct meal and residential payment plan, and a direct tuition charge. These changes were implemented simultaneously and termed 'cost-sharing'. These sudden changes challenged the students' perception of the public university and themselves. The loss of comfort associated with cost-sharing angered the students and stimulated violent strikes and subsequent government responses which led to the shutting down of the universities for several months). Also suspended were the reasonably high quality meals at the university catering services and the introduction of user-pays for both meals and residential-halls. While the austerity measures were a direct consequence of unplanned expansion of university education by the Moi government, they were also tailored along the recommendations of the World Bank and IMF that advocated cost-sharing in higher education as one of the conditions for loan reimbursement under the unpopular Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs). The resultant impact was the loss of the glory that was once associated with state universities, marking for the first time a growing interest in the private higher education (Oketch 2004, p. 123).

Universities sought other ways of generating income given the reduction in government funding. They began to adopt entrepreneurial practices which seem to have led to the generation of more revenue than when they were depending on financing from the exchequer (Oanda 2010; Johnson and Hirt 2011). These practices involved increasing student enrollment in the main campuses and establishing constituent colleges and satellite campuses in major towns around the country (Odhiambo, 2006; Otieno 2007; Sifuna 2010; Odhiambo 2011; Oanda and Jowi 2012). The practice of enrolling fee-paying students in the public universities (also referred to as the "parallel programme" or "Module II") began in 1998 with University of Nairobi and was taken up by the other public universities. However, Wangenge-Ouma (2008b) points out the disadvantages.

These institutions started enrolling parallel students at a time when they were strained in terms of capacity. There were not enough physical facilities, and most of those available were suffering decay following many years of neglect. They did not have enough teaching staff, a problem, which the marketisation agenda has

worsened. The desire to claim a bigger share in the student market has seen the introduction of many new courses in advance of capacity to offer them. By seeking economic self-determination through parallel programmes, in advance of a well-developed capacity, the subsequent pressure seems to have made a bad situation worse (Wangenge-Ouma 2008b, p. 469)¹².

The main concern is that “marketisation” (Wangenge-Ouma 2008a, p. 224)¹³ of public universities, has led to a serious drop in the quality of the education imparted in these institutions (Oketch 2004; Otieno 2007; Aina 2010; Johnson and Hirt 2011; Oanda and Jowi 2012). Some of the issues which have been raised are the following:

- Poor quality of academic programmes and delivery: (Mwiria et al 2007, p. 38-39; Wangenge-Ouma 2008b; Sifuna 2010; Odhiambo 2011).
- Inadequate space, teaching materials, library services, laboratory resources, etc.: (Mwiria et al 2007, pp. 41-2; Wangenge-Ouma 2008b; Sifuna 2010).

The problem of poor communication in English and lack of appreciation of the humanities amongst students (Mwiria et al. 2007) have also been highlighted as contributing to lack of quality in public higher education. Nafukho (1999) discusses the importance of fostering cultural literacy through Arts and Humanities courses in higher education as an important factor in educating graduates who can contribute to the development of the country. In Appendix L I explain how once again in December 2012 there were calls within government to cut back funding in this field. I present a newspaper article discussing the need for the critical thinking skills, etc. provided by the Arts and Humanities courses in our universities. This issue also relates to Chege’s concern (2009) about the lack of critical pedagogy in public universities. He explains that this approach requires that educators engage students as active participants in the learning process and encourage them to express themselves as full participants in the struggle for a just and equitable society. Educators also need to win over students who often resist dialogic pedagogies because they require more work and participation than in passive learning environments. It is also

¹² For a further commentary on the phenomenon of the “private” public university student see Wangenge-Ouma’s article of 2012 with the graphic title “Public by Day, Private by Night: examining the private lives of Kenya’s public universities”.

¹³ For further details on the evolution of the marketisation of public universities in Kenya see Wangenge-Ouma and Nafukho (2011).

important to help students discover the connection between academic studies and lived experiences.

Only in this way will universities in Kenya join other sectors of society in nurturing the democracy taking root in the country and reclaim their role as training grounds for informed citizens and agents of social change (Chege 2009, pp. 68-9).

There is also growing concern about the quality of the doctoral degrees which are being awarded by public universities in Kenya. Ayiro and Sang (2011) have highlighted the need for enhanced quality assurance processes in the award of this degree. Their findings reveal that quality challenges exist in various areas such as the quality and capacities of students being admitted to doctoral programmes, selection of supervisors, training of supervisors, availability of supervisors, lack of attention to the difficulties which may arise in student-supervisor relations, etc. (Ayiro and Sang 2011, p. 176).

Issues around the quality of higher education in Kenyan public universities have also been highlighted in the international context (Odhiambo, 2006; Mabizela 2007, p. 34). A number of authors have discussed the need for appropriate quality assurance systems such as internationally recognized certifications, student assessment of academic staff, performance contracts, etc. (Odhiambo 2011, Oloo 2010). Odhiambo (2011) refers to the importance given internationally to quality, evaluation and performance reporting in higher education. He suggests that Kenya's higher education needs to follow this direction and promote interest especially in performance indicators, as one of the facets of evaluation. He also mentions the need to improve research capacity in academic staff as well as teaching and learning practices (Odhiambo 2011, p. 312).

Bamiro (2013) brings up the matter of graduate employability as a global concern which also needs to be addressed by public universities in Kenya. His study highlights findings such as:

- a call for more active-learning and skills-based approaches from employers, students and from within higher education institutions;
- capacity issues with respect to designing and assessing outcomes-based curricula and in the delivery of less traditional teaching and learning approaches;

- better use of extra-curricular opportunities to develop employability (work placements, work experience, internship and mentoring);
- employability considered as a peripheral activity or as the role of a single department, if it is not actually outsourced altogether;
- the absence of country or region-wide collaborations or platforms to develop and share practice.

This is an important element which has not been very present in the literature in higher education in Kenya. At Strathmore University we are studying ways of incorporating this concept across faculties and at all levels of staff to help our students enhance their employability throughout their courses rather than when they are about to finish.

Another feature of the “privatization” of public universities as it is called (Nyaigotti-Chacha 2004; Oketch 2004; Otieno 2010; Wangenge-Ouma and Nafuhko 2011; Jamshidi et al. 2012), has been expansion through the conversion of mid-level colleges into university colleges and campuses of existing public universities. One of the results of this conversion has been the loss of colleges that served the mid-tier component in terms of vocational training for industry. Many of these institutions are located in rural areas or on the outskirts of the cities. Certainly, access to university has been expanded for qualifying students. However many others who do not meet university entry qualifications have been denied alternative education opportunities as the mid-level colleges which they previously relied on no longer exist (Oanda and Jowi 2012, pp. 57-8). We are thus left with a significant gap at the level of third level training which needs to be filled for the sake of equity in education and also to ensure the necessary supply of skilled workers in vocational disciplines for the needs of the country.

A study carried out by Mwiria et al. (2007, p. 76) has highlighted the need for reform in the public universities motivated by various factors such as the need to survive in the face of adversity, growth in primary and secondary schooling, competition from the private universities, prompting by foreign universities and the private sector, pressure from the government and from development partners and dynamic leadership in some public universities. Areas indicated for reform are the following:

- Strengthening the quality of teaching staff

- Broadening student assessment mechanisms
- Students' appraisal of academic staff
- Teaching/learning strategies.
- Relevance, research, community outreach
- Co-ordination and standardization of university curricula
- University funding and student support
- Strengthening institutional governance
- Promoting long-term sustainability

In the Introduction to the text Mwiria himself, as Assistant Minister of Education in 2006 responds to these recommendations indicating government policy at the time for reform in six key areas of higher education:

- Governance/management (Mwiria et al. 2007, p. 4)
- Quality/relevance: (Mwiria et al. 2007, pp. 7-8)
- Expansion/integration: (Mwiria et al. 2007, pp. 8-9)
- Access/equity: (Mwiria et al. 2007, pp. 9-10)
- Finance/financial management and accountability: (Mwiria et al. 2007, p. 10)
- Community service and engagement with society: (Mwiria et al. 2007, pp. 11-12)

Mwiria concludes 'This volume illustrates both the contemporary situation and the government's reformist intentions towards the public and private universities in Kenya' (Mwiria et al. 2007, p. 12).

Overview of higher education in the private sector

Aside from the United States International University (USIU) which has been operating in Kenya since 1970, the first private university to be chartered was the University of Eastern Africa in 1991. As may be seen in the table below, three more public universities had been established by then to expand the capacity for student enrollment which could no longer be satisfied by the existing University of Nairobi.

What explains the rapid expansion of private higher education from the early 1990s on? Some authors hold that during the first two decades after Independence, private higher education was perceived to be of poor quality (Oketch 2004, p. 122), an opinion which is also maintained by Otieno (2007, p. 57). However Banya (2001, p. 165) sustains that it is a force for the revitalization of higher education in Africa, in the context of the negative

impact of state control of public higher education which was a reality in Kenya as I have explained above. He observes that Kenya was the first country in East Africa to recognize the importance of private universities (Ibid.).

In East Africa, dozens of new universities have been established in the 1990s. When Kenya established rules for registering private universities in 1989, for example, three institutions were granted official recognition and 13 others were allowed to operate on an interim basis. In 1999 alone, the country's Commission for Higher Education considered the applications of 27 new institutions (Banya 2001, p. 165).

Banya identifies three reasons for the rise of private higher education in Africa which are also applicable to Kenya (Banya 2001, pp. 166-168):

- Enrollment: there was excess demand for higher education which could not be met by public universities and so students were willing to enroll in private institutions to obtain a university education.
- Religion: many private universities in Africa and in Kenya are faith-based, either Christian or Islamic. For certain segments of the population they become universities of choice as people perceive that their faith will be respected in the private institution.
- Employment: while public universities were considered to be a training ground for the minority elite who would be employed in the civil service, private universities tend to design their programmes with an entrepreneurial focus to produce more broadly employable graduates; they seek a niche within their resources and strive to specialize in specific fields (Odhiambo 2006).

Oketch (2004, pp. 121-131) identifies another series of reasons to explain the expansion of private universities in Kenya since the early 1990s:

- Response to market demand where public provision of higher education is insufficient; it may also be noted that private universities became more attractive as conditions deteriorated at public universities due to over-crowding, etc. (Otieno 2007; Mabizela 2007; Mwiria et al. 2007; Munene 2009; Otieno 2010; Oanda and Jowi 2012).
- 'Differentiated demand' for educational services cannot be ignored in Kenya's higher education. Even were the state to provide sufficient places in public universities, there remains a need to meet the demands of religious and other specific social groups. This point is relevant given the religious affiliation of a

significant number of Kenya's private colleges and universities. (Mabizela 2007; Otieno 2007; Mwiria et al. 2007; Munene 2009).

- The notion of 'elite demand'. Some private universities have emerged in response to the demands of the wealthy and prosperous sections of society for 'something better' for their children that will enable them to have a competitive advantage in the labor market that is priced lower than universities in Europe or North America. (Oketch 2004; Mwiria et al. 2007; Munene 2009).
- The Kenyan government came to the realization that higher education is not a right which the state has to deliver universally. Following in the paths of other nations with expanded higher education provision as a result of a much wider range of patterns of financing the Kenyan government now takes private higher education seriously.
- The credibility of the 'capital' that is associated with qualifications from international overseas providers is also attractive to Kenyans. Some of the private universities in Kenya were initially affiliated with universities in North America which gave them more prestige. Currently many private universities have relatively high levels of international enrollments. For example, USIU, CUEA, University of Eastern Africa, etc. (Mabizela 2007).

I would agree that all the factors mentioned have influenced the expansion of private universities in Kenya. The market became very dynamic creating opportunities for this expansion. Before 2012-2013 when the number of public universities increased dramatically as mentioned above, the private sector actually dominated in the number of institutions. From 2007 to 2011 there were seven public universities and twenty-two private institutions which existed or were established in Kenya. However, enrollment has always been higher in public universities due to their size and perceived prestige although private enrollment has been rising progressively partly due to the exhaustion of capacity and deteriorating conditions in public universities (Oketch 2004, p.128).

Another important development for private higher education was the establishment of the Commission of Higher Education (CHE) in 1985 by Chapter 210B of the Universities Act (<http://www.kenyalaw.org/klr/fileadmin/pdfdownloads/Acts/UniversitiesActCap210B.pdf>) The Universities Act regulated public universities, along with the individual act of parliament through which each was established. The Acts establishing universities give them the freedom to run their programmes without prior reference to the CHE, unlike the

chartered private universities (Otieno 2007, p. 181)¹⁴. Although the mandate of CHE was to regulate the provision of higher education overall in Kenya, in fact it became the regulatory body for the provision of private universities.

CHE was the link between private universities and the government and had the overall responsibility of licensing higher educational institutions. CHE categorized private universities into four main groups: accredited private universities, registered private universities, private universities operating on the basis of a letter of interim authority and foreign universities classified as offshore campuses. Accreditation means recognition and confirmation in writing by charter, certificate or other documentation issued by the CHE. Before accreditation is granted, the CHE carries out an inspection of the human, physical, technical and financial resources available to carry out the institution's stated objectives. Requirements for accreditation include the establishment of institutional standards with respect to physical facilities, staffing levels and teaching loads, peer review, visitations and inspection, internal self-assessment and viability of financial resources on a long-term basis (Mwiria et al. 2007, pp. 127-8; Odhiambo 2006, pp. 5-6).

The establishment of CHE and the rigorous implementation of its functions regarding the accreditation of new private universities certainly contributed to ensuring the quality of the education offered by these institutions, thus overcoming the previous wariness in many peoples' minds' regarding private higher education (Otieno 2007, p. 179-180). As Oketch (2004) put it:

Traditionally, the admission to private university meant 'less qualification'. Today, it has a different meaning and cannot even be said that they are less competitive. The Commission for Higher Education has made it known that admission to the private institutions is based on the minimum requirements for admission to the state universities. (Oketch 2004, p. 135).

In fact some authors have queried the possibly excessive rigour of CHE in executing its mandate to guarantee quality in private universities. It is accused of making the playing field uneven to the advantage of public universities and applying stringent measures which are not applicable to the public universities (Otieno 2010, p. 57). Private universities also experience a long time lag in going through the various processes required by CHE (Odhiambo 2006, p. 6). Others have suggested that some public universities may not be

¹⁴ For further explanation of the incongruencies of CHE and the public universities see Otieno 2007, pp. 179-182 and Otieno 2010, pp. 52-53.

accredited if they were subjected to the same regulations applied to private universities, notwithstanding that they have some of the most qualified staff (Otieno 2007, pp. 180-1). In any case the success of CHE can be seen in the fact that programme quality in some private universities has exceeded that in the public universities (Munene 2009, p. 57).

Mwiria et al (2007) do suggest the Commission for Higher Education adopt strategies that allow for easier, more efficient and more transparent evaluation of the accreditation procedures. Greater flexibility could be introduced by allowing affiliated universities to initiate new programmes under a much more timely review process. CHE could also consider revising its accreditation requirements, some of which seem obsolete. The requirements for substantial campus size (50 acres), for example, might become less relevant with the further spread of information technology (Mwiria et al. 2007, p. 192; Otieno 2010, p. 61).

Some of these discrepancies in the accreditation and establishment of public and private universities have now been overcome by the Universities Bill 2012 (<http://www.strathmore.edu/pdf/universities-bill-2012.pdf>) under which the Commission for Higher Education (CHE) has been replaced by the Commission for University Education (CUE). All public universities must now be accredited by CUE following the same processes as private universities. The Acts of Parliament establishing the already existing public universities were repealed and each of these has gone through a process of review, accreditation and granting of charter by the Commission for University Education. This Act facilitated the rapid expansion of public universities which took place in 2012-13. Now all universities fall under the mandate of CUE, which should facilitate the harmonizing of regulations, standards and quality across the sector and on an equitable basis.

The new Universities Bill is an outcome of the 2010 Constitution which required a change in the way of creating public universities along with a unified system for evaluating the operations of both public and private universities. At the same time, the policy of the political regime in government from 2008 to 2013 (M. Kibaki in coalition with R. Odinga) had promised to increase access to university education for Kenyans by providing more universities all over the country. Shortly before the 2013 elections, President Kibaki worked to establish as many universities as possible before the change of regime.

The following table provides an overview of the current public and private universities in Kenya as they have been established over time, and in particular from 2012 to 2013.

Overview of public and private universities in Kenya (September 2013)			
No.	Public Universities¹⁵	Chartered Private Universities¹⁶	Universities with Letters of Interim Authority¹⁷
1.	University of Nairobi (Nairobi), 1970	University of Eastern Africa (Baraton), 1991	Kiriri Women's University of Science and Technology, 2002
2.	Moi University (Eldoret), 1984	Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA), 1992	Aga Khan University, 2002
3.	Kenyatta University (Nairobi), 1985	Scott Theological College, 1992	Gretsa University, 2006
4.	Egerton University (Njoro), 1987	Daystar University, 1994	Presbyterian University of East Africa, 2008
5.	Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (Nairobi), 1994	United States International University (USIU), Established: 1970 Chartered: 1999	Inoorero University, 2009

¹⁵ Prior to 13th December 2012, public universities were established through individual Acts of Parliament. Following enactment of the Universities Bill No. 42 of 2012, the public universities have since been established through the award of charter. All individual Acts were repealed and the previous public universities re-accredited through charter award after institutional quality audits.

¹⁶ Private Chartered Universities: these are universities that have met the set standards for full university accreditation status.

¹⁷ Private Universities with a Letter of Interim Authority: the universities operating with Letters of Interim Authority (LIA) from CUE receive guidance and direction to continue developing resources and facilities towards full university accreditation (Award of Charter) status. They are allowed to admit students for the approved programmes.

6.	Maseno University (Maseno), 2001	Africa Nazarene University, 2002	The East African University, 2010
7.	Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (Kakamega), 2007	Kenya Methodist University, 2006	GENCO University, 2010
8.	Dedan Kimathi University of Technology (Nyeri) 2012	St. Paul's University, 2007	Management University of Africa, 2011
9.	Chuka University (Chuka), 2013	Pan Africa Christian University, 2008	Riara University, 2012
10.	Technical University of Kenya (Nairobi) 2013	Strathmore University, 2008	Pioneer International University, 2012
11.	Technical University of Mombasa, 2013	Kabarak University, 2008	Umma University, 2013
12.	Pwani University (Kilifi) 2013	Mount Kenya University, 2011	
13.	Kisii University (Kisii) 2013	Africa International University, 2011	
14.	University of Eldoret (Eldoret) 2013	Kenya Highlands Evangelical University, 2011	
15.	Maasai Mara University (Narok) 2013	Great Lakes University of Kisumu, 2012	
16.	Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology (Kisumu) 2013	KCA (Kenya College of Accountancy) University, 2013	
17.	Laikipia University (Laikipia) 2013	Adventist University of Africa, 2013	
18.	South Eastern Kenya University (Kitui) 2013		

19.	Meru University of Science and Technology (Meru) 2013		
20.	Multimedia University of Kenya (Nairobi) 2013		
21.	University of Kabianga (Kericho) 2013		
22.	Karatina University (Karatina) 2013		

Source: Commission for University Education 2013¹⁸

Table 2 Public and private universities in Kenya (September 2013)

From 1970 to 1978 (Kenyatta's regime): there was one public university (University of Nairobi) and one private university (USIS) functioning in Kenya. Total: 2

From 1978 to 2002 (Moi's regime): five new public universities were created in Kenya; five new fully chartered private universities were established and two private universities received Letters of Interim Authority. Total: 12

From 2002 to 2013 (Kibaki's era of two presidential terms): sixteen new public universities were established; eleven new private universities received their charter and nine private universities received Letters of Interim Authority. Total: 36

Absolute Total Universities in Kenya at September 2013: 50

Otieno (2010) suggests that both the new and old private higher education institutions attest to some positive developments in Kenyan private higher education. In particular, in his opinion, private institutions have overcome the initial skepticism on their viability, quality, and relevance in a terrain long dominated by privileged public universities. This is a positive view of private universities in Kenya which it is not common to find in the literature. At the same time, Otieno (2010) claims that they have not taken over and led in enrollments because of the enduring tradition of public privilege. I would also suggest that the public universities have had more resources and capacity over time which allowed for

¹⁸ Available from: <http://www.cue.or.ke/services/accreditation/status-of-universities>. [Accessed 7th September 2013].

increasing enrollment. They were also willing to risk the quality of their educational output through increased numbers of students.

I have already discussed the issue of decline in the quality of public universities over time. Odhiambo (2011) summarises it as follows:

The specific quality issues faced by the public higher education institutions in Kenya are also connected to a number of issues that include: deteriorating physical facilities; rigid programmes that are not responsive to the market; student unrest, which leads to long closures; and the political appointments of higher education leadership. It is well documented that among other infrastructure and academic problems, windows and doors are falling apart in public universities, residential halls are stinking, there are no subscriptions to journals and no tutorials and that large lecture halls lack efficient microphones. In many universities, academic infrastructure can no longer cope with the number of learners, so the learners have to attend lectures in over-crowded conditions that are not conducive to effective communication and learning (Odhiambo 2011, pp. 307-8).

Amwata Owuor (2012) has discussed the issue of the tension between quantity and quality in Kenyan public universities and has concluded that the following is necessary to ensure quality university graduates who are productive and able to contribute to the country's development (p. 134):

1. Expansion of infrastructure and facilities.
2. Recruitment of adequate qualified staff.
3. Review and restructuring of programmes offered and regular reviews to make sure that they are in tandem with Vision 2030 which has identified science, technology, engineering, and medicine as the drivers for growth but few universities have this orientation.
4. Establishing and strengthening of the quality assurance units within the universities and making sure that they engage effectively with the academics.
5. Establishing a robust external quality assurance system and an overall body to ensure greater accountability.
6. Enhancing the role of Commission for Higher Education in coordination and regulation in the HE sector for both public and private institutions.

I would certainly agree with recommendations one to three, however I am also aware of the financial implications involved and the challenges which both public and private universities have regarding funding and income generation. Recommendations four and five are being attempted through the use of performance management agreements and efforts to obtain the "International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) certification. Strathmore University was the first university in Kenya to obtain ISO 9001:2000

certification in 2003 (Muchira Gatei and Sevilla 2006). However, my personal experience with ISO 9001:2000 is that it is too rigid for a university environment. Strathmore is now designing a more flexible and applicable quality management system which it hopes to roll out little by little. Recommendation six has already been resolved as I have discussed earlier.

Strathmore University within higher education in Kenya

Otieno (2007) makes an interesting observation regarding the rise in number of private universities. He explains that in many cases existing institutions have been upgraded and accredited rather than springing up overnight. In these cases, these universities had lower start-up costs as the basic infrastructure was in place (Otieno 2007, pp. 175-6).

This was the case with Strathmore University which was chartered in 2008 and received its Letter of Interim Authority in 2002. It had been operating as Strathmore College since 1993, offering professional courses in accountancy, information technology, secretarial studies and leadership and management. This was the outcome of a merger between Kianda College, an inter-racial secretarial college for women which had been operating since 1961 and Strathmore College, an inter-racial accountancy college for men (1966) which began operations in 1961 as an advanced-level sixth form college offering Science and Arts subjects. Both Kianda College and Strathmore College were well-known in Nairobi and other parts of Kenya even before the merger in 1993. At that time both colleges moved to the Madaraka Campus which had been funded by the European Union and the Italian government and constructed on land donated by the Kenyan government at Ole Sangale Road, Madaraka Estate, Nairobi (<http://www.strathmore.edu/en/about-strathmore/history>). This was the start of the current Strathmore University Campus which has developed in the same location over the years as I explain in Chapter Seven of my dissertation.

The original Strathmore College and Kianda College began in 1961, shortly before Independence. Both colleges were open to all races and religions in Kenya from the start, following the express desire of St Josemaria Escriva. They had to struggle with opposition from the colonial government and their neighbours in the Lavington area of Nairobi who resisted this approach because it went against the status quo, which in fact promoted racial segregation by law. The general aim of both colleges was to provide some form of further

education for all Kenyans at a time when only the elite could access the Royal College of Nairobi. In particular the aim was to prepare Kenyans, especially Africans, to obtain employment in the private and public sectors on the eve of and after Independence in 1963. At that time the other options would have been basic technical colleges providing vocational training in teaching and manual trades. Clearly, both colleges provided professional skills to their students so they could obtain good jobs and help to support and develop their families and the nation. Both colleges started secondary schools in 1977 and later went on to open the primary sections.

In 1993 when the merged Strathmore College began functioning at the Madaraka Campus there were four public universities and four private universities (if we count USIU) in Kenya. Shortly before that Strathmore College had started professional computer courses at diploma and higher diploma levels (1991) and started the Distance Learning Centre to offer correspondence courses in Accountancy (1992). From 1993, the long term goal of the College was to seek university status at the appropriate time. In 2001 Strathmore began offering degree courses in Commerce and Information Technology in conjunction with Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT), a public university which had been established in 1994. The first intake of university students in 2001 completed their four year degree course in December 2004 and graduated in August, 2005. By that time, Strathmore University had received the Letter of Interim Authority (2002) and could award the degrees under its own authority, having separated from JKUAT. In 2002 there were six public universities in Kenya, six fully chartered private universities and three universities with Letters of Interim Authority if we include Strathmore itself. Since 2002 Strathmore University has formed part of the university landscape in Kenya with growing student enrollment over the years¹⁹.

¹⁹ It is owned by Strathmore Educational Trust (SET), a non-profit body corporate with perpetual succession, established under the Trustee (Perpetual Succession) Act.

Enrollment	2012
Postgraduate	461
Undergraduate	3193
Professional/diploma courses	2618
Total enrollment	6272

Source: Strathmore University 2013²⁰

Table 3 Student Enrollment at Strathmore University in 2012

The high level of enrollment in professional and diploma courses is due to the university's history as a third level college from 1961 to 2001. These courses have been maintained because they possess a strong “good will” factor due to the high quality of the lecturers and the excellent performance of students in international exams (<http://www.strathmore.edu/en/study-at-strathmore/professional-courses>).

Over the years Strathmore has sought to diversify its undergraduate courses and to offer high level degrees (<http://www.strathmore.edu/en/study-at-strathmore/undergraduate-courses>) along with postgraduate programmes (<http://www.strathmore.edu/en/study-at-strathmore/postgraduate-courses>) and diploma courses (<http://www.strathmore.edu/en/study-at-strathmore/university-diploma-courses>) to attract new students in an ever more competitive environment, with financial challenges and concerns regarding sustainability (Banya 2001; Odhiambo 2006; Mwiria et al. 2007; Mabizela 2007; Oketch 2009; Munene 2009; Aina 2010; Otieno 2010; Oanda and Kowi 2012).

From 1961 onwards Strathmore College and Kianda College were committed to providing quality education. Strathmore University has developed a reputation for quality over time (Muchira Gatei and Sevilla 2006) and the Strathmore “brand” has a good name amongst Kenyans. As I mentioned above the university is now developing its own quality assurance system based on free and personal ownership by everyone on campus. We have a Learning and Teaching Services department which has been providing academic staff development programmes for over six years (Odhiambo 2006, pp. 11-12). At the same time we are

²⁰ See: <http://www.strathmore.edu/en/about-strathmore/corporate-facts-figures>.

struggling to maintain quality because of multiple student in-takes, big class sizes and other demands (Otieno 2010; Odhiambo 2011).

Strathmore University is an intrinsic part of the higher education landscape in Kenya and shares the same challenges as the other public and private universities. As Otieno (2007) describes:

The transformation of the Kenyan higher education landscape has been rapid... There are more higher education institutions, more programmes, increased enrollment, and greater diversification – both in programmes and types of institutions. A strong competition between public and private institutions forces both to adopt coping strategies... (while facing) the challenges of market pressure and financial need (Otieno 2007, p. 191).

As an entrepreneurial, not-for-profit university we strive to meet the market demand for professional degree courses (Odhiambo 2006, pp. 2-5; pp. 14-15), which is in keeping with our tradition reaching back to 1961 as I have explained. At the same time we are developing our research capacity and have various research centres in the university (<http://www.strathmore.edu/en/research-at-strathmore>). We have established a scholarship endowment fund (Odhiambo 2006, pp. 8-10) and are constantly seeking new scholarship opportunities so that no-one may be excluded from Strathmore because of financial need. We are also building international partnerships and our Alumni Association (Odhiambo 2006), as well promoting community outreach amongst staff and students (<http://www.strathmore.edu/cop/>).

Our activities as a university are in line with the country's needs as outlined in the literature as I have tried to show in this Appendix.

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Appendix H: Issues I have contributed to at Strathmore University

- Write up on SU dress code currently on Dean of Students website (SU): <http://www.strathmore.edu/dos/dresscode.php>: (26th April 2009).
- Review and comments on Strathmore University Research Ethics Guidelines (12th April 2010).
- Review of research paper for colleague (Beatrice Njeru): Post Graduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PCAP). Wading through the comments: Is structured formative feedback a useful paddle? (24th May 2010).
- Comments on proposed curriculum for Masters in Applied Philosophy and Ethics [MAPE]. (May 2011).
- Suggestions regarding bibliographical issues brought up by Commission of Higher Education [CHE] regarding the MAPE document (25th October 2011).
- Review and comments on Masters in University Academic Practice [MUAP] (29th March 2012).
- Philosophy Curriculum Review: some comments and suggestions (13th August 2012).
- Comments on curriculum for Masters in Academic Practice [MAP] (27th September 2012).
- Comments on and examiner at defence of three Master's thesis proposals: November – December 2012.
- Review and comments on *Guidelines: Research for Postgraduate Theses, Dissertations and Projects* to adjust appropriately for research in the humanities and social sciences (2nd January 2013).
- Reference letters for colleagues, friends, past students (on-going).

Appendix I: Narrative of my work (July 2007 – November 2008)

My work on the Academic Development Unit Committee

Based on the findings of the focus group discussions on the existing Certificate of Lectureship, it was decided that the ADU should design a course for staff development, with a new name. In the meeting of 8th February 2008, the five key areas were agreed upon by the committee. “It was decided that members should send ideas about the curriculum on email. Ms. Dean was asked to do the introductory part to act as a guide to the rest” (of the committee members)²¹.

I implemented this request and sent a summary of the ideas discussed along with an initial proposal for the first part of the module to the committee members on 13th February 2008 as follows:

1. Teaching Philosophy of SU: learned centered teaching (Catherine D. and XX)
2. Classroom management: (XX and XX)
 - a. handling different class sizes;
 - b. managing the different types of “class/group personality”: (each group of students has its own general personality which you need to discover and work with in the classroom)
 - c. way of dealing with students e.g. they are young adults, not children so we should treat them as such; not scolding, commanding them in public; listening to and respecting their views; making positive use in class of all their contributions, etc.
3. Teaching methodologies: (XX and XX)
 - a. presentation of various ways of teaching;
 - b. suggestions on which method to use in different units, class groups, etc.
 - c. teaching tools: audiovisuals, PowerPoint presentations, etc.
4. Encourage innovative teaching: (XX and Catherine D.)
 - a. explain what this means;
 - b. give ideas, examples, suggestions;
5. Evaluation / exams, etc. (XX and XX)

²¹ Minutes of the Academic Development Unit (ADU) committee meeting held on Friday, 8th February 2008, in the executive boardroom, at 10.30 a.m. Min. 12/08.

To be presented by ADU members on Friday 15th February:

A brief outline (in point form) of the main contents that should be covered in the topic that was assigned to each of us, along with the topic aim / objective, the outcomes from covering that topic and practical exercises for the participants to carry out.

To facilitate things and to ensure that we all work using the same structure, we can use the template that XX sent us the other day, as adapted to our needs. I include a sample of the topic that I am to work on (incomplete).

We can all look at / comment / make suggestions to further complete the objectives, contents, etc. for each topic.

The next meeting was held on 8th May 2008. In this meeting we agreed that the course would be called *Academic Staff Development Programme* (Min. 21/08) and that it would run each day from 16th to 20th June 2008 (Min. 22/08). We then discussed the document which I had sent in February. “Ms. Dean had prepared the course outline which was distributed to all members. It was agreed that the teaching philosophy should be changed to learner centered where the learner participates a great deal”²² (Min. 23/08). In the same Minute, it was stated that “Members were given a deadline of 16th May 2008 to have handed in their course outlines”.

Unfortunately the programme did not run in June 2008. In a meeting on 15th August 2008 the following problems were identified:

- poor communication with Faculty Managers
- lack of response from lecturers
- delays in booking speakers
- the Deans needed more information regarding the role and importance of the ADU and the staff development programme to encourage their lecturers to participate²³ (Min.2/ADU3/15/08).

I would also add that the contents of the various topics had not actually been prepared. It was agreed that Mrs. Omingo²⁴ would prepare the contents for the first module of the

²² Minutes of the Academic Development Unit (ADU) committee meeting held on Thursday, 8th May 2008, in room 4, at 2.15 p.m.

²³ Minutes of the Academic Development Unit committee meeting held on Friday, 15th August 2008, in the executive boardroom.

²⁴ From May 2008 Mrs. Mary Omingo chaired the ADU committee meetings as she got more involved in the daily running of the unit. She also began studying, reading, and working on issues around academic staff development. She was appointed Academic Registrar in 2010 and held the position until mid 2012, when she

ASDP to be discussed at the next meeting. I was also to send a draft proposal for two further modules along with the programme.

On 29th August 2008 we met again and it was reported that Mrs. Omingo had prepared and sent the contents of Module One for study by the committee members. I had not managed to prepare and send the drafts for Modules Two and Three. During the meeting we discussed and made amendments to the contents of the first module²⁵. In the next meeting we would discuss the implementation plan for Module One of the ASDP, so that it could be executed effectively for the benefit of lecturers and students. The following meeting was held on 10th November 2008. I did not attend as I had recently been substituted on the ADU committee by another representative for IHEDS.

moved to manage the new Learning and Teaching Services which substituted the ADU. She also began working on her doctoral research in this field.

²⁵ Minutes of the Academic Development Unit committee meeting held on Friday, 29th August 2008, in the executive boardroom. Min.2/ADU4/29/08 and Min. 3/ADU4/29/08.

Appendix J: Student Feedback (July to October 2012)

Feedback from 2nd and 3rd year students in Information Technology, Informatics, Telecommunications, Tourism and Hospitality after Philosophical Anthropology (July to October 2012)

1. Ms C. Dean is one of the best lecturers I have encountered since joining SU. Her unit also happens to be one of the most interesting I have learnt (RNOM).
2. This unit was clearly and interestingly covered otherwise it would have been a boring class. I commend the lecturer for her outstanding teaching methods such as interactive classes, video sessions and guest speaker (JMM).
3. The unit has been interesting and I have learnt a lot of things which will not only help me during exams but also in the future to come (GN).
4. The idea of the guest speaker was good since it gave me hope that no matter where one comes from, anything is possible as long as one doesn't give up (AI).
5. Philosophical Anthropology is a productive unit that helps / assists one to understand various life concepts. It has been exciting working with C. Dean. Cheers and thank you! (MNP).

Appendix K: Feedback on Staff Seminar (9th November 2012)

Feedback on my presentation at the Staff Seminar of 9th November 2012

Mail from Mrs. Omingo to all Lecturers on 12th November 2012

On 12th November 2012 she sent this mail to all the lecturers:

Dear all,

I would like to thank you for setting aside some time to attend the staff workshop last Friday. One of the ways of improving our teaching is by having such sessions. Unfortunately the time allocated to various sessions was short. In case you have a comment or question or any other feedback on any of the sessions you can send it to the facilitators of the sessions.

In particular Ms Dean would like some feedback, you could write a one page (or less!) commentary, on your impressions of the session; perhaps you can include (if you felt it was present), your opinion on whether she gave sufficient evidence to validate her claims to living the values she spoke about. She would like to include it as evidence in her dissertation.

Attached is what she presented, I hope it will also assist you in reflecting on your own educational values and how you can live them to make the students' learning experience at Strathmore University memorable.

Mail from Mumbi, one of my past students and currently a Graduate Assistant at SU:

Response to the above request

The presentation given was very insightful. It is true that even the best of us tend to forget how we should or rather how we ought to behave towards our students. It is easy to overlook the fact that all students are unique individuals each with their own special needs. This came out very clearly in the presentation. I strongly feel that our university needs to pay more attention to the various contexts surrounding the students. Personally I know the devastation that comes with losing a student to suicide. When I was a student here (which is not so long ago) one of my classmates committed suicide, so I have experienced it from the perspective of a student. I would want to say that we did not see it coming but the signs were there. I felt responsible. I think it is imperative that lecturers become aware of this because I

think it is something that can be prevented. The more people speak about it the better. Furthermore the values that you use for teaching will no doubt be very helpful, especially love and freedom. If students know you generally want them to succeed and most of all that you actually care about them, they won't want to disappoint. Finally, what stood out most for me in your presentation was choosing to be real. Just letting students know who you are as a person, to foster that relationship (basically love) and building trust (12th November, 2012).

Mail from Muireann Ní Dhuigneáin

I enjoyed reading the extract and relived the session all over again as I read the text. From the latter, I can feel your struggle in terms of personal growth and development as you marry (at a personal and practical level), your ideas of student centered approaches to teaching with those most prevalent in the experience of the students and fellow colleagues (authoritarian and disciplinary). Wonderful work. Long may you continue to lead and inspire in such a manner (2nd February, 2013).

Appendix L: The Humanities at Strathmore University

I have mentioned Strathmore's mission, vision and values on a number of occasions in this chapter. I should clarify that when I came to Strathmore in 2004 the mission of the university was formulated differently. I only realized in 2012 that the university website now has a slightly different mission statement, a new vision statement, and values have been introduced, which were non-existent on the website in 2004.

Mission Statement (2005)

We dedicate ourselves to the advancement of education through teaching, scholarship and service to society by providing an all-round education in an atmosphere of freedom and responsibility, creating a culture of continuous improvement, fostering high moral standards, and developing a spirit of service and respect for others.

This mission statement has been hanging at the entrance to the Main Reception area of the university, and at the entrance to the Library since 2005. It is still in place. The Strathmore Quality Policy, also dating from 2005 is hanging in the same places.

It seems that the university's mission statement was adjusted, and a vision statement and list of values were added in 2010 / 2011.

Current Mission, Vision and Values:

Mission Statement

To provide all round quality education in an atmosphere of freedom and responsibility; excellence in teaching, research and scholarship; ethical and social development; and service to Society (www.strathmore.edu/aboutus).

Vision Statement

To become a leading out-come driven entrepreneurial university in the region by translating our excellence into a major contribution to culture, economic well-being, and quality of life (www.strathmore.edu/aboutus).

Values

Excellence through the sanctification of work; freedom and responsibility; ethical practice; personalized attention; subsidiarity; collegiality; life-long learning; service to society (www.strathmore.edu/aboutus).

I do not know the reasons for these changes. The new statements and values are certainly formulated in a clear, direct manner. To a large extent the elements of the 2005 mission statement are still present in one or another of the new mission, vision and values. However, I cannot identify clearly in these new versions, the following concepts which are present in the 2005 mission, unless they are implicit in the concepts I place in brackets:

- A culture of continuous improvement (life-long learning)
- High moral standards (ethical and social development; ethical practice)
- Respect for others (ethical practice; personalized attention; service to society)

The values include new concepts, perhaps to underline how Strathmore is managed as an institution and indicate the values which it wishes to represent in society.

The vision is totally new and aims at expressing what Strathmore as an institution wants to become. My concern here is the emphasis on being an *out-come driven entrepreneurial university*, even if the aim is to contribute to culture, economic well-being and quality of life. The entrepreneurial university is certainly in vogue in many parts of the world (Thorp and Goldstein 2010; Rothaermel, Agung and Jiang 2007). However in my opinion it may be difficult to continue promoting Strathmore as an entrepreneurial university, and still maintain in practice, an appreciation of the core role of the Humanities units in the various undergraduate programmes being run by the university.

A document on the University Teaching Philosophy does point to the important role of the philosophy and other humanities units in the educational programme offered at Strathmore:

Extract from a Strathmore University policy document on the University's Teaching Philosophy

“The University’s educational philosophy is centred on humanistic education whose aim is to:

- Equip students with critical capacity that would enable them have the criteria to sift ideas, and to help the students have the independence of will not to be led against their informed judgment. This entails educating the students in human virtues: prudence, justice, fortitude, temperance, industriousness, loyalty, cheerfulness, sincerity, honesty, etc.
- Inculcate in the students a mentality of service to others as part of the human formation of students.
- To develop the supernatural dimension and bring students to know God, and thereby seek their true happiness.

The expected learning outcome of this human formation is the acquisition of the objective moral criteria needed for making decisions in both professional work and personal lives.

Integral education: The goal of integral education is to help students to develop their character, that is, grow in human virtues”.

However in recent years, as the cost of running the university and repaying loans taken for the new buildings becomes more expensive, there is a certain reticence towards the units offered on a compulsory basis by the School of Humanities and Social Studies. This is found amongst the administrators in other faculties and schools who have to pay SHSS for each of their students doing these courses. SHSS has no other source of income as it functions as a service department to the rest of the university and has very few students of its own. The need to reduce expenditure is affecting all departments, but SHSS is particularly at risk precisely because it does not have its own sources of income. Yet, this school is really the most important in the university, as confirmed by the first point in our teaching philosophy which highlights the role of humanistic education in developing our students as persons. This education is offered only by the School of Humanities and Social Studies.

Due to the financial pressures within and beyond Strathmore, there is a growing tendency to focus more on expenditure and less on the people who are employed by the university, and the students who study there. This may be seen in the tendency towards on-going intakes of students throughout the academic year which has caused many challenges in terms of class distribution, timetabling, lecturing hours, etc. This has an impact on students and staff and can give rise to a reduction in the quality of the education we offer.

At the same time, this challenge is affecting other universities too as governments around the world are trying to reduce expenditure, education is often amongst the first budgets to

be cut. Here in Kenya this is also the case. In 2012, a comment was made by a leading figure in the Ministry of Higher Education about the need to invest in “productive” degrees such as the sciences, and reduce or remove the Humanities courses. The comment became a topic of public debate. On 3rd December 2012, Waga Odongo, a journalist with the *Daily Nation*, Kenya’s most widely read newspaper, published an article *An attack on the art is an affront to democracy itself*. He made a case for conserving the humanities and arts courses in universities because they are “core disciplines” which teach our young people to think, develop their own ideas and philosophies. As such, they help to prevent a country from falling into tyranny and historical ignorance. He explained that studying the humanities enriches our knowledge of the human condition throughout time and enables us to reflect on important value laden issues (Odongo 2012).

After reading the article, I sent mail to many contacts in Strathmore University and others who I knew would appreciate the ideas and promote the article further. I introduced the text and included the link to the online site where it could be accessed. Many replied expressing their appreciation for the article. My aim was to contribute to sustaining the awareness within Strathmore especially, of the importance of the humanities units which we teach, precisely because they are the foundation of our teaching philosophy, and ultimately of our mission and values.

Helping new Graduate Assistants understand the role of SHSS at Strathmore University

On 29th July 2009, I gave a presentation to some new Graduate Assistants who had been employed by Strathmore. I had been asked to explain *Why incorporate ethics and other humanities into all courses?* so they would appreciate the role of the core humanities within the undergraduate curricula in the University.

I emphasised an idea which I heard our Vice Chancellor speak about on 3rd July 2009 at the launch of the Centre of Education and the Centre of Applied Philosophy and Ethics. He explained that the courses offered by IHEDS are the heart of the university. All the other schools and faculties should be inspired by the essential concepts taught in the humanities units, while they teach their specific subjects. However, IHEDS (now SHSS) is still often considered as a “service department” for the rest of the university. To help counteract this

idea and explain the purpose of the humanities at Strathmore, I discussed the following points with the new Graduate Assistants:

- The Humanities help to humanise us by making us aware of what it means to be a human person;
- They can help us to develop an harmonious personality;
- They can help us to develop an appreciation for human values such as goodness, truth, beauty, peace, understanding, etc.
- They can help us to develop good interpersonal relationships;
- They can help us to develop our desire to contribute to our community, etc.

In my opinion these are some of the key values which the humanities units can transmit and foster in our students. They are values which can help them to become better persons and contributors to improving our society and the world. These units will help Strathmore to fulfill its mission, and live out its values, although its vision is to be an entrepreneurial university.

Management issues and the Humanities

When we have staff meetings with top management on the university's strategic plans and related issues, it is usually only the SHSS lecturers who speak out about the possible consequences and impact of these on the people who work and study at Strathmore. On one occasion I spoke in such a gathering, to insist that people, who are supposed to be at the heart of what we do, are actually bearing the brunt of some new policies. I pointed out that people matter more than money. I was listened to by everyone and the Vice Chancellor replied. However the reactions of specific staff members afterwards were interesting. The service staff working in the cafeteria, house-keeping, etc. thanked me for speaking out in their "defence". However some lecturers told me that they do not mind the workload that extra intakes of students bring, because they want the extra teaching hours for the money it can give them. This is understandable in a sense as some of these people are trying to raise a family in difficult financial times. But I was surprised that my own colleagues, in private, nearly reproached me for questioning certain policies which would increase their workload. I thought that I was helping them, but some of them thought otherwise!

In 2010 the outcomes of a study on Strathmore's rebranding strategy, which had been outsourced to a leading company, were presented to staff members. Unfortunately I was not present as I was abroad at the time. However I was told that the key concept which the team had identified as Strathmore's unique and differentiating feature is upholding human dignity. It seems that this idea came up frequently as the team spoke with a broad range of staff members and observed the way of working and lifestyle at the university. I was very impressed that an independent, outsourced team had identified this as, in fact, it does express the essence of our mission statement.

In 2011, the Administration studied and began to implement some restructuring of the existing rooms in the university. The Management Science Building (MSB) was finished and contained many classrooms and the Student Centre was nearly finished. As a result many areas of the original building would be vacated. In the plan for redistribution of lecturers in new staff rooms, an old classroom (Room 11) was to be converted into a staff room for the SHSS lecturers. I began to hear stories about the type of desks, etc. that were being installed there, which did not seem appropriate as work stations for lecturers. On 4th August 2011 I visited Room 11 personally to investigate the situation, partly because it was possible that I too would be transferred to this new room. I was not impressed by what I saw. On 5th August after thinking about it, I sent a mail to the Dean of SHSS, expressing my opinion that the new staffroom did not reflect the university "brand", which is to uphold human dignity.

Extract from my mail to the Dean of SHSS on Room 11 (5th August 2010)

Good afternoon Christine

We have been informed that the SHSS academic staff will all be relocated to a new staffroom, at room 11, close to the current SCM offices.

I went to see the room yesterday and how it is being set-up. To be honest, I do not find it very conducive to good academic work.

You have probably seen that the room is being filled with small work stations, all stuck one to the next; somewhat crowded together. They already look very small. When the desktop, the CPU and the chair are added, it seems there will be very little work surface to actually lean on for writing, even marking, reading effectively, etc. To add to this, a small

locker has been added, but is again very small, so where will we store scripts which we have pending to mark? The little shelf space available for books is minimal.

At the same time, due to the number of desks being put in the room, I think there will not be enough good lighting, and the colour of the sides of the desks is very dark. The whole appearance, although not yet finished gives a sense of claustrophobia. Also, I don't know how students will be able to reach any given lecturer physically if they need to consult or ask something. (...)

The staffroom I am in now, first floor of the library building, had much bigger work stations which make it much easier to work well. I don't know where those stations will be moved to (...). But why should the SHSS lecturer have to use room 11 with those small desks? I find it a rather inhuman and uncondusive working environment (and yet it seems that our branding strategy is upholding human dignity!). I may add that the students now have state of the art classrooms (MSB), student centre and library. Why should the lecturers be given working space which is somewhat unpleasant? Perhaps administration thinks that SHSS has many part-time lecturers and so the small desks in room 11 don't matter so much, however, the other schools also have many part-time lecturers. And it also seems that SHSS actually needs many full-time lecturers, who should have better working conditions in my opinion.

I know that this is a tricky issue and that there may be a lot of politics involved in the distribution of staff rooms, etc, which may not be easy to solve. But I needed to communicate to you what I feel about room 11. I don't know if I will get much work done there!

Thanks for listening!

On reading it afterwards the text comes across as somewhat passionate and perhaps emotive, however it expresses what I felt about the situation. Since then, I try to tone down the mails in which I give my opinion on specific issues within the university, while still making my point clearly and giving reasons for my position.

On 8th August 2011, the Dean replied to my mail. She explained that she agreed with me fully, and that she, along with the Faculty Manager, had been discussing the issue of Room 11 with the Administration and the Management Board for the last month to try to have better working conditions for the SHSS lecturers. Soon afterwards, I heard that the tiny work stations had been removed from Room 11, and that fewer, more spacious desks were being installed, allowing sufficient space for movement of staff and students in the room.

Eventually I was not moved from where I have been working since I arrived in 2004. Sometime later, the Dean told me that she had forwarded my mail to the Management. Apparently it was an important contribution to bringing about the change of plan. I was heard because I have been at the university for a long time, and I had called for the upholding of the dignity of our lecturers in the quality and organization of their staff rooms, particularly given that the students now have state of the art facilities. It was encouraging to know that I was able to contribute to ensuring dignified working conditions for our lecturers.

When necessary, I continue giving or sending my opinion on issues that arise at Strathmore to the appropriate person/s, to help the university function according to our mission and values and ensure that we are acting in the best interest of our staff and students, who are people that must be respected. I know that I do this because I have made the university's mission and values so deeply my own over the years that the university matters to me personally.

As I see it, the humanities units offered by SHSS contribute to educating our students in an all-round manner, by helping them to discover their value and worth as persons, and that of other people. At the same time, the humanities lecturers and SHSS, have a role to play in helping the university to live out its mission and values, by highlighting the fact that the human person is at the heart of this mission and these values. Strathmore should address the needs of the people who work and study at the university in the first place, when developing policy, strategic plans, etc. I understand that this will always be a challenge because it is easier to manage things than people.

The most recent brochures produced to advertise our courses have the following written on the last page (the highlighting is mine):

*At Strathmore University, we are **open to everyone**, as felt in our **warm family atmosphere and the simplicity and confidence with which we engage one another**. We encourage **open, lively and responsible interaction based on the respect for the freedom and opinion of others**. Our culture and reputation for outstanding excellence has deep roots. We are driven by the desire to **enable you recognize the dignity and worth of self and of others and to make that fact propel you to achieve the greatest possible excellence in what you do and to do it for the service of others**. Strathmore University is for those seeking to be that peerless*

professional, revolutionary entrepreneur, inspirational manager or exemplary leader who wants to make an impact and transform our society.

This sounds attractive and implicitly focuses on the centrality of the person in the university's mission and values. However, my concern is that in practice, we do not manage to actually live up to the ideals expressed in this brochure. At times I ask myself: how are we treating each other? How are we treating our students? How are we treating our staff members? Do we take into account the needs of the individual, along with the broader picture? Do we really “walk the talk”?

There will always be challenges in daily living which can make it difficult to live by what we say we stand for. At times those challenges will come from the staff and students themselves: lack of cooperation; lack of initiative; indifference; etc. For example, the university is now requiring all lecturers to start working on their PhD, if they have not already done so. From the Personnel Management Department, mails are regularly sent out with information about scholarships for post-graduate studies in various locations. However, it seems that lecturers are not following up on these opportunities, nor looking for other ways of beginning or continuing with their studies. How can we deal with such a situation?

In my opinion, although it is harder, we need to focus more on the circumstances of the individual people at Strathmore. We need to help each one to identify where, what is/are the difficulties which they have in responding to the requirements made by Management. In this way we can then understand, and help them to understand *why* their response may be lack of cooperation, indifference, etc. We can then seek effective solutions together. If we try to work like this, we will be living out respect for each person's freedom, while helping them to accept the responsibility which their free actions and choices bring. It is an opportunity to help our staff understand what Strathmore means by the reference to “an atmosphere of freedom and responsibility” in our mission statement. We must understand the needs of the unique individual persons who work or study at Strathmore, while still maintaining the broader vision of what we are trying to achieve. Otherwise, in my opinion we are not really living up to our mission and values.

Given my position in the university, I cannot always do much about the bigger issues and problems which Management face in implementing our mission while developing the

university. However, from my place I try to contribute with my suggestions, and through the way I live and interact with the people around me, staff or students. I try to be friendly, polite, smile, be patient and considerate towards each person I meet on the corridors, in the classroom, the cafeteria, the Library, at my desk, etc. I cannot judge the impact of these small details, but at least I know that I am trying to respond to the possible needs of each person and respect them for who they are.

Appendix M: My early teaching at Strathmore University

Semester	Timeframe	Unit	Student Groups	Numbers	Mean Grade Exam
1.	October 2004 – March 2005	Principles of Ethics	2 nd year Commerce	120	Not available
			2 nd year Business and Information Technology	54	Not available
Total				174	

Table 4 Summary of my first teaching semester: October 2004 – March 2005

No.	Question	Score out of five
1.	Punctuality in starting and finishing lecture	3.78
2.	Sets clear objectives for the course	3.63
3.	Punctual in setting, marking and returning CATs/Assignments	3.10
4.	Presents course material clearly and logically maintains continuity	3.19
5.	Timely completion of syllabus	3.35
6.	Gives constructive and helpful feedback	3.57
7.	Shows expert knowledge of the subject matter	3.79
8.	Uses board and other visual aids in ways that make the material clearer & note-taking easier	3.73
9.	Has right attitude towards students	3.85
10.	Gives adequate and up-to-date reference material, handouts	3.56
11.	What is your overall assessment of the lecturer's teaching performance?	3.60
	Overall Average	3.56

Table 5 Feedback from Business and Information Technology students

Semester	Timeframe	Unit	Students Groups	Numbers	Mean Grade Exam
2.	July 2005 – October 2005	Principles of Ethics	2nd year Commerce (Group A: 96 + Group B: 95)	191	60.91
			2nd year Business and Information Technology	85	62.84
Total				276	

Table 6 Summary of my second teaching semester: July – October 2005

No.	Question	Score out of five		
		A	B	BBIT
1.	Punctuality in starting and finishing lecture	4.7	4.6	4.71
2.	Sets clear objectives for the course	4.4	4.3	4.73
3.	Punctual in setting, marking and returning CATs/Assignments	4.2	4.3	4.63
4.	Presents course material clearly and logically maintains continuity	4.2	4.1	4.09
5.	Timely completion of syllabus	4.5	4.3	4.41
6.	Gives constructive and helpful feedback	4.2	4.1	4.40
7.	Shows expert knowledge of the subject matter	4.6	4.5	4.45
8.	Uses board and other visual aids in ways that make the material clearer & note-taking easier	4.2	3.9	4.11
9.	Has right attitude towards students	4.5	4.3	4.42
10.	Gives adequate and up-to-date reference material, handouts	4.0	3.8	4.11
11.	What is your overall assessment of the lecturer's teaching performance?	4.5	4.3	4.44
12.	Overall Average	4.4	4.2	4.41

Table 7 End of semester feedback from all three groups of students

Semester	Timeframe	Unit	Student Group	Numbers	Mean Grade Exam
3.	November 2005 – March 2006	Philosophical Anthropology	1st year Commerce	103	47.33
			1st year Business and Information Technology	90	45.16
Total				193	

Table 8 Summary of my third teaching semester: November 2005 – March 2006

No.	Question	Score over five
1.	Punctuality in starting and finishing lecture	4.48
2.	Sets clear objectives for the course	4.30
3.	Punctual in setting, marking and returning CATs/Assignments	4.13
4.	Presents course material clearly and logically maintains continuity	4.25
5.	Timely completion of syllabus	3.95
6.	Gives constructive and helpful feedback	4.00
7.	Shows expert knowledge of the subject matter	3.85
8.	Uses board and other visual aids in ways that make the material clearer & note-taking easier	3.54
9.	Has right attitude towards students	4.11
10.	Gives adequate and up-to-date reference material, handouts	3.71
11.	What is your overall assessment of the lecturer's teaching performance?	3.79
12.	Overall Average	4.01

Table 9 End of semester feedback from BBIT students

Appendix N: Reflections on my teaching in Rome and in Kenya

During my doctoral research I have reflected back on my work in Rome and my early years at Strathmore University. I have identified various factors which may explain why I experienced myself as a “living contradiction” during my first teaching semesters in Kenya.

- ✓ In Rome, I was teaching young professional women, who were doing postgraduate studies and had a certain level of personal maturity; at Strathmore I was teaching young undergraduate men and women with little professional exposure, who were still “discovering themselves” as persons.
- ✓ In Rome, the women I taught were united amongst themselves, in spite of their culturally diverse background, by the fact that lived the same spirit as they were all members of Opus Dei who were studying Theology; at Strathmore, although there was less cultural diversity by comparison with Rome, my students did not have a unifying common denominator, other than the course they were studying.
- ✓ In Rome, the majority of my students had varying levels of intrinsic motivation; at Strathmore it seemed that my students were studying only to get good grades in the exam (this is relatively understandable given the education system, as I have described in Chapter Six).
- ✓ In Rome my students were doing Theology because they freely wanted to; at Strathmore, most of my students did not seem to want to study philosophy and, as I will show later, they felt it was being forced upon them.
- ✓ In Rome, my students were only studying Theology and they understood why they were studying it (to deepen in their knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith, and to be able to transmit it to others with personal conviction); at Strathmore, the philosophy units were few in comparison with all the other units each student was covering for their degree in Commerce or Business and Information Technology and, as again I will show, many of them did not understand the reason why they had to take these units and pay for them.
- ✓ In Rome my students were all living and studying on the same premises, and did not have to struggle with traffic, weather conditions, etc to come to class; at Strathmore my students had to get up early, find their way to university on time, at times overcome various challenges related to traffic and weather conditions, amongst others, as I will explain further on.

Appendix O: March 2006 Questionnaire and Outcomes

My commentary on the questions in the student feedback questionnaire which I designed and administered in March 2006

Student assessment of ETHICS 1 (March 2006)

1. *What skills have you learnt through the study of Ethics?*

The purpose of this question was to get the students to think about whether or not they had learnt anything beyond the contents of the unit:

- a) *Academic skills:* thinking skills for future use in other studies
- b) *Life skills:* for life in general

2. *Which themes did you find most interesting and/or useful and why?*

This question relates to my aim of making learning interesting. I also wanted to find out if the students they were able to apply the theory to life, another of my aims.

3. *Indicate one new idea that you have learnt which has a practical application in your life:*

This question directly addresses my aim of relating the contents to real life by drawing out their practical implications.

4. *Give your opinion on the delivery of the unit by the lecturer:*

Some of these questions are similar to those on the faculty feedback forms, but I was seeking more specific information to identify problems and address them in my teaching. The questions are indirectly related to my aim of making learning enjoyable for my students.

- a) *clarity:*
- b) *contents made interesting:* this again relates to my first teaching aim.

- c) *too fast or too slow:*
- d) *use of audiovisual material:*
- e) *use of questions and answers:* I was trying this method in class to elicit discussion, although it was often difficult to get the students to participate.
- f) *other comments:* very open-ended to allow for other issues regarding delivery to be brought up by the students.

5. *Any suggestions for improving on delivery, course contents, teaching methods, etc?*

The last question was totally open-ended to provide an opportunity for students to give feedback on absolutely anything related to the unit.

My summary of and reflective analysis on students comments in the March 2006 Questionnaire

1. Make learning interesting / enjoyable:

Boring; irrelevant; no humour; be more aggressive, enthusiastic; interesting but not too lively.

My reflection: many students did not really find their learning experience interesting or enjoyable.

2. Get students thinking: these replies usually began with the phrase “I learnt to...”

Think broadly; think more analytically; cramming; memorizing; terms are hard but delivery is clear; questions were asked in class but we didn't answer due to little comprehension; need more time to understand new concepts.

My reflection: these comments are mixed as some reflect that the students learnt to think, while others only learnt to “cram” (memorise) for the exam. However, most students seemed to find it hard to deal with the concepts, probably because they can be quite abstract. These replies explained why students did not answer in class, and their own perception that they need more time to “understand the new concepts”. I confirmed my intuition about their difficulties in understanding Philosophical

Anthropology and so learnt that I would need to make changes in my teaching practice to address these challenges with my future students. These replies also explain, at least in part, the low mean grade in the exam.

3. Apply theory to real life:

Group A: Only 6 students explicitly stated that the course was not practical although others made comments which implied that they had not learnt to link the contents with real life: *No new idea learnt to apply to life as I don't understand; course is mostly theoretical; give examples that students can relate to; ideas too complex for real life application; make course more practical and less theoretical; too technical and academic but not practical; use more real life examples.*

Group B: Although they did not state explicitly that the course was practical, some students did indicate that they had learnt new ideas which they could use in their lives: *Learnt how to understand self and others; good choice of examples; she used examples that affect us personally.*

My reflection: the answers which touched on the application of theory to real life were quite diverse, which is why I have made two groups here. The replies would seem to reflect differences in the students' prior education and preparation for a unit like Philosophical Anthropology, possibly based on where they went to school, which language they were accustomed to use for study, etc. They indicate a common problem that I have discovered generally exists in Kenya, which is the difficulty in moving from theoretical knowledge, even in the case of clear instructions, to practical application or implementation of those ideas. I think that this is due to the education system and practices in traditional informal learning, which focus on memorization rather than on understanding and application of knowledge, as I have discussed in an earlier chapter. This was another learning point for me which, as I will explain later, became one of the main issues that I have tried to address while transforming my practice.

Appendix P: Material related to the Unity in Diversity Project

Students' notes on their experience during the post electoral violence in Kenya

(30th December 2007 to 22nd January 2008)

Student 1. *Election? What election? There were no elections!!! This whole thing had been decided even before the 27th. Both PNU and ODM rigged, only that PNU were better at it. So I don't think ODM guys should chill (expect that things will change). If they wanted to win, they should have put more effort in rigging. Anyway, I'm XXX so yay for me!*

Student 2. *It was time to vote and we (ordinary Kenyans) decided to go down to the ballot boxes and express ourselves but alas our freedom of expression was to be marred by chaos. Kibaki (sorry to him if I show him no respect) stole our votes and our rights. Being a fanatic supporter of Raila, we took to the streets and voiced our opinions, others going to the full extent of brutality and murdering those who went by the names i.e. Chege, etc. We feel cheated! Should we be forced with leaders through our nostrils. I bear credence to the violence that is taking place on the MP of Othaya (Kibaki). ODM fanatic.*

Student 3. *On the 27th of December I was very anxious to vote but after that disappointments followed. First the results took centuries to be announced and all abnormalities followed. What is on telly is not even half of what is happening to us. The Luo and Raila supporters are killing by beheading the Kikuyu because they think Kikuyu are the reason why Kibaki is in power. It is very frightening to see your neighbour's head being chopped off and the older youth are the people doing this, ages 21 to 26. This will remain in my mind forever and I thank God I am alive.*

Student 4. *I was born in a small town in Kenya, schooled in the town and have virtually lived there my entire (life), not knowing any difference between my tribe or any other. But come 27th Dec 2007 – I now know that TRIBALISM will exist and probably DESTROY our country. I happen to have been a victim of ethnic cleansing in this remote town. An innocent person whose only crime was to vote in a candidate I have confidence in. Punishment – wanton destruction of all our property – looted in broad daylight by persons*

wielding stones and machetes. Do I feel a sense of hatred towards the said community that kicked us out of our home of virtually all my life?! I don't know yet...

Student 5. *It was an experience I don't want to ever think about. I think peace should just prevail from now henceforth because we are tired of fear and I don't know how I shall ever live in peace with the people who made our lives miserable yet up to now we are still thinking about what next because I don't know what tomorrow has in store for our family. They may not be willing to have us back to their land, making resettling and going on with life difficult. It is ironical how people (with) who we shared a lot for the past seventeen years can just decide to turn against us. Will we ever forgive each other?*

Student 6. *It was all a total mess in my place. Our houses had already been allocated to the XXX and we were the targets to face the fate of voting in one of our own, Kibaki. My village is like a war zone and only black patches is all that remained. We fled to Nakuru for safety thanks to the military. I saw a child being taken from his mother's back and thrown into fire in Eldoret church in which 35 people died. I am really traumatized about what is to happen next during the 3 day mass action.*

Student 7. *I felt like committing suicide after the announcement of the results. I felt betrayed as a voter and I think I will never vote again. For me I know peace will never share a blanket with injustice!*

Student 8. *It was on a Saturday night. Our house had been burnt down to the ground so we decided to go to the bar. On arrival, we saw Manchester United were about to play Newcastle. My life will never be the same. A Cristiano Ronaldo hat-trick, Carlos Teres scoring twice and one Rio Ferdinand goal... I was about to commit suicide but after watching Man. Utd. I thought twice. Thus, Manchester United saved my life.*

Student 9. *No words can better explain. I lost all my documents and property that I had gained. My parents had their house burnt down and property looted. I spent my New Year eve sleeping out in the cold to shelter from the violence. Kenya is a state built in love, peace and unity. It's time we raise up and build a better tomorrow. I forgive the people who attacked us, but I will always hold a grudge on the politicians who incited them to do the act.*

The student who wrote this last note seems to be the same who gave feedback in a questionnaire when the unit was over, in which I asked the students, among other things, if they had learnt to think through Philosophical Anthropology:

“Please give an example that shows how you have reflected on some real situation or experience, what you have understood and what you have learnt from this reflection”.

During, or rather, before the post election violence, my family was threatened by some people. We took it lightly until 31st December 2007. We were chased away by a mob of people from our home. On 1st January 2008, this was the time, I slept under a tent for the first time. My friends, people I knew, were part of the mob. But although I was affected psychologically, mentally, emotionally and physically, I learnt that they acted on an unknown issue, under pressure. So I have forgiven them and opted never to bring up the topic again. My reflection made me see that the politicians are mainly to blame not my friends, so we are back together. The same student replied as follows to other questions: Forgiveness. (I) learnt to forgive those who did wrong to me, my family and my society. I have taken everyone as one equal body, despite what one had done to me before. This has made me happier because I have reconciled with friends I had considered as enemies (NMM).

This text was written after the violence had ended, however it illustrates that, with the help of Philosophical Anthropology, the student had gone deeper in his / her forgiveness of those who had done wrong, and was able reunite with his/her friends and focus on unity.

The story of Gladys and her Neighbour

This story is evidence of what one first year Commerce student managed to achieve.

I happen to come from a place where people of all levels of the economy inhabit, i.e. the poor, rich and middle class friends. My immediate neighbour falls under the category of the poor by the fact that he earns below a dollar a day (...) the neighbour has seven small children who have to be fed. Getting a meal a day is in fact dependent on people's generosity, who at times provide for the family.

I had a brief talk with the neighbour recently and asked him how I could actually help him reach the end of his problems. The neighbour who also happens to be from a different ethnic group from me, invited me to leave his house immediately because he thought that I was actually intimidating him. This could in fact have become a heated argument had I not put into practice what I have learnt in Ethics (Philosophical Anthropology): to respect

other people's feelings. I kept cool and waited for about ten minutes until he cooled down his temper.

The dialogue engaged in was fruitful because in the long-run, we came up with a reasonable solution. The solution can be judged as ironical because that neighbour is a nilote²⁶ and the solution was to rehabilitate a certain waste land for cultivation. With the help of his children, we tended that land until our plan actually looked feasible²⁷. My parents helped us purchase some seedlings which we planted and water every day. The seedlings are growing bigger, and our background and cultural differences sorted out. Unity in diversity.

I have come to learn that differences created by human beings can be solved by human beings. Human beings should value each other even though they might come from different social or cultural backgrounds. We should embrace the fact that our diversity is mutually enriching and a harmonious co-existence will give rise to development.

My commentary on Gladys's work

The story of *Gladys and her Neighbour* links in very well with my plan for this piece of coursework.

1. *Choose a person or a group of people from outside Strathmore University who come from a different background to yours.*

It shows how she reached out to someone who was different because of his economic status and his ethnic background, as well as the fact that he was the father of a family of seven, while she is a first year university student.

2. *Do something for them or with them to foster unity in diversity.*

She shows how she used her understanding of human emotions, learnt in Philosophical Anthropology, to overcome her neighbour's initial rejection of her and persevere with her intention to work out with him how they could overcome the problem of providing food for his family in a more definitive manner. So she did not just do something for the

²⁶ Gladys comments that the solution was ironical because the people of Neolithic origin do not usually work the land for sustenance.

²⁷ Gladys means that they cleared the land, removed stones, dug it, etc. until it was ready for planting. Even if the piece of land was small, which she does not indicate, this would have been a lot of hard labour.

neighbor and his family, such as giving them food, but rather, they worked out a more long term solution together: “We came up with...”. The whole family worked with Gladys to prepare the land for cultivation: “We tended that land...we planted and water...”

3. *Help develop an awareness that our diversity is mutually enriching.*

Thanks to her ethnic background, Gladys knew how to prepare the land and cultivate seedlings, unlike her neighbor. She used this diversity as a resource to help the neighbour, who also agreed to accept small scale farming as a solution, although it was outside the norm in his own ethnic community. Gladys’ diversity became his source of “wealth” in the sense that it provided him with a way of feeding his family. Finally, she indicates that their background and cultural differences were sorted out, as they had developed a sense of unity, within their diversity.

4. *Explain what you have learned.*

Gladys concludes that *a harmonious co-existence will give rise to development*. This is a highly significant statement as in Kenya part of the challenge in achieving effective development in various spheres lies in the mutual rejection of each other by diverse ethnic communities. Yet this could be overcome if, as Gladys puts it: *Human beings (...) value each other even though they might come from different social or cultural backgrounds*. She shows how she has understood that all human beings are equal, and merit mutual respect and appreciation by the fact of being persons, independently of economic status or ethnic origin.

Gladys shows how she has assimilated and put into practice the four main ideas we had discussed in class:

1. *Unity: Love and respect for all human beings as we share the same basic nature.*
2. *Diversity: respect for and appreciation of human diversity.*
 - a. *Diversity as a resource.*
 - b. *Diversity as a source of wealth (not necessarily financial).*
3. *Learn to value our diversity and conserve it by harmonising our differences.*
4. *Create unity in our diversity.*

Appendix Q: Personal Development Project

Sample of one student's journal entries with my comments

Student: M. C. B. N.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT JOURNAL.

*We were given a personal development project by our ethics lecturer to carry out throughout the semester and I was not sure what I wanted to achieve. To say the truth it has really taken me time to realize what I would like to achieve. My personal development project is that I would like to stop being proud. My journal basically shows what I have been doing to achieve it and the constraints I have faced and achievements. **Good goal!***

WEEK ONE

*Being the proud person I am I have always believed that people should make the first effort to know me and not the other way round. My goal is to try and change this belief this week. This week I have been able to make 9 new friends and although they do not know it took me a lot to get to talk to them. I achieved this when we were told to form a group and I decided to join one with people I had never talked with. At first this was really hard as we had been reshuffled and I did not know many people in my class. I was also trying to fit in so hard but I did not want to show that I was making the effort. In my opinion I think I achieved this goal I now have 9 new friends to show for it. **Well done! I hope you can keep the friends so they are real ones and not just acquaintances! Did you learn anything from your efforts?***

WEEK TWO

*Due to pride when I see someone who seems better than me, I find fault with them so that I feel better about myself. **Yes, this is a "natural" proud reaction, but it closes us up to people, don't you think?** This week my goal is to try and find something good with people I perceive to be better than me in one way. **Good and challenging!** There is this girl in my class who seems to have the best of everything and being me I did not like her. She is bright, she dresses well and her life just seems perfect. I decided to wait until she did something that impressed me then I would walk up to her and sort of appreciate what she did. So during one of the units we ended up in one group and I thought this was the best time to know her. During the discussion everybody in the group tended to listen to her and this made me angry as I felt no one was bothering with me. Instead of trying to see what other people saw in her I started talking bad about her saying that she only wanted attention. Unfortunately I was unable to achieve the goal I had set for the week due to my pride. **It is okay. You can still rectify by saying sorry to God and to her, and starting again. That is what life is all about really!***

WEEK THREE Dates?

*In conversations, I always find myself talking about myself. This week, I have decided to try and listen to other people. **Good idea! Where did you get this idea from? Did you work it out through your own reflections?** During lunch breaks, I decided to talk to my friends and try to listen to them. I told them what I was trying to achieve and realized that they knew I had that problem but had never told me because they thought I would get hurt. It was hard to do so as most of the time I found myself cutting into their conversations but I would withdraw once I realized what I was doing. I cannot say I have achieved this goal fully but with time I believe I will. **Yes, and you are trying, that is the main thing!***

WEEK FOUR

*I have never been the kind of person who apologizes especially when I am wrong. This week I decided not to anger people and if I did I would ask for forgiveness. There is a friend of mine with whom we had a major disagreement sometime last year and it was my fault. I called my friend and apologized for all I had done but he did not listen to what I had to say. I felt very bad because I had taken a big step to call him and apologize and he did not even notice my effort. Later on I realized that at times the best you can do is apologize and hope that the person gets to hear you out. I think if I had not done so I would feel very guilty and full of regret. I think I achieved this goal but I hope my friend comes around soon. **Yes, you have done your bit. Now pray for him!***

WEEK FIVE

*I tend to make some of the things I do seem effortless when I am among people. I always want to get people to praise me for something I have done. Pride makes you be arrogant to other people's feelings **(yes!)** because I noticed that I tend to make things look simple when in the real sense they are not. I have planned that this week I will show people that it takes me the same amount of effort to do some of these things that I make look simple. My group for development studies was supposed to make a presentation and I told them that to make a great presentation one had to practice. Our presentation was very good and I felt that I had shared an important secret on how to perfect you. I think I achieved this week's goal to some extent. **Good!***

WEEK SIX

*Since I had not achieved my goal for week two I decided to go back to it and try to achieve it. **Great! This takes courage!** One day during lunch I found her at a table alone and decided to join her. When we had talked for some time I realized that she was not as bad as I had thought she was. When I asked her why she was having lunch alone she said that she did not have many friends and I realized that at times we give wrong about **not clear??** people. I achieved this goal although it was kind of belated but at least I got to add one more friend. **Yes, and probably you can help her too!***

WEEK SEVEN

This week I want to try and appreciate other people because at times I tend to assume that they will always be there. This is the week I am now in.

Good work XXX! You are trying specific things each week, keeping records and showing how you reflect and learn from your experiences. You should give the specific date of when you update the journal! For sure you are developing as a person even if you cannot quite see how just now, but do think about it so you can discover your improvements! The other challenge is to keep them up! For this, we also need God's help, so trying pray too! We can talk more about all this if you like, just let me know! Thanks! Catherine

Grade: 17/20

Appendix R: Material related to the Self-Awareness Project

Sample journal entry by a student who implemented the SAP very well throughout the semester:

Experience described:

Last week I was so decided to drop my CPA course as my exams were really a mockery! It dint²⁸ make sense continuing with my exams to the end (EWN).

Concepts discovered and applied to text:

I discovered the will-power and remembered its relationship with the intellect which opened my eyes! I reasoned out and got a reason to remain in the exam room to the end of the exam period! Thanks to my philosophical anthropology classes!

My intellect discovered that despite the exams being quite complicated the end of it all would be a good pay. It revealed the idea to my will as a good one as it would bring me happiness in the end. My will could not resist grasping the idea as good. I began feeling the need and want for it. I desired living a happy life. My will took over my feelings and believe it or not I stayed in the exam room to the end! I now have a reason to go to my next level-SECTION 5! (EWN)

Concepts explained:

Intellect; this is a combination abstraction, judgement, reasoning and reflection with the aim of coming up with a rational and well informed decision.

Will; this is a spiritual power/ force that is within each individual and gives one the drive to do a thing though not according to ones feeling!

Relationship between the will and the intellect; the intellect influences the will and consequently the will influences both the body and the will (EWN).

The student submitted this journal entry with an apology:

Sorry for the late submission. I beg not to get penalised. Could not escape the circumstance! (EWN)

I replied as follows:

Well done XXX! I am so glad that the classes helped you to stay in the exam and to continue with the CPA course! Let me know how you got on when the results come out! {Encouragement} Good analysis of how the intellect and the will worked and explanation on what they are, although you could explain the intellect and how it works in a little more detail! You could perhaps make sure the spelling and punctuation is correct to improve the write-up! {Guidance to improve}

Grade: 3/3" (CD)

²⁸ This is a typical spelling error amongst young Kenyans. I leave it in the text to illustrate its authenticity.

Final Report on the SAP with some of the students' responses:

Evaluation of the project:

After each question I have incorporated some of the student feedback included in their reports.

1. *Give your opinion on the experience of keeping a personal journal.*

An opportunity for the students to give their opinion on the use of journals, whether for learning or personal purposes.

Student response 1:

According to me, keeping a personal journal means one having the chance not to bottle up their feelings. One gets to have a kind of 'person' to talk to, without having them judge you, talk back at you or interrupt you while you talk to them. It almost means that you can relieve some of your stress as you write (AM).

Student response 2:

Having my own journal has been quite attention grabbing; since I was being forced to create at least some time during the week to read this subject so that I can be enabled to apply them well in all of my journals. This has made me like this subject to some extent very much because it has enabled me get to know what goes on around me but also keeping a journal is also boring in some way because you are forced to go to the e-learning every week to update it. In some other cases one might forget about the entry and thus ends up losing marks. Above all that having journal keeping has made me know what takes place in me and outside me weekly (SI).

2. *Indicate to what extent the project is helping you to apply the concepts being studied in the unit.*

To assess whether students think that the SAP actually helped to understand and apply concepts in a practical manner.

Student response 1:

The personal journal as enabled me to test whether I understand the concepts taught in class. Whatever happens me in that week I am able to categorise it according to what we have learned in that week... Appreciating others and myself even more has become fundamental to me. Many of the concepts learned are those that we practice daily among friends and even family. Learning is continuous and

the more you learn about yourself the more you learn about others and these promotes cohesion and harmony with one another (EK).

Student response 2:

It has been educative in that I was able to know many concepts because I used to apply them in my journals... It has made me understand the relationship between my will and intellect and be able to know how they work together so that I am able to reach well based conclusions on matters of life (JN).

3. *Indicate to what extent you think you are coming to know and understand your inner world better through this project.*

To assess whether the SAP helped students to develop a greater self-awareness, understanding of self and others as persons (See the Objective explained initially).

Student response 1:

It has helped me understand the relationship between body and soul in that body and soul interpenetrate to form one being... It has helped me be able to understand human sexuality in that we should not judge people based on their physical characteristics but we should appreciate their character. It has helped me be able to exercise my power of freedom since every one of us has the ability to choose between right and wrong using the help of the human intellect (JN).

Student response 2:

Another thing I liked about the whole experience was that I got to learn that what I experience everyday can be related to the various concepts that I encounter every day in class. The experience also helped me to be able to answer questions about life that I was previously unable to answer on my own, as I was able to identify the answers as I evaluated the journals... I am now able to identify concepts and features of a person and be able to explain them using what I have learned in class. As a result I am able to understand how my faculties such as senses, intellect and will function as a human being and as a person this in turn helped me to understand my inner world (JM).

Student response: overall comment on SAP

The project was helpful in that I was able to express my inner and outer self. It was interesting to have someone to share with my experiences through writing up the journals. I was able to re-connect with my inner self and know myself much better. I was able to identify things such as my temperament. It has also helped me relate with other individuals better because of concepts such as acts of love and friendship. This project was quite educative in that these are life lessons that will remain always etched in my life (JN).

My request for student feedback and analysis of their replies

The Faculties did not ask the students for official feedback on Philosophical Anthropology at the end of the semester. As I was interested in receiving their feedback regarding the nature of their learning during the unit, and their perception of myself as their lecturer, on 23rd February 2009 I gave them a feedback form to assess these issues. Out of 194 students, 122 actually replied. This is a copy of the questionnaire, including a summary of some of the answers:

Assessment of Philosophical Anthropology

(BHT1 / BCOM 1 A and B)

November 2008 – February 2009

Question 1: answer the following questions yes / no, and give at least one reason for your answer

- a) Did you like Philosophical Anthropology?*
- b) Did you like the lecturer?*

Yes: 122; various terms used to evaluate her: good teacher; clear; understanding; motherly; etc.

- c) Did you like how the unit was delivered (class, discussions, use of e-learning platform, power-point presentations, etc)?*

Question 2: Answer specifically and giving reasons!

- a) Which topics did you find most interesting, relevant, and useful?*
- b) Which topics included contents that were new to you?*
- c) We used various methods to cover the course material; which systems helped you to learn best?*

Question 3: Give two specific examples of how your behaviour has changed as a result of studying PA.

To assess personal behavioural change in students via PA

Question 4: Give two examples (different to those in q. 3) of how your study of PA has made an impact on other people (friends, family, environment, etc => social impact of your learning!)

To assess social impact by students via PA

Reponses to questions 3-4:

Significant change explained with examples: 29

Less significant changes: 39

Change focused on increased respect for own dignity, knowledge of own temperament and improved relations with others (brief comments): 30

Insignificant or no change / no reply: 24

Total: 122

Question 5: Do you have any suggestions for improvement:

- a) in the lecturer?*
- b) in the delivery of the unit (methodology, etc)?*
- c) in the course contents for PA?*

One student wrote:

I have been able to take note of how others feel and thus changed my sarcastic responses to people as I have found out that that hurts them. I have become more considerate and grateful for the differences existing in others. I have been able to share some of my knowledge thus helping them have a deeper insight into their own lives.

Another wrote:

I have become more disciplined and responsible in doing my day to day activities because I have learnt some of the weaknesses in my temperament e.g. procrastination, hence I have tried to do things on time not just minutes before the deadline....I have been able to understand people and why they act the way they do hence I have been able to live peacefully with everyone.

From this summary we can see that 68 students (55.73%) indicated that they changed in a more or less significant manner through their study of Philosophical Anthropology and illustrated this with examples or in other terms. 24.59% briefly stated that they had changed, mainly focusing on a greater awareness of their personal dignity and temperament and improved relations with others. 19.67% did not reply to the questions or indicated that they had experienced insignificant or no change through the unit. At the same time, all students expressed a liking for the lecturer and many expressed it using various terms.

Appendix S: Intended Learning Outcome 4 project

Data for the Tomodachi group (ILO 4):

Examples of Action Plans which the various group members tried to implement weekly:

1. *To have a group meeting and discuss the research. To learn more about X.*
2. *To identify the main points from the (group) discussion with input from X.*
3. *To get X a birthday card.*
4. *To create the power point presentation with input from X.*
5. *To spend more time with X.*
6. *Find out her plans for sports day.*
7. *Decided to teach her something about Japanese culture thus help her explore new things.*
8. *Invited me to go to the children's' home where she helps out.*
9. *Learn more about her culture and mannerisms.*
10. *Since her birthday is coming up, take her for lunch and buy her a present.*
Outcome: Successful. Went out as the whole group.
11. *Share with him about my life outside Strathmore and also find out about his life outside Strathmore.*
12. *Since in week 2 I learnt that we love the same music, I decided to share mine with her.*
13. *Meet, greet, find out meaning of name.*
14. *Find our hobbies, interests.*
15. *Learn some Japanese phrases.*
16. *Hang out over lunch.*
17. *Share e-books, tutorials, music, notes and other learning resources.*
18. *Talk about family.*
19. *Walk home after school.*
20. *Study together.*
21. *Go for ice cream.*
22. *Attend ICT conference together.*
23. *Sit with her in class more often than before.*
24. *Go for cake with her.*
25. *Solicit more ideas from her as we have lunch together.*
26. *Integrate our ideas as we (all) have lunch together in the cafeteria.*

Out of the nine group members, three spontaneously wrote a final comment at the end of their ILO 4 records and evaluation.

Student 1:

I liked the idea of improving relationships with my group members. I learnt a lot from them and they learnt a lot from me. I developed personally more. I learnt to appreciate people more as I interacted with my group members. I also developed stronger bonds with my group members and I always look forward to spending time with them.

Student 2:

Through this semester I have made some of the best friends I have met in a long time and have learnt about most of these people in my group and I have a lot more in common with them than I thought. These friends will help me through the rest of my school life and through life as they have proved that they will be there for a longer time than I expected. Interaction with these people and the ILO 4 as well has helped me broaden a lot of my ideas, as exchanging with my group members has brought many more amazing ideas.

Student 3:

Doing the PA assignment has been a wonderful experience. It has allowed me to learn more about my classmates, make new friends and build relationships with them. Through this process I have gained friends for life. I will always (cherish) the moments we have spent together. Both a learning and social success that I encourage others to participate in.

Information regarding student evaluation of the course:

Philosophical Anthropology – Lecturer’s Evaluation Form

Student name (full 2-3 names):

Student

Number:

PA Group:

NOTE: I would appreciate that you answer this in all honesty as it will assist me in evaluating my own performance as lecturer. Your answers will not be used for evaluating your performance in the unit!

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)
1. Identify (BT 1), explain (BT 2 & 5) and apply (BT 3) the basic characteristic features of the human person in themselves and others.
2. Discuss (BT 2) the meaning of human sexuality and choose (BT 6) how to exercise one’s sexuality appropriately in different circumstances.
3. Explain (BT 2) the dignity of every human being, assess (BT 6) in practical situations how a person’s dignity should be respected and act (BT 3) in a way that respects their own and other peoples’ dignity.
4. Use (BT 3) their freedom to create (BT 5) a spiration of love for their own personal development and that of others by developing or improving (BT 5 & 6) their relationship with the

people with whom they work on the group presentation throughout the semester.

5. Discover (BT 3) the relevance of Philosophical Anthropology for daily life, academic studies and professional work through active participation in the appropriate forums on the E-Learning Platform.

Question 1: Do you think that you achieved ILO 1? To what extent? Give reasons for your answer, with real examples from your own life, if possible:

Question 2: Do you think that you achieved ILO 2? To what extent? Give reasons for your answer, with real examples from your own life, if possible:

Question 3: Do you think that you achieved ILO 3? To what extent? Give reasons for your answer, with real examples from your own life, if possible:

Question 4: Do you think that you achieved ILO 4? To what extent? Give reasons for your answer, with real examples from your own life, if possible:

Question 5: Do you think that you achieved ILO 5? To what extent? Give reasons for your answer, with real examples from your own life, if possible:

NOTE: Please sign here if you are willing to let me use your answers as evidence of the effectiveness or not of my work, for use in my PhD research. I will only refer to you by your initials.

Signature:
2010)

Many thanks! C. Dean (September 2010)

Summary of student evaluation of <u>ILO 4</u> for Philosophical Anthropology July to October 2010		
	Content of Answers	Number of replies
YES	Focus on improved relations with group members and others; friendships developed; openness to different kinds of people, etc.	87
YES	Focus on learning about types of freedom, etc.	19
YES	Little comment; to some extent	14
YES	Mainly an intellectual experience	1
NO answer		4
ILO 4 and 5	Interesting comments on both ILOs	2
ILO 5	Interesting comment on ILO 5	2
		129

Table 10 Student evaluation of ILO 4

Transcription of Daniel's testimony on behalf of the Tomodachis at the 2010

Strathmore University Ethics Conference:

Good afternoon. For this group presentation we were very surprised to receive the ILO 4 forms where for every member you had to write an action plan, what you want to do for this week. At the end of the week you write what you had achieved. That is, for each student in our group. So we wanted a name that was interesting and unique, so we chose Tomodachi, which is Japanese for friend. And in the course of the whole thing we notice that we aspired to our goal, we became good friends. So during the first weeks the typical action plans were smile, meet, greet. So maybe I try for Ken: smile, meet, greet, at the end of the week, I'd write "successful". But in the course of getting to know each other better, it moved to: hang out during lunch, buy ice cream after class, walk home together, talk about high school experiences, family, attend lunch together. And we did all these things so it was very interesting. We got to know each other better. As you can see the group cuts across cultural and ethnic and racial boundaries, so it was very interesting. Among us we are strict vegetarians, meat lovers, so it was very interesting ... It helped us get our work done without stress, without pressure. We learnt a lot about socializing, how to treat other people, how to appreciate other people, be considerate. The feedback from the group members helped us know how other people perceive us; know what to reinforce within ourselves, that is, good points, and to know how to do better in other points. Like let's say if someone tells me, maybe I am curt or rude, I will try to be more kind to them. If they tell me I'm nice, then I'll try to be nicer to them. Such things. What really changed were just the small things, cos now if someone is buying snacks, they buy for the whole group. Yeah, if I need a phone I can borrow, talk a bit. So really, it's the small things that changed. And if I can end with a quote from Dr Carl ? He said, "The least of things with a meaning is worth more in life than the greatest of things without it". So thank you very much.

Appendix T: My teaching from July 2011 to October 2012

Philosophical Anthropology: July to October 2011

During the first few weeks of the semester I managed to enthuse the students using activities such as role play, dramatization, drawings or charts to express and show the outcomes of their small group discussions. The BBS2 students were quite creative in these activities and willing to get involved. The BBIT2 students were less willing to present the findings of their discussions to the rest of the class. I found it difficult to maintain the momentum in using these activities in class, partly because they took up time and slowed down coverage of course contents, and partly because my mind was more occupied with my doctoral research. However, I continued trying in small ways.

By the end of the semester I experienced a sense of frustration, particularly with the BBIT2 students as they hardly responded at all to my efforts to reach out to them in class, facilitate their learning, etc. This may have been due to peer pressure because that group consisted of two different groups of Business and Information Technology students who had been combined for my unit. They did not know each other and were somewhat wary of participating actively in class out of fear of what the others would think. This was confirmed for me in a conversation with one of my mentees²⁹ who was in the group. I did not live my values well by allowing myself to be managed by my frustration, even if that group of students was more difficult to handle. Their lack of motivation and interest in general is illustrated in the Exam report for the unit (see below).

Extracts and commentary on the Exam Report

The Exam Report indicates various difficulties which I experienced in teaching this unit, such as absenteeism and plagiarism of the term paper by two or three groups of students. I also pointed out the particular characteristics of the two groups:

The BBIT2A group of students: it was hard to get them to participate actively in class. There was a group of around 10 students who habitually missed classes and who were signing for each other. In the last month of the semester, I called the roll in class to prevent this. I also warned students repeatedly about the need to attend at

²⁹ Strathmore University has a mentoring system in which each student is assigned a lecturer to guide and assist them in various aspects of life, during their time at the University. See <http://www.strathmore.edu/dos/mentoring.php> for further details.

least 2/3 of the classes to do the exam. Some tried at the end to convince me to let them do the exam as their attendance records showed that they had only missed a few more classes than those allowed. However I did not give permission for them to do the exam, due to the tendencies described above. There are some very good students in that class who did work hard and performed well. However, I think that many did the minimum, just to get by, although in general they did not seem to have difficulties with the abstract thinking involved in the unit. No group in this class submitted their research paper for the Ethics Conference as I had encouraged them to do; one student was interested but his group did not support him. In general, the class seemed somewhat indifferent in its approach to the unit, with the exception of a few students.

The BBS2 students attended nearly all the classes; towards the end of the semester, a few started skipping class, so I also began to do the roll call with them. In general the class seemed much more motivated, and was more proactive and willing to participate during lessons. (...) They seem to have studied the unit, at least before the CATS and the Exam, and, after the first month, during which they found it hard to adjust to the abstract style of thinking and studying, they started performing better. This may perhaps explain the good overall performance. However, I still have an “intuition” that they studied for the grades, in the majority, rather than because they had assimilated the contents of the unit personally.

The tone of the report expresses my disillusion caused by the apparent lack of motivation and interest in the unit, particularly amongst the BBIT2 students. I had tried to get them involved and enthused, as I described briefly but I felt that I had failed to live my educational values because I had not engaged one group of students effectively.

The overall results for each group were quite different. The BBS2 group shows more effort in learning and they were generally more proactive in class.

Philosophical Anthropology July to Oct 2011	
Group	Overall Mean Grade
BBS2	71.19
BBIT2A	57.72

Table 11 Overall student performance PA: July to October 2011

The four groups which had their research papers accepted for the Ethics Conference were also all from BBS2.

Philosophical Anthropology: November 2011 to March 2012

My reflections:

In terms of overall performance of the students, the Exam Report reflects quite a high level of absenteeism and problems with students signing the class register for one another.

Both groups seemed relatively passive throughout the course, and it required a lot of effort to get them actively involved in class discussions. However, in the course of a class, some would eventually participate. Very, very few participated in the on-line forum discussions which were created (3-5 students in total in both groups).
(...)

Absentee levels in both groups were high, particularly at the start of the course; I also realized that in both groups people were signing for each other extensively. Hence I resorted to calling the class register daily, which took a lot of time but seemed to be the only way to ensure transparency in the class attendance data. This explains why absenteeism reduced in the second part of the course.

The overall mean grade for both groups was good.

Group	Mean Grade Overall
BCOM 2B	68.46
BCOM 2C	67.69

Table 12 Overall performance in PA: November 2011 to March 2012

Perhaps the exam was too easy or the marking system which I was required to use facilitated students gaining marks. Maybe the students simply worked harder for the exam.

On-line Course Evaluation³⁰: Philosophical Anthropology (Nov 2011 – March 2012)

11 / 186 students replied

Part 1: Knowledge

1. The readings for this course were relevant to the subject: 4.54
2. The course material was presented in a clear and logical manner: 4.63
3. The course material/syllabus was adequately covered: 4.54
4. Current trends in the field were discussed: 4.27
5. The stated course objectives/learning outcomes in the course outline were met: 4.36
6. The course was very practical: 4.45
7. The environment was conducive for learning: 4.63

³⁰ The scores are over a maximum of five.

Part 2: Assessment and Feedback [There was confusion here as the questions were repeated 2-3 times]

1. The course assignments were related to the course outcomes: 2 // 4 // 1
2. The feedback during the course was constructive and helpful: 2.9 // 4.9 //
3. The assessment processes for this course were fair: 1.90 // 3.90

Part 3: Skills

1. The course provided; Critical/creative thinking skills: 4.27
2. The course provided; Problem solving skills: 4.36
3. The course provided; Effective oral and written communication: 3.90
4. The course provided; Logical reasoning: 4.54
5. The course provided; Ability to relate theory to practice: 4.72
6. The course provided; Aptitude for lifelong learning: 4.54

Part 4: Attitudes / Values / Predispositions

1. I believe this course will help me in the future: 4.18
2. Overall, I rate this course as excellent: 4.18
3. I have read the recommended text book: 4.45
4. I sought help when I needed it: 4
5. I have enjoyed this course: 4.18
6. I actively participated in this class: 3.72
7. I have taken this course evaluation seriously: 4.90

Among the few students who did fill in the form, some had interesting comments to make under the final point:

Please be free to make any other comments, suggestions, or recommendations about this course.

Student 1:

My personal comment is that I believe this unit is so important. In essence the unit touches so much about the human person which I trust that we all really have to have the important skill and knowledge on how to relate to each other. Thank you so much and I highly appreciate my lecturer Miss Catherine Dean.

Student 2:

The course is generally important to everyone since it deals with peoples' behaviors and reactions, hence it plays a major role in their lives.

Student 3:

I believe this course has helped me to get a better understanding of the human person. It will help me to relate with others very well.

Student 4:

If there is a possibility to advance it more, then it would be much better because the unit encompasses a wide scope of life's aspects which is generally a good preparation for future challenges.

Philosophical Anthropology: July to October 2012

Mid-Semester Questionnaire (9th August 2012)

You may use the following key to give your feedback where relevant:

Your comments / reasons are very important so I can know where, how, what to improve on!

I appreciate your effort to respond to these questions:

<i>Award scores as follows:</i>	<i>Rating</i>
<i>Unsatisfactory</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Satisfactory</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Good</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Very good</i>	<i>4</i>

Question	Score	No. of replies	Others
1. Course design and organization	3.53	55/56	
2. Quality of feedback	3.57	53/53	
3. Give 3-5 words that express my strong points	3.71	28/56	
4. Give 3-5 words that express my weak points	2.73	15/56	
5. What could I do better?	3.24	17/56	
6. Are you comfortable in class with the lecturer? Explain.	3.81	44/56	5 yes
7. Are you comfortable in class with your classmates? Explain.	3.47	51/56	5 yes 1 no
8. Do you feel “free” in class to participate, etc? Explain.	3.27	48/56	3 yes 1 no
9. Do the PA classes encourage you to develop yourself as a person? Explain.	3.29	50/56	4 yes 1 no
10. Does the group work help you to change yourself in any way? Explain.	3.20	50/56	5 yes 1 no
11. Did the group assignment on sensitive life help you to learn effectively or not? Explain.	3.11	48/56	4 yes
12. Do the small group discussions/exercises in class help you to learn better? Explain.	3.37	48/56	6 yes 1 no

13. Does the group work help you to interact with different people? Explain.	3.45	47/56	7 yes
14. Do you think that the different groups of students are bonding / learning to interact positively? Explain.	2.85	45/56	4 yes 1 no
Total Mean Score	3.33		

Table 13 Student mid-semester evaluation for PA: July to October 2012

The aim of questions 3-8 was to assess the student's perception of me as their lecturer and the class environment in terms of the flow of love and the sense of freedom which I wanted to establish. The aim of questions 9 – 14 was to assess in different ways whether the students thought they were growing as persons through the course contents and the teaching methods I was using.

56 out of approximately 90 students present replied to this questionnaire. I have indicated the scores on the form. Not all questions were given a score as they were difficult to evaluate with a grade e.g. Question 5. The students also found there were too many questions and so did not answer all of them, particularly the last few. However I collected useful information which both my Graduate Assistant and I analysed and which I summarised in a final end of semester report.

Assessment of mid-semester evaluation by students: Graduate Assistant

Negative:

1. Power point slides need to be more colourful, use pictures.
2. Incorporate audio-visual material (videos/movies) in teaching to help with practical understanding of the lectures.
3. The course book has been highly criticized as dense.
4. The assignment on sensitive life using group work ended up being a piece of combined, individual work in some cases, and did not help students to interact much.
5. The size of the whole group of students (115) makes some feel uncomfortable in class.

Positive:

1. Course organization and design is very good.
2. Interaction with students is positive regarding lecturer / student relations and student / student relations.
3. Students are impressed by punctuality.

4. Strong points include: patience in explaining points so that everyone understands; lecturer does not undermine any questions asked.

Assessment of mid-semester evaluation by students: Catherine Dean

Common points on Methodology:

1. Use other teaching aids such as movies/videos (followed by a questionnaire and discussion on how to approach the topics).
2. Power point presentations only become monotonous; make slides more colourful and use pictures.
3. Use more group presentations.
4. There are too many students in class and they cannot hear each other without the mike.
5. Benches in classroom are not movable, which doesn't help with small group discussions.
6. Show practical application of the unit to learn how to apply the lessons learnt to life and work; show how people apply what we are learning in real life; this would help to understand what we've learnt through theory.
7. Use the critique of different authors and ideas to strengthen the base of understanding of PA.
8. The questions and answers in quiz are not clearly spread out; anything close to the correct answer should be marked.
9. Give a question to students, let them discuss it in groups and the lecturer can explain and answer later.
10. Double lessons preferred to single lesson.
11. Use more student / lecturer discussion in class.
12. Make the class involved in discussions.
13. Update discussion topics on the e-learning platform early so students have an idea of what is coming up.
14. Use class participation in an open forum (meaning?).
15. Unit is irrelevant (1 student).

Common points regarding the lecturer:

1. Monotonous, flat, boring at times; be more interesting.
2. Make class more lively, crack jokes, use humour.
3. Portray more energy during lessons.
4. Sometimes a little harsh, but not all the time.
5. Inaudible.
6. Lengthy with words; use simple words, explanations.
7. Give more encouragement / require students to mingle (no encouragement to mingle).
8. Encourage students to think, apply to own life.
9. Poor communication about quizzes, assignments (1 student).
10. Impractical, slow, few media aids (1 student).
11. Motherly; makes students comfortable in class.

After the mid semester evaluation I tried to take action on certain points in order to improve.

1. I tried to make the slides more colourful, and use more images and pictures in the power point presentations.
2. With the help of my G.A., we found short video clips for all the remaining topics and used them to illustrate practical aspects of the theory / how to apply the theory to real life.
3. We created more forums for discussion of different topics on the e-learning platform.
4. We invited a past student of SU, Cleophas Odoyo, to give a presentation in class about his life growing up in Kibera, his learning experience through Philosophical Anthropology and Principles of Ethics and the changes he began to bring about in Kibera as a result. The underlying focus was on the power of each person's freedom to bring about change in themselves and others.
5. We started using the microphone in room 34 as well as in Lt 6 to ensure that the students could always hear properly, in both the double and the single lessons.
6. I began offering the mike to students more often during class discussions to give their opinions and be heard by everyone.
7. Update the necessary material for the following topic beforehand so students could see it. Include other interesting articles, links, within the material available for each topic.
8. The remaining topics allowed for more discussion in small groups in class. The students subsequently gave the findings of their groups and we discussed issues further for clarification.
9. I tried encouraging students to mingle before a group discussion one day, with little success as they refused to move. On one or two occasions I moved students who seemed less involved closer to the front of the room to enhance their participation in class and reduce disturbances too others due to background conversations, etc.
10. I continued trying to be pleasant, understanding, warm with students, smile, encourage them to participate, etc.

End of Semester Questionnaire (24th September 2012)

Based on the feedback which you gave in the mid-semester evaluation, we have tried to improve the PA classes in various ways. Now we would be grateful to receive further feedback from you on the following:

Question 1: Please indicate any improvements in the teaching methods which you have noticed since the previous questionnaire.

Question 2: Kindly point out any improvements which you have noticed in the lecturer during the semester.

Question 3: How do you think that you have improved during the semester?

Question 4: How do you think that people in class have improved during the semester?

Feel free to add further comments and suggestions here:

I would like to use your feedback as evidence for my doctoral research. If you are willing to allow me to refer to your comments using only the initials of your name, kindly indicate them below. Thank you very much for your assistance! C. Dean

The purpose of the four questions was to assess:

- a. Student perception of improvement in the teaching methods, as my synthetic analysis of the mid semester feedback was that they were interested in improvement in this area;
- b. Student perception of improvements in myself as their lecturer, given that some of their suggestions had touched on this point and it is related to my educational value of creating a flow of love in the classroom;
- c. Challenge and assess student perceptions regarding their own improvement, and that of their peers, in the second part of the semester. This point touches on my educational value regarding facilitating the development of my students as persons.

Final observation which I included in the Exam Report at the end of the semester:

I think that this range of comments by the students on the various areas of improvement during the semester indicate that we managed to address the issues which had come up in the mid-semester evaluation and provide a better learning experience all round. The experience of using both a mid and an end of semester evaluation allowed time to make changes which the same students could benefit from while still doing the unit. I will repeat this in future.

I think that a lot of learning has occurred both in the students and in myself as their lecturer. I now have more ideas and experiences which I can use to improve my delivery of the unit the next time I teach, particularly in terms of using a variety of teaching methods to allow for the different learning styles of the students in the classroom.

These reflections are evidence of my own learning during the semester, as well as that of the students.

Appendix U: Random Survey (24th September 2012)

Random Survey and analysis: Philosophical Anthropology students (24th September 2012)

The following is a sample of the random survey, including a summary of the replies:

The purpose of this survey is to gather data for my doctoral research about how to teach Philosophical Anthropology in a way that is more beneficial to the students. I appreciate your cooperation in offering feedback and suggestions based on your experience of the unit! Thank you! C. Dean.

Scoring: 1 = unsatisfactory; 2 = satisfactory; 3 = good; 4 = very good

36 students replied to the questionnaire. Their responses are summarized here.

Question	Your comments: Please give a reason and a real example					Score	
1. Do you think that the relationship between the lecturer and the students is important in facilitating the learning process in this unit?	Yes		No answer		Other	3.25	
	30 (with reasons / examples)		2		4		
2. Do you think that the lecturer established a good relationship with the students during PA this semester?	Yes		No		Other	No reply	3.16
	28		1		5	2	
3. Please indicate any qualities in the lecturer which helped to build a good relationship with the students.	Methods		Qualities		No reply	None	3.13
	9		26		0	1	
4. Kindly suggest other qualities which you think the lecturer could develop to help students learning.	Other	No reply	None	Fine	Other qualities		1.94
	2	6	3	10	15		
5. To what extent did the lecturer's attitude help to improve relations among the students?	No reply	Great/large	Other	Comments on me	Examples of what I did		2.66
	4	4	5	12	11		
6. Do you think that students were helped to apply theory to real life in PA, and to change themselves as a result?	No reply		Yes + theory to practice		Yes + change	Yes + no change	2.66
	5		18		11	2	

7. What do you think is more important in helping students to learn in PA: the lecturer's attitude to students or the teaching methods?	<i>Both</i>	<i>Lecturer</i>	<i>Methods</i>	<i>Others</i>	2.69
	8	13	13	2	
					2.78

Table 14 Random questionnaire: data from students for my doctoral research

Kindly indicate your initials here if I may use your comments as evidence in my research:

24th September 2012

After I had administered this questionnaire I realized that the scoring which I had included was not very relevant to some of the questions, particularly because I had emphasized that I was interested in qualitative feedback, in the form of examples and reasons to support the responses.

The replies to the questions when summarized are as follows:

Question/s	Theme	Response	My comments
Questions 1 + 2	Importance of relations between students and lecturer in theory and in practice	Q. 1: 30/36 say they are important Q. 2: 28/36 say that we established good relations	This evidence confirms that I lived my first educational value and that students perceive it as important for learning
Question 3 + 4	Qualities in the lecturer which help to build good relations	Q. 3: 26/36 indicate specific qualities I have; 9/36 refer to methods I use Q. 4: 15/26 suggest other qualities I could develop	See further details below
Question 5	How lecturer's	Q. 5: 27/36	This data illustrates

	attitude affected students relations	(4+11+12) indicate, with specific comments, how my attitude affected student relations positively	my awareness that my attitude also has an impact on how students interact with each other; this is important for creating a positive learning environment
Question 6	Were students helped to apply theory to life and to change themselves as a result?	Q. 6: 35/36 indicate yes in general; further comments highlight that 18/36 applied theory to life while 11/36 changed themselves; 2/36 did neither	This evidence shows that I do facilitate students in growing as persons by helping them to apply the theory to life and encouraging positive change in them
Question 7	Lecturer's attitude vs teaching methods in helping students to learn	Both: 8/36 Methods: 13/36 Lecturer: 13/36	Clearly, these students could not say that one was proportionately more important than the other; both count

Table 15 Summary of student feedback via random survey

When replying to questions 3 and 4, the students indicated specific qualities in the lecturer which helped to build good relations with the students, and suggested some more which I could develop to facilitate student learning. I have summarized these as follows.

Question 3: *Please indicate any qualities in the lecturer which helped to build a good relationship with the students.* (35 specific answers in total; None: 1)

a. Answers which focused more on methods I use:

- Use of video clips
- Many group discussions / allowed free discussion and interaction / gave time for these interactions

- Use of questionnaires / quiz
- Good content
- References to real life
- Being interactive with students
- Dynamic teaching = use of many approaches to teaching
- Good lecturing
- Good knowledge to topics
- Good use of forums on e-learning platform

b. Answers which focused more on qualities / attributes:

- Friendly: 15
- Open: 10
- Positive: 8
- Listener: 7
- Understanding: 7
- Patient: 6
- Kind / caring / sympathetic: 6
- Encouraging: 5
- Creates a good atmosphere: 4
- Asks questions and for opinion of students / appreciative: 3
- Humility / nice / soft skills / jovial / ready to help / easy to talk to: 2
- Others: concerned and tough / outspoken / lenient in marking / audibility / motherly / soft spoken / time conscious / freedom / expressive / responsive / motivated / honesty / integrity

c. Student Comments:

- No hostility, negative attitude towards students and their opinions (RNW).
- Formidable interpersonal skills and related to each student differently and in their own unique way (KWK).

Question 4: *Kindly suggest other qualities which you think the lecturer could develop to help students learning.* (15 specific answers in total)

a. Answers which focused more on methods:

- The text book is hard
- Give more detailed notes (these were available on the ELP)
- Establish study groups and meet groups to assist each student
- More interactive group discussions (?)
- Use more real life references (?)
- Use more videos to demonstrate (?)
- Use more questionnaires / random assessment tests

- One on one lecturing for students that don't understand in class
 - 10 minute video at start of each lecture – motivates students to come (another lecturer does this)
 - Emphasise more the relevance of PA in real life (my approach was to encourage them to discover this themselves)
 - More presentations by class members
 - Don't use cartoons, etc. (on slides) to enhance how seriously students (should) perceive content
- b. Answers which focused more on qualities / attributes:
- Be more encouraging
 - Offer personal attention in class
 - Use humour / make more interesting
 - Be positive in this type of course
 - Too kind in letting groups organise themselves (for discussions, etc.) / distribute groups
 - Be more enthusiastic when giving a discussion on a topic
- c. Other answers:
- *Fine*: 10
 - No reply: 6
 - *None*: 3
 - *Maintain*: 1
 - *Don't know*: 1

As may be seen, the replies to Question 3 were largely positive. The suggestions made in Question 4 focus more on methods than on qualities. In both cases, many points have been indicated in Question 3 as already existing, for example:

- Methods: use of questionnaire / quiz / video clips / class discussions / real life references
- Qualities: being interactive with students / positive / kind / encouraging / jovial / motivated

I consider these apparent discrepancies to be based on the diverse perception that each student will have of the lecturer caused by many factors, such as personality traits and preferences, student capacity, etc. I have also learnt from the double feedback this semester that some students are very demanding in terms of their expectations of the lecturer, their

desire for more variety in the teaching methods used and their preference for specific methods such as video clips and movies.

As I reflected on this at the end of the semester, I accepted the fact that I could use a greater variety of methods in the teaching and learning process. However, I also decided that I will not always use movies and videos, even if the students like them because they do not necessarily learn better and, the type of contents I teach still requires them to learn to think critically, apply theoretical concepts, etc. They need to develop their intellectual capacities, etc. beyond being “entertained” by audiovisuals in class. At the same time, I do recognize that for many students in our day and age, the initial use of videos can help to capture their attention and begin to grasp an idea. However this method needs to be accompanied by their own personal effort to understand, analyse, articulate and use ideas to solve problems, adjust their world view and even their behavior if this is the case. Overall, while respecting the need for a variety of teaching and learning methods to suit different student learning styles, I do not want to fall into the trap of “edutainment”.

Appendix V: My self-transformation: July 2005 – March 2009

I will summarise some aspects of my personal development in this period to avoid repetition of material that has been discussed elsewhere.

July 2005 – March 2006:

During the next two semesters (July 2005 - October 2005; October 2005 – March 2006) I continued with my efforts to reach out to my students by:

- Being generally friendly
- Opening up to understand my students better
- Illustrating theoretical concepts with practical examples from daily life in Kenya
- Adjusting my explanations to the little Philosophy which they had studied in Introduction to Ethics

I was learning to live my existing value of helping my students enjoy their learning experience in a new way:

- ✓ Building conducive learning relationships within the classroom

At the same time I was developing the other values which I already held within my new cultural context:

- ✓ Make the contents interesting by using relevant examples
- ✓ Relate the contents to real life by drawing out their practical implications

By October 2005, I had developed in how I was living my implicit educational values as evidenced in student perceptions of my attitude towards them (see Table 16 below). The perception of the students to whom I taught Philosophical Anthropology for the first time from October 2005 to March 2006 was somewhat different (Table 16). This may have been because I was less familiar with the unit and the students (first years) had less knowledge of Philosophy.

July – October 2006

After administering the student feedback questionnaire in March 2006, as I explained in part one of this Chapter, I diversified my teaching methods, and introduced more practical exercises into the teaching and learning experience. I was motivated by my desire to help

students learn more effectively, to enjoy their learning, to learn to think more deeply and to discover the practical dimension of Principles of Ethics and Philosophical Anthropology. At the same time, I continued looking for ways of reaching out to and developing good relations with my students.

The impact of these efforts may be seen in the ratings I received in the semester from July to October 2006. The score which I received from the two groups I taught for “Has right attitude towards students” had increased to a certain extent. This is an indication that my effort to reach out to students had been more effective, as the evidence shows they felt comfortable with me as their lecturer.

Comparative Student Feedback: Principles of Ethics (POE) and Philosophical Anthropology (PA) October 2004 to October 2007				
Categories	October ‘04 – March ‘05 (POE)	July – October ‘05 (POE)	Nov ‘05 – March '06 (PA)	July – October '06 (POE)
Has right attitude towards students	BBIT 2: 3.85	BCOM 2A: 4.5	BBIT 1: 4.11	BCOM 2B: 4.34
		BCOM 2B: 4.3		BBIT 2: 4.16
		BBIT 2: 4.42		

Table 16 Comparative student feedback over time on my attitude towards them

November 2006 to March 2007

In this semester, I taught Philosophical Anthropology to two groups of first year Business and Information Technology students, 103 in total. However I did not receive any feedback from the students at the end of the semester as their Faculty did not administer the usual questionnaire.

July to October 2007

I taught Principles of Ethics to two groups of second year Commerce students: BCOM 2A (98) and BCOM 2B (84). We carried out a variety of teaching and learning activities during the course, and managed to create an atmosphere in which the students were

comfortable to discuss many issues in class. This was very positive as they began to open up to other peoples' ideas and to learn from each other. Although, the official feedback questionnaire was not distributed, I carried out a Learning Outcomes Survey shortly after the semester finished, in November 2007. I summarise in Table 17 the outcomes for the first two questions which were more relevant for discovering if students were actually learning in my units, and what contributed most effectively to their learning.

Summary of Learning Outcomes Survey for Principles of Ethics November 2007	
Question	Response
1. Did you learn new things in Ethics 2?	YES: 127 = 100%
2. How did you learn best (scale of 1 to 5)?	
Explanations by lecturer	98 = 31(absolute) + 67 (combined equally with other methods)
Classroom discussions	59 = 8 (absolute) + 51 (combined equally with other methods)
Personal study / research	38 = 6 (absolute) + 32 (combined equally with other methods)
Others (movies; case studies; newspaper articles; group discussions; booklet for subject)	21 = 7 (absolute) + 14 (combined equally with other methods)
E-learning platform	10 = 2 (absolute) + 8 (combined equally with other methods)

Table 17 Student Learning Outcomes for Principles of Ethics November 2007

As may be seen in the table above, the focus of learning revolved around my explanations, however class discussions also had a significant impact on learning. This was partly what I was trying to achieve in getting the students more actively involved in their own learning, and in learning from each other. The evidence shows that I was changing my teaching approach little by little, to introduce more class discussion. This implied transforming myself as I had to become more outgoing and find ways of encouraging my students to share their ideas in class. I had to open up to more personal levels of interaction with them to create an environment in which they felt comfortable enough to contribute to the discussions.

Up to this point in time, as I tried to reach out more to my students and build good relations with them to facilitate learning, my educational values were the following.

My educational values from March 2006 to October 2007	
1.	Make learning interesting / enjoyable
2.	Get students thinking
3.	Help my students to apply philosophical theory to real life

Table 18 My educational values from 2006 to 2007

November 2007 to November 2008

I maintained the educational values just mentioned, focusing largely on getting my students thinking, and applying philosophical theory to daily life using practical forms of assessment to facilitate my students' learning³¹. Based on this experience my educational values evolved significantly. By November 2008, I had identified more specific and practical values which I maintained until October 2009.

Evolution in my educational values: 2007 to 2009		
	October 2007 – November 2008	November 2008 – October 2009
1.	Make learning interesting/enjoyable	Create a conducive learning environment
2.	Get students thinking	Intellectual – practical change in students
3.	Apply theory to life	Personal – behavioural change in students

Table 19 My evolving values from 2007 to 2009

Each semester I continued seeking ways to reach out to my students by fostering positive educational relationships.

³¹ The *Unity in Diversity* project and the first Personal Development Project were implemented at this time.

Appendix W: My teaching from November 2009 to March 2012

Principles of Ethics: November 2009 to March 2010

Plan for coursework

In one of the first classes I explained to my students that I had designed the whole course as a Personal Development Project. The coursework was planned with this in mind. I tried to provide a variety of opportunities for personal growth to the students, along with the traditional exam as may be seen here:

Academic Assessment	
Type	Weighting
Final Exam	60%
Personal Growth Plan (PGP)	10%
Group Research Project	10%
Sit-In CAT	10%
Final Evaluation of the course as a Personal Development Project	10%
Total	100%

Table 20 Academic Assessment: Principles of Ethics November 2009 to March 2010

The aim of the Personal Growth Plan was to encourage students to identify one virtue which they would like to develop during the semester, keep track of their progress using an online journal and consult once with the lecturer on their progress.

Questionnaire Final Evaluation of the course as a Personal Development Project

1. *a. To what extent have you developed your theoretical knowledge and understanding of the concepts covered in POE?*

b. Give evidence taken from your coursework, etc.

Student evaluation (1-3m):

Lecturer evaluation (1-2m):

2. *a. To what extent have you developed your capacity to apply the ethical concepts to real life situations?*

b. Give evidence taken from your coursework, etc.

Student evaluation (1-3m):

Lecturer evaluation (1-2m):

3. a. *To what extent have you developed your ethical understanding of your own acts through studying POE?*

b. *Give evidence taken from your coursework, etc.*
Student evaluation (1-3m):
Lecturer evaluation (1-2m):
4. a. *To what extent have you developed yourself by improving your behaviour due to POE?*

b. *Give evidence taken from your coursework, etc.*
Student evaluation (1-3m):
Lecturer evaluation (1-2m):
5. a. *To what extent have you become happier through studying POE and why?*

b. *Give evidence taken from your coursework, etc.*
Student evaluation (1-3m):
Lecturer evaluation (1-2m):
6. a. *Have you tried to create a spiration of love in freedom that facilitates your personal growth and that of others during POE?*

b. *Give evidence taken from your coursework, etc.*
Student evaluation (1-3m):
Lecturer evaluation (1-2m):

Student Feedback on Question 6 of the Final Evaluation of the course as a Personal Development Project

Student 1:

Creating a spiration of love in freedom that facilitates my personal growth and that of others is about creating an atmosphere of acceptance and respect of others and appreciating the diversity amongst ourselves. I have tried to create a spiration of love in freedom and initially it seemed like it won't work out but eventually it did grow and I even envision further growth.

In Journal 7, I attempted to create a spiration of love in freedom by forming a discussion group with members of the class that I hardly talked to in the past. Despite our first group work failing since I ended up doing all the work alone, we eventually developed team spirit and this I believe has helped us all grow, for instance for me, the experience has helped me build fortitude as a virtue.

In Journal 8, I made a mistake and one of my classmates corrected me and in an attempt to create a spiration of love in freedom, I took the correction positively and even asked her to notify me any time I make a mistake so that she could help build me up. Moreover, I requested more of my classmates to be my accountability partners and provide checks on my character. I believe in the process of providing checks on each others' character, we will continue to build the spiration of love in freedom even after finishing POE (R.D. Nelima).

Student 2:

Freedom is the capacity of every human person to incline themselves to something good because they want to. True fulfillment is found in self-realisation through gift of self to others, committing self to seek the good of others and relating generously to others: to love and be loved. The highest expression of our freedom is to love.

By the understanding of what freedom is, I have been able to create a spiration of love in freedom that facilitates my personal growth and that of others. I have been able to do this by being more sympathetic i.e. offering a listening ear to my fellow students. Any time they have a problem understanding concepts in class I avail myself in case I can help them out.

Through the small group discussions we have had in class in the process of learning I have been able to listen to other peoples' ideas and incorporate them into mine and coming up with a more concrete idea. This way we have been able to work together. I have been able to contribute my ideas to my fellow students and discussing them and coming up with better and complete ideas. This way I am able to grow both academically and socially. In the same way my friends are also able to learn from me and grow academically and socially (KLW).

These students provide evidence of how they tried to live my educational values.

Student feedback on ILO 5

Regarding ILO 5, create a spiration of love in freedom to facilitate our own personal growth and that of others, give your opinion on the following:

1. Lecturer-student relationships:

- a. How would you express/ describe the quality of the relationships between the lecturer and the students during the unit, both inside and outside the classroom?*

The relationship was a great one that actually created a decent environment of learning hence helping the student understand the ideas in POE (Principles of Ethics). OOB.

The relationship was great as the class environment was conducive for asking questions and the lecturer was always helpful. Olivia W.

Great. The lecturer was very approachable and she made the class very comfortable and we had the freedom to express our views. MSC.

It was fine. The lecturer was outgoing, accommodating, and always ready to help. Wanjala, M.W.

The relationship was good both inside and outside (the classroom), and thus creating a conducive learning environment. Gladys W.G.

These replies are evidence of how students perceived that I was creating good relationships between myself and them. They use specific nouns to describe my attitude towards them: helpful; approachable; gave freedom in class; made the class comfortable; accommodating, etc.

b. To what extent do you think that these relationships influenced the level and quality of the teaching and learning during POE?

It made it easier to understand the whole unit, so all in all, it was to a great extent. OOB.

The quality relationship influenced teaching and learning greatly, since a good relationship leads to formation of a conducive and healthy environment for learning. The relationship I believe gave excellent chances for question and answer both ways and also boosted interest in the course. Orge, G.

It influenced to a great extent and it also enhanced the learning and teaching skills because approaching a lecturer who has a good relationship with students makes learning much simpler and easier to understand. H.A.

Due to the students being free with the lecturer, then the quality of teaching and learning was high since both lecturer and student were involved. Wanjala, M.W.

These comments are proof of my intuition that if I can establish good relationships with my students, this will enhance the teaching and learning process as there is a conducive learning environment in which students feel free to ask questions, discuss, approach the lecturer with their issues, etc.

2. Inter student relationships:

a. How would you describe the quality of the relationships between the students in your class throughout the POE unit?

High quality as they were taught to interrelate freely. Immaculate M.

I would describe the quality of the relationships as open minded, characterized by willingness to learn from one another especially during the class and group discussions. DAO.

Students were able to relate better owing to their enhanced understanding of ethical issues affecting their lives. MSW.

It was excellent. Through the class activities given to us during the lessons, and also group work, we were able to relate with one another freely and learn a lot from each other. AnnElsie W.W.

- b. *To what extent do you think that the lecturer's attitude influenced the relationships among the students?*

Greatly. The lecturer had a positive and encouraging attitude which made us interact better. MSC.

The lecturer's attitude challenged the students to appreciate each others' opinions and seek assistance whenever they were stuck as the lecturer encouraged the students to work in pairs during the course. DAO.

To a great extent. A lecturer whose attitude towards students is polite and firm at the same time influences them to be the same towards each other. CCC

Great because she encouraged random group work thus improving the relations in class. Immaculate M.

The lecturer's attitude influenced the students' relationship positively. She was friendly in class and was able to explain all concepts clearly and this motivated students to always attend all classes so that we could learn more every day. AnnElsie W.W.

Great. In that the lecturer's active interaction with the students in class did lead to students opening up to each other and the relationships were improved. Wanjala M.W.

- c. *How do you think the relationships among the students during POE affected the teaching and learning process during the unit?*

Very positive influence which lead to better learning environment, hence brilliant learning process. OOB

The student relationships made teaching and learning process of POE to be excellent as we were able to discuss in class and each group present its results to the class thus having different views. Olivia W.

Great because for example, at the beginning people were reluctant to mingle. Immaculate. M.

The very good relationships gave rise to collaboration and increased the number of ideas hence positively enhancing the learning process. Orge, G.

I think the relationship among the students enhanced the learning process as the students learnt that various concepts can be explained differently and that there are various different angles (from which) one can view particular concepts. DAO

The good relationship helped us understand concepts better. MSC

The positive relationships among the students during POE affected the teaching and learning process positively because the students were free to give new ideas in class without fear of embarrassment from their fellow classmates. Everyone had the chance to give their views on all issues we learnt in class and so we learnt from each other. AnnElsie W.W.

Great group work as students enhanced unit and thus the teaching and learning outcome was optimum level amongst most of the students. Wanjala, M.W.

Transcription of AnnElsie's presentation at the 2010 Strathmore Ethics Conference:

Me: (I will now invite AnnElsie to come to speak about) what I was speaking about: the Self-Awareness Projects and the Personal Development Projects because she is one of the few students who went through the two one after the other with me, as the same lecturer. And I would also say that, in all my years of teaching, which are about twenty now, she is the only student who, in a class discussion, trying to explain something to her colleagues, has spontaneously, stood up, moved from her seat, grabbed the marker and gone and written on the board what she wanted to explain, and it was explained perfectly. We were all left speechless! AnnElsie...

AnnElsie: Good morning ladies and gentlemen.

Public: Good Morning.

AnnElsie: My name is AnnElsie Wanjiku from BCOM 3 [We use this acronym to refer to the third year Bachelor of Commerce students]. I got a chance to learn Ethics in both first year and second year [She is referring to Philosophical Anthropology, studied in first year and Principles of Ethics, which students do in second year]. Ethics was a good lesson although it was hard, but Ms. Catherine Dean made it a bit easier for us because she engaged us in so many projects like the Personal Development and the Self Awareness. Okay, for the Self Awareness Project [first year project for Philosophical Anthropology] what we did is we would identify what she does, what she teaches in class; like if she teaches the intellect or the will today, we were able to engage with our lives and then write a report or a journal at the end of every week which would apply in our lives. And then for the Self awareness project [she is actually referring to the Personal Development Project,

which she did during Principles of Ethics, in second year]; we would identify one virtue, which we would develop continuously throughout the semester. That developed me as a person. I would say that it was a good chance for me to learn. It would give me the chance to, like, stand in front of you all and say something, because actually I was a very, very shy student but Ms. Catherine Dean helped me to develop myself. I would also thank Strathmore community for making Ethics a compulsory unit for all of us because it has developed us. Thank you.

Me: Thank you very much AnnElsie. In the Self Awareness Project that she was explaining, each week they (would) write a story about something that happened to them during the week and then analyse it using the concepts that they had learned in class that week. And like that acquire a greater understanding of themselves as persons: that the intellect is different to the imagination for example. And in the Personal Development Project, it involved choosing a virtue. She chose the virtue of kindness and caring, maybe she didn't want to say it but, through her journals each week you could see how she was doing specific things each week to try to develop that virtue.

November 2010 to March 2012

From November 2010 to March 2011 I did not teach to spend more time working on my doctoral research and prepare for my transfer exam in May 2011. Although I did teach Philosophical Anthropology from July 2011 to October 2011 as I discussed in part three of Chapter Eight, I did not do any video recordings of the classes. Neither did I nor the Faculties concerned carry out student evaluation that particular semester.

During the Philosophical Anthropology unit which I taught from November 2011 to March 2012, again I did not record any classes. I did no student evaluation, however, as I explained in part three of Chapter Eight, the School of Humanities and Social sciences did attempt an online course evaluation with a very limited response from students.

I did not record my classes during these semesters because I did not have someone available to help in the process and I did not want to continue asking people from other departments as I had done in December 2009. I did not seek student feedback during these semesters partly because of lack of organization, and partly because I had become a bit tired of the process.

Appendix X: Student feedback on my characteristics as a lecturer

Student Feedback: February 2013

Feedback questionnaire with a summary of the responses and a selection of comments from students:

I would greatly appreciate if you can assist me by filling in this form with your comments. I need your feedback as evidence to include in my doctoral thesis. However, it is important that you write what you REALLY think!

Could you kindly indicate / explain what you think makes Catherine Dean stand out as different, if anything, in contrast with other SU lecturers (please do not name any particular person). I suggest some areas which you could think about as you write your feedback:

1. C. Dean as a person:

Explicit statements on overall quality of my teaching (excellent, very good, impressive, etc.): 6

Statements reflecting positive student perception of my attitude towards them (understanding; approachable; ready to learn from them; etc.): 51

Statements referring to more specific professional skills (involves class in discussion; diligent; does not tolerate indiscipline; articulate; confident with course material; emotional intelligence, etc.): 33

Other qualities mentioned: kind (8); humble (5); fun / humour / cheerful (6); warm (5); tolerant (4); polite (3); etc.

Some comments from students:

She is open, tolerant, disciplined among many other positive traits. This can be clearly shown in the ways which she related with the students, punctuality with time in attending lectures. She also tolerated even those who did wrong and disciplined them understandably (while being understanding towards them). That makes her outstanding amongst others. (K.O. Onyancha)

She is the best lecturer (I) have met from the faculty of humanities. She ensured that everyone understood a concept and she would try her best not to leave anyone behind and no question went unanswered. (Mauline Odera)

She was a great person and one of the best lecturers I have had a chance to be taught with. Her relationship with the students was just amazing and her attitude towards her work and the students was just out of this world!! (Phuti)

C. Dean is a special person with special characters which I haven't seen in most other lecturers. She takes questions positively and is ready to answer them. She has deep knowledge of the unit and is still ready to learn from us students. (Charles M.K.)

C. Dean is one of the very very few teachers I've encountered that actually listens and learns from her students. (Sandra A.)

C. Dean is a down to earth lecturer. She has a special way of dealing with the students that makes them feel free with her. (G. Kiunga)

2. *C. Dean's lecturing style / teaching methods:*

Many students simply listed the various methods used: power point presentations; video clips; group discussions followed by class presentation; class discussions; quizzes; use of e-learning platform; relevant examples; proper explanations; encourage further research and reading; provision of past papers and marking schemes on e-learning platform; etc.

Other students mentioned qualities of my teaching style: student centered; student friendly; interactive; involving; informative; clear delivery; depth of content; easy to understand; encourages individuals to participate and be attentive to her lecture; asks questions for clarification; interesting; enjoyable; relevant, real life examples; kept students attentive throughout the lesson; etc.

Some comments from students:

C. Dean's teaching methods are very participative. She encourages class interactions and most importantly, she listens and takes into account our ideas and opinions (while still clarifying any doubts or misunderstandings we may have). (Sandra A.)

C. Dean used all sorts of styles to keep the students engaged in the lecture. I particularly liked her visuals which gave you a hint on what was going to be discussed and aroused your curiosity. In the e-learning platform (I) am yet to see a lecturer who can give so much and interesting content for the students to use. (G. Kiunga)

I greatly appreciate C. Dean's lecturing style. She explained in an understandable way. Her methodology of lecturing, where she involved us students to contribute to the subject as we understand; asking questions which helped us understand better as we try to contemplate; invoking our thought made me curious of the subject matter, read and ask more about it. I like the clause that she used "stop a minute

and think...”. The quizzes we have been doing allow us to continuously read and revise. (Charles M.K.)

She has very good lecturing styles. She asks questions to know how much you know the topic, then introduces the topic, gives you real life examples to relate to and gives you enough study materials for you to understand better e.g. videos. She ends the topic with a quiz to test your understanding and gives a platform to discuss more about what you understood (e-learning). (Victoria Okumu)

In my opinion she is excellent with her teaching methods, her lecturing style has the whole class engaged by use of relevant examples, proper explanations and even humour. Her e-learning was well maintained and even visually appealing. (I.J.T.)

3. *The environment which C. Dean tries to create in the classroom:*

Explicit replies regarding environment (free; friendly; conducive; good learning; student centered; comfortable; relaxed; warm; fun; excellent; motherly): 55

Replies regarding class activity (open to discussion; interactive; easy to understand; real learning; involving; informative; teamwork; open expression of ideas/opinions; questions asked and answered): 35

Some comments from students:

A friendly environment where all students are free to air their views and speak out their minds. (K.O. Onyancha)

A learning environment, conducive enough for one to develop, learn and make others learn as well by allowing every person to express their opinion. (RMN)

An environment where every student feels like they belong and are comfortable. (Phuti)

The classroom environment is involving and very informative. We learn as much as we share. (Sandra A.)

When in the classroom she creates an environment where it's like we are experiencing our lives there. You do not get bored since it's like what is being discussed really touches on your life and brings back experiences that were good and others that were bad but would have been good if you had applied the skills taught in class. (G. Kiunga)

Interactive environment where the lecturer and students are sharing. It is through these interactions that we (students) raised questions and answered each other seeking clarification where we did not understand. (Charles M.K.)

She does not just make it any other lecture but a learning experience as a whole. Made the environment and class one to be looked forward to. (I.J.T)

The environment was that of peace, calm and interactive. She is unique, so the ambience was unique. (Esther Kinuthia)

She creates a friendly environment and established an excellent teacher-student relationship. (Rachel N.W.)

She tries to create an environment of friendliness among the students and also between the students and the lecturer, through discussion of questions among the students and also actively participating in asking and answering questions. (Sheila N.)

She creates an environment where the students are able to participate without fear. They speak their mind. (A.N.I.)

She makes the students feel comfortable and at ease with themselves and encourages self expression. (Anon)

An ample and good learning environment whereby students don't have major distraction such as their phones with them. (K.V.)

4. *The impact on your learning of C. Dean as a person, her lecturing and the environment in the classroom:*

A number of students commented on how they developed their public speaking skills, learnt to appreciate and respect the dignity of the person, learnt to apply the contents of the unit to life, improved their learning skills, etc.

Some comments from students:

I really enjoyed my time with her (...) I was able to love this unit, though at first it didn't quite interest me. I have come to highly appreciate the unit as well as C. Dean as a capable lecturer. (Anonymous)

C. Dean has helped me to learn a lot of things that affect my day to day life and I appreciate. I have learnt a lot I never knew before. (K.O. Onyancha)

I was able to grasp concepts quickly, easily and could remember them because she drove the point home through her examples, explanations, information on slides and the videos we watched. I especially liked the video on the senses. She was very punctual during her classes and ensured we all gained understanding of a concept before continuing. In my opinion, she is one of the best lecturers. (S.C. Terer)

Her lectures have transformed me as a person, intellectually, and enabled me discover my potentialities. Thanks to Dean. (R.M.N.)

C. Dean has been one of the best lecturers because I got to understand her unit which I believe will help me in future; questions that I had were well answered, unlike other lecturers who just brush off difficult / challenging questions. (Adem. E.)

I have learnt to be a better person both in school and outside. (E.N.)

I was motivated to learn more about P.A.; it also had a positive impact in my life as a person as it has helped give meaning to what I do in life, also in school. (Anonymous)

Her lecturing has enabled me to grow in confidence as a person, trusting myself to make correct decisions in every situation and to appreciate my strengths and weaknesses. (G. Kiunga)

I thought P.A. would be boring because I like Maths but my experience is different. It has turned out to be one of the most interesting subjects/units of this semester. Actually it is the unit I most enjoyed. The reason being that I was thinking out, trying to understand how? And why? E.g. like in the thinking process. It's amazing. (Charles M.K.)

C. Dean has helped me a lot as a person. Her lessons, which I found interesting and applicable have helped me know myself better, and understand others better, know about reality of life, such as death, intellect, will, love others and accept others. I have gained self-confidence for she encouraged me to talk in class and also seeing her as a woman also helped me build my goals. (Victoria Okumu)

Made P.A. easy and interesting to learn. Opened my curiosity towards philosophy and anthropology. It is a very relevant unit for university students. (Crux)

I learnt a great deal in development as a person in various aspects of life but most importantly learning how to control and manage my emotions by determining if they are subjective or objective. (Rachel N.W.)

C. Dean actually gave me a motivation to go on learning philosophy. I hated the unit, but she gave me a reason to love it so much and go on using it in other aspects of my life. Thank you. (Sheila N.)

She has taught me to be more patient and tolerant. (A.N.I.)

This has made me to be more active in class and also concentrate during the lectures, something that has enabled me improve my grades. (K.V.)

Has encouraged me to read constantly and not just during exams. (J.K.M.)

She taught me that our culture is to encourage modesty and humility and not bragging about myself. Have really learnt about me as a rational being and how I can live with others in the society. (Anonymous)

She made an impact on my learning in that she was outstanding in teaching and ensured that whatever she taught we understood. (B.N.N.)

Kindly indicate if I can quote your feedback in my research: Yes / No

If yes, please indicate how I should refer to you e.g. your initials; anonymous; one name + an initial, etc.:

Thank you very much!

C. Dean

I received 82 responses from a total of 140 students.

Appendix Y: Influencing others through my work

In this Appendix to Chapter Eight, I present evidence of how living my values in my practice has had an influence on some lecturers at Strathmore University, and a significant ripple effect through one of my students in particular.

Influencing other lecturers

As I explained in part one of this Chapter, on 20th February 2009 the Dean of IHEDS organized a Faculty meeting in which she asked a colleague and I to make presentations to the other lecturers on the teaching tools which we use.

I explained how I was using online journals within the context of the Self-Awareness Project (SAP) to enhance students learning and assimilation of concepts in Philosophical Anthropology. This was the second personal development project which I was still carrying out at the time (November 2008 to March 2009). I designed and implemented the first personal development project from July to October 2008.

My colleague, John Branya, spoke about studies which he had carried out regarding the use of technology by our students and their generation in general, to encourage lecturers to make creative and original use of the e-learning platform to capture students' attention. He also made brief mention of the Personal Social Development Project which he had designed and implemented in the second half of 2008 (possibly with evening course students from August to November). At the time I did not register much about this part of his presentation because he went through it very quickly. However I did hear him comment that, when he first heard that this type of project was being done (by me, although he did not refer to me publically), he was somewhat doubtful about it. In any case, he had designed and implemented two projects of this type.

A few months later I heard a student speaking about a development project which Mr. Branya had designed for the fulltime students doing Social and Political Philosophy with him. I was interested to know more. I discovered that he had taken and adapted my concept of a personal development project to help students apply philosophical concepts in the units he was teaching to their own lives in practical ways. This was what he had explained in February 2009, but I had not realized the extent to which he had adopted my idea. In his

presentation in February there was a slide with the following comments regarding these projects:

- The projects are:
 - Practical
 - Personal
 - Active
- The projects help the students:
 - See the subject in a more practical way
 - See the topics in a more personal way
 - They can apply what they work on

In August 2009 Mr. Branya sent the IHEDS lecturers a Sampler of Personal Development Projects which his evening students had carried out while doing Principles of Ethics from May to July 2009. In the Introduction he wrote the following:

They (the projects) show how «applied philosophy» could benefit all of us. A sound grounding in philosophical concepts improves our way of seeing ourselves, others and our environment. Because action follows knowledge, proper knowledge of what we are and what we are meant to do, improves our actions, for our own and others benefit.

The reports included in this sampler have been modified to preserve the privacy of the authors. Except for names and companies, the rest are «real life» situations, perceptions, attitudes and behaviours.

The purpose of this sampler is to help each one of us to «budget our life» seeing how our colleagues do it. For those who want to try I have included the instructions given to the students for the project.

The results of these projects are not the consequence of one subject, or one lecturer, but of the sum of efforts of the students themselves, many lecturers, mentors and other personnel who remain, as the authors, anonymous in the background, for example the project methodology was developed by Ms. C. Dean among others.

John Branya
26th August 2009

When I looked at the projects and the detailed design, I was very impressed by how Mr. Branya had developed my idea further, for the benefit of his students. I was also happy to

see that he acknowledged that I had developed what he described as the “project methodology”.

For the purposes of this dissertation I asked Mr. Branya some questions about his use of these projects, which he responded to by email.

1. I seem to remember that you mentioned that your initial reaction when you heard about the personal development projects which I was doing, was to think that they could seem to be a "mzungu" (Kiswahili term which refers literally to “the white man”) type imposition from outside the local context (or something to this effect). Could you explain why you thought that, or had this impression? (It was one of my own concerns when I first thought of the projects too).

More than *mzungu* (it) was the privacy issue. I thought it was an improper intrusion in the intimacy of people, a bit too daring also.

2. In spite of this initial impression (if I understood it correctly), what lead you to change your mind and decide to try out the personal development projects in your units?

Because we were teaching two classes of the same course I did not want my students to feel different or your students to feel they had to do something the others were exempted (from).

I was teaching Principles of Ethics to two groups of second year Commerce students from July to October 2008, while Mr. Branya was taking the third group for the same unit.

3. As far as I know, you have designed these projects frequently as part of your coursework. Does this mean that from the first time you used one, you were convinced of its effectiveness?

I was actually surprised of (by) the results and the good response of most of the students. Some of them were very grateful to learn how to plan their lives.

4. Based on your experience using the various development projects which you have designed, what is it that makes them "effective" in facilitating your students' learning?

To tell them I am the only one who is going to read the projects and that if I think some parts could help others I will first ask them permission in writing.

5. Could you explain briefly what you understand by "effectiveness" in the context of these projects?

I think it comes clear from the students comments. It helps them to discover they can plan and change their lives. It also helps them to put into practice and see the effectiveness of what is being taught in class, which makes it more "real".

6. As far as I know, the marking system which you design in your projects is quite detailed, and you teach large groups of students. How do you handle the challenge of following up the students during the semester regarding the implementation of their projects, and provision of ongoing assessment and feedback to them?

I mark the plan, and send them comments and then the final report and also send them comments. In between I leave them on their own. Very few ask questions.

I started asking for the plans after the second year when I noticed some would do the project at the end, either copying from the work of previous years' students or inventing a project from scratch. They were very few, but it was a pity they missed the opportunity.

It does take time, but it is worth the effort. (Personal e-mail received on 10th September 2012)

This feedback helped to confirm my own experience that the students found these projects helpful as they discover that they are in control of and can change their lives and themselves as persons. The projects also help to make the Philosophy units more practical, so students discover how they are relevant to life, and their learning becomes more real.

Subsequently, in informal conversations I have discovered that two or three other Philosophy lecturers at Strathmore are using these projects to help their students learn in a practical and effective manner. Each lecturer designs the projects in their own way. Now they are not even aware that the original idea of the "project methodology" came from me. However, I have no problem with this as, what matters is that we help each other to teach effectively and help our students to discover the relevance of these units for their lives.

The story of Cleophas



Photo 1 Cleophas near his home in Kibera (August 2012)

Cleophas was a student of mine twice while doing his Commerce degree at Strathmore University. He did Philosophical Anthropology (Ethics 1) with me from November 2007 to March 2008 during the second semester of his first year. He then did Principles of Ethics with me from July to October 2008, during the first semester of his second year at Strathmore.

His story begins with the *Unity in Diversity* project which I described in part two of Chapter Eight, however it spiraled beyond to have further impact on Cleophas, his classmates, his community and myself.

In his report on what he did for the *Unity in Diversity* project, Cleophas writes about how he, along with other leaders of different youth groups in Kibera³², decided to organise a four day seminar for the youth in Kibera during February 2008, focusing on teamwork and reconciliation in the aftermath of the post-electoral violence. When the young people

³² One of the Nairobi slums and one of the areas which was most affected by the post-electoral violence of 2008.

gathered together, the leaders organized them into groups in which people from different ethnic communities were mixed together.

These groups had to compete against each other and so people got involved in putting their ideas together. The group that emerged the winner said that they really had to hear each one of their member's ideas and so leading to their success. The least successful group had members who were not participating and did not have good co-ordination. This practice made the youth realize that each one or each individual has a meaning in society and that putting ideas together could bring many good things in society (*Unity in Diversity Report* by Cleophas).

Other activities were organized, including watching movies. After watching "Hotel Rwanda", Cleophas comments: *When the youth saw the movie, they were really touched and said they didn't want Kenya to go to that state.* The young people also had a talk on reconciliation and forgiveness, and the effects of keeping grudges in one's heart. *After we had a talk from him, we decided to wash each other's feet as a sign of reconciliation and love,* says Cleophas. He concludes: *The whole seminar was good and the best experience we ever had and really changes the lives of people especially in Kibera. It made us understand that our differences in community were just accidents and that we were all one and could do great things together* (*Unity in Diversity Report* by Cleophas).

The reflections and considerations which Cleophas made in his report, when linking Philosophical Anthropology to the situation that Kenya was going through were particularly interesting. He begins by explaining that, thanks to studying Philosophical Anthropology, he came to understand himself better, *to know who I am and what I need to do.* He then affirms: *By understanding myself better, I was not able to involve myself in criminal acts of violence.* In other words, even before the outbreak of violence in his home area, Kibera, Cleophas had already grasped from his study of the human person that he and others have special value, and this knowledge helped him in practice not to get involved in the post-electoral violence when it started in the place where he lives. He then gives examples of how he proactively responded to the situation: *One man was shot by an arrow and was lying in front of our gate. Because he was in pain and I was the only one around him, I decided to call some of my neighbours and helped one another to take him to hospital.* This was probably a risky thing to do in that context, but Cleophas had the courage to do it.

He also describes how his study of Philosophical Anthropology helped him to learn how to treat people like friends and family members, even if they were just passers-by, because he learnt that a human being's dignity cannot be replaced by anything and it is the most expensive (valuable) thing in the world. As a consequence of this, he explains that: *This is why we kept tight with my friends through the difficult times of violence and never parted with each other due to tribalism, even though we lived in the most affected area in the country.* I can testify that Kibera was a dangerous place for people of different ethnic communities to interact at that time. One evening, I called a friend who lived in another area of Kibera at that time. In the background I could hear the terrifying sounds of mobs shouting, threatening each other, and attacking each other, etc.; she told me that it was like that every night at the time. One of my tutees, who lives in another area of Kibera described experiencing the same phenomenon; in the case of her family, they were saved by the fact that the people of the area appreciated her father's activity within the community, although they come from a different ethnic group to their neighbours. She also told me that, coming to university in January 2008 was a fearsome journey as one had to pass through the different areas which Kibera had been divided into according to ethnic background, and that to walk through an area that did not belong to your community was dangerous, especially at the "checkpoints" set up by those perpetrating the violence. One was often asked to give their name or to show their national identification card, and based on that, one could be attacked, or required to pay a "fee" in order to move to the next area.

Finally Cleophas concludes:

it (Philosophical Anthropology) has also enabled me to realize the dignity of the human person and to help those in need. This is why I always take my friends to accompany me to old age houses where we wash clothes for them and give them food. During the violence period, we went to visit disabled displaced people and gave them food, washed clothes for them and played some games with them to make them feel some sense of belonging and that they were still with us...

(Philosophical Anthropology) has really built me; my personal being has really developed. (*Unity in Diversity Report* by Cleophas)

As we can see from his account, through the *Unity in Diversity* project, Cleophas applied what he had learnt about the value and dignity of each human being to real life situations and contributed in different ways to helping others, especially his peers, to do likewise. The spiral effect moving from my educational influence on him, through his acceptance of

that influence, is transferred or passed on as he attempts to transmit the same values to others, and bring well being to his friends and neighbours.

The story of Cleophas does not finish here. In July 2008, I took his class again for Principles of Ethics. This time, I designed a personal development project in which each student had to identify some goal they wanted to achieve during the semester, and work at moving towards that goal little by little, week by week. In the process, they did some journal writing to describe their efforts, successes and failures, and their reflections on these, in order to learn from them and adjust their strategy in trying to achieve their goals. At the end of the semester, they wrote a report on the project summarizing what they had achieved and what they had learned from it, using specific examples and references to their journals. This project gave rise to some fascinating transformation in many of my students. However, here I will focus on the project carried out by Cleophas.

His report opens with an explanation about his goal and the reason he chose it:

Through Strathmore University, I have been molded to understand very many things that I had never thought of as significant in my day to day activities. The study of Ethics here has had a great impact on me especially my way of life and I thank Strathmore University for this. Before my Ethics lecturer asked us to have a personal development project, I had already seen and experienced difficult situations around me, which I had been perceiving with ignorance before coming to Strathmore. (*Personal Development Project Report* by Cleophas).

Cleophas is referring here to some things which he told me about later in a personal conversation, regarding life in Kibera, such as the disregard for the corpses of the dead, which he would come across when moving around, along with the practice of abortion in brutal ways. He commented that at times he finds aborted fetuses that are still living, in a corner, or on a rubbish heap. This is why he comments:

but after (coming to Strathmore), I felt like something had to be done and not by anybody else but it had to begin with me. For this reason my project was about dealing with people experiencing difficulty around me and to make them realize that they had dignity, and to avoid activities which would rather degrade their dignity as human persons. Actually this was to share what I had learnt in Ethics with the community that has brought me up and to put them into practice. (*Personal Development Project Report* by Cleophas).

Basically, Cleophas' project involved setting himself a weekly target of a certain number of sick people to visit, which he broke down to various visits to different people each day. He also carried out other social activities within Kibera. He describes how he faced challenges such as the need to catch up with his personal study because of dedicating more timing to visiting the sick. When he tried to organize clean-ups around Kibera with his friends and other youth, people were suspicious and thought that he was being financed by some organization to do this, and so, they did not want to cooperate, or they tried to get money from him for loaning the tools they needed to do their work. He describes how he dealt with these challenges as follows: *this made me try to explain my intention by having some little meetings after the activity. Some of these people eventually joined me and became very actively involved....* Regarding those who wanted to charge him for using the tools, *To solve this I had some talks with the group and explained to them my intentions and had to make it clear to them that I was to get nothing out of this.* At the same time, although he did not have money and usually walked to and from Kibera every day, as well as walking all over Kibera, Cleophas still bought snacks for a group of kids which he visited with some friends. At times he ended up getting home very late, as people wanted to talk a lot when he went to visit the sick in their homes. He also tried to get his friends involved in the various forms of social work which he organized.

In the self-evaluation he carries out at the end of the report, Cleophas states:

Through this exercise I was able to understand different people, different ways of life people have and it made me realize that there are very many people out there who really need my assistance. It also made me realize that human beings have to work together to be prosperous and that we need to put ourselves in other peoples' shoes and try to help them in times of difficulty. I too noticed that I had a task to shed light to the people who didn't have the opportunity that I had and so I had the responsibility to share my knowledge with them. This project has enabled me to change my perspective towards life and to realize that at one time I'll need someone to visit me when I'll be sick in the hospital; it has also made me realize that keeping good relations with people is very important since life is very uncertain. I realized this when I visited a house where there was a sick man whom neighbours didn't care about, claiming that he didn't have good relations with people when he was well. (*Personal Development Project Report* by Cleophas)

His evaluation of the personal development project itself was:

This project helped me a lot in the practical use of my freedom as through doing different activities in it, I was always the subject (owner) of my choices and always in my own hands. Through it I was able to love the real good of associating with others in trying to solve common problems we undergo. According to me this project was very successful and of great importance in my life as through it I got to learn a lot. (*Personal Development Project Report* by Cleophas).

Once again, in this project Cleophas showed the spiraling effect of educational influence which moved from myself as educator, to himself as learner, and on to his own community, where he also managed to change peoples' lives through his efforts.



Photo 2 Cleophas in Kibera

In the next stage of Cleophas' story I found that I too had to get involved in another way. I include here a brief text which I wrote for publication in the Strathmore Digest, a bimonthly magazine about events in and around the university.

From July to September 2008 I taught Principles of Ethics to Cleophas and his classmates. During the unit I asked the students to carry out a project to help them develop themselves by achieving some chosen goal. Towards the end of the semester, Cleophas came to tell me of some activities he was carrying out to help

his peers in Kibera to improve their lifestyle and upgrade their living conditions. I thought it was a great initiative and encouraged him but I did not get involved!

Then, in June 2009, IHEDS invited some visiting lecturers from Ireland and the UK to carry out a staff training seminar on Action Research. The guests were interested in visiting some SU projects in Kibera, which they did. At the time I remembered that Cleophas was doing things there and I would have liked to introduce him to our visitors, but it was not possible. Then I decided that, the next time I saw him, I would ask how his activities in Kibera are going. Providentially I met him a day or two after making this decision and asked him how things were going. We agreed to meet so that he could update me.

So we met in early July 2009 at the Forecourt and Cleophas told me about how he had managed to help his friends to clean up their living conditions and to improve their lifestyles. He also told me that he had recently started going to Soweto Baptist High School early on Wednesday mornings, with the permission of the Principal there, to give classes in virtues and life skills to the students from Form 1 to Form 4. He said he needed more people to help with the project, especially to assist the girls in the school. I thought the project sounded exciting so I agreed to go with him on the following Wednesday, to see what he was doing. Elsie Onsongo accompanied me and we were very impressed and excited by the rapport that Cleophas had with the students, and their response. So I suggested to Cleophas that he ask some people in his class if they would be interested in coming to help us with the project as I had already decided that I wanted to collaborate.

The following Wednesday, we met at High-rise Estate at 6.45am with Cleophas and other 3rd year BCOM students. We went to the school and agreed to talk with the girls and the guys in separate classrooms as we had noticed that the girls were shy to speak and to give their opinion. And it went on from there! June came up with a schedule of topics for the remaining weeks until December, including human virtues, life skills, study skills and career talks. Little by little more SU students joined the early morning Wednesday group and we got to know the students at Soweto better. As they developed their trust in us, we were able to give them lots of practical advice and help which they really appreciated as shown in some of the letters which they wrote on one Wednesday when we could not go to see them because of exams at SU:

“I really appreciated all the efforts that you’ve made coming to teach us here in our school. By the lessons we have been taking with you all that time, it has really helped me a lot. I have changed a lot. I’m not the Alice I used to be. The lessons have helped me more getting to know myself really well, how to mingle with people and how to be generous. One thing that I have learnt about generosity is that you don’t have to be generous in order to get paid or being praised; it’s really a self want. The other thing is how to

plant my goal and the steps that I have to take in order to succeed in life.”
(Form 3 student)

Many students commented how the study skills they were taught and how they have started to be more focused and to improve in their class work.

“I first thank the Almighty God for giving you the heart of encouraging young people like us. It was a very great opportunity where we were sharing with you and it has really changed my life. From form one up to form three I had never planned my timetable but when you gave us the way how we should prepare our home timetables I saw I’m getting something and in my mid-term exams I realised am improving in my academics slowly and slowly” (Form 3 student)

Other students speak of how they are trying to share what they have learned with their friends:

“I have learned how to control peer pressure. I now even take time studying instead of watching movies and visiting some places which are not close to studies like I did before. I am now able to control myself from my peers especially when they guide me in the wrong direction. I am more careful and instead I am the one who advises them to take their studies seriously. ..I really know who I am, who I want to be in future and the goal I would like to achieve at school and in future” (Z.M.)

They speak of learning to be courageous in facing reality, to live fortitude, to pray. They especially refer to how the SU students have given them encouragement, hope, new dreams and a vision for the future.

On the last day of class before the school closed for the long holiday the students at Soweto did a performance illustrating what they have learned through all the SU team has tried to transmit over the last few months. We really enjoyed it! Fenuel from COP came to video record the session, which we greatly appreciated.

I could go on, but I would like to underline that this project required a lot of sacrifice from the SU team of students; many came on days when it was cold, raining, muddy, when they had cats and exams, etc. To me the whole project brings to light what our students can do for others if they put their minds to it! We would like to take this opportunity to encourage other students from SU to join the project or to assist in any way possible. We hope that, from January, we will meet on Saturday afternoons at a hall in one of the church compounds in Kibera.

We already have a Saturday afternoon group for students from other schools following the same plan as at Soweto, which Cleophas and Sharon have dedicated themselves to assisting generously. We would like to focus on the Saturday afternoon programme to bring together even more students from other schools around Kibera. The more help we have from SU students and friends, the easier it

will be to reach the point of helping these young people on a personal, one to one basis through mentoring by the SU team. This is our dream and goal for 2010!

One of the Strathmore students who got involved in the project was Irene. She described it as follows:

I got to know of and join this initiative 'by accident'. I had accompanied a friend to attend a meeting to discuss the progress of the initiative. Needless to say the reason I agreed to visit the school for the first time was merely because I was asked to.

But that decision to see what the fuss was all about changed my life forever. The sight of young ladies and gentlemen eager to learn from us and having questions that once overwhelmed me and the knowledge that I could actually make a difference in their lives erased all the skepticism I initially had about the project.

The more I got to visit them the more fulfillment I got compared to the alternative uses I could have invested my time in and the more I got to learn from them too. They are intelligent, mature youth with great dreams and a willingness to learn that is not too common. And very entertaining too!

I got to a point that I cannot bear missing the Wednesday sessions we have with them and I hope that they are gaining something from us too. Big thanks to Cleo for coming up with this.

June also participated in the project and had this to say:

When Cleophas first mentioned the project to me, I was skeptical about my ability to contribute to it. However after meeting and interacting with the students, and remembering my teenage years, I realized that the problems I may have had at the time are similar to those they face, and all they needed was a sense of direction and hope, and someone to listen. This increased my willingness to help and also after the aim of the project was explained to me. The benefits accrue to not only the students but to all the participants of the project. Being of help to someone else is one of the greatest feelings, especially after seeing the increased receptiveness and participation of the students to the topics discussed as the weeks went by. I only hope that many more students can be reached by this project.

In December of 2009 before schools closed for the long break over Christmas, the members of the drama club at Soweto Baptist High School did a performance for the Strathmore University students to show their appreciation for the time and energy which they had dedicated to the high school students.



Photo 3 Performance by Soweto Baptist High School students

After the performance, the high school students asked the Strathmore students to do something for them, a song or a dance... The Strathmore students were not prepared for this, however some of them made brief speeches expressing what they had learnt from going to Soweto Baptist High School each week and encouraging these students to persevere in their studies so they can achieve more in life.



Photo 4 SU student thanking and advising the high school students

One of the Strathmore students did an impromptu song and dance which the high school students enjoyed immensely!



Clip 1 Y-1 The SU performance!

I may also add that when I began taking part in this project, I also learned many things. I had to overcome a certain fear of working Kibera, which gave me the opportunity to experience the reality of daily life there. I had to come out of my comfort zone and leave home earlier in the morning, while it was still dark and everyone was walking in silence to work, to be on time to meet Cleophas and the other Strathmore students. This allowed me to witness how Cleophas really seems to know so many people in Kibera as, whenever we walked to the school with him, he was continuously greeted or stopped by people he knows. The small children called out “Omosh”, the name he is known by in Kibera, and the students at the high school are obviously fascinated by him and how he managed to bring students from his university to their school to help in different ways. For many of them, he is a role model and a sign of hope that it is possible for them to move beyond Kibera in the future and get training or even go to university, if they work hard and try to live well, so that they don’t destroy their lives through substance abuse, disease related behavior, etc. I had to sacrifice my time and efforts to cooperate with Cleophas in the project, over and beyond my work in the classroom, but this has broadened my outlook and helped me to discover once again what our students are capable of doing when they want to, and receive some support.

In this brief video made by Strathmore University, Cleophas explains his background and the project which he started at Soweto Baptist High School. He also explains his dream for the young people of Kibera, based on his conviction that if they are helped to understand their dignity as persons, they will be able to improve themselves and their community.



Clip 2 Y-2 SU video of Cleophas³³

Cleophas continued with the project and also graduated with his degree in Commerce in June 2011. From March 2011, when he had finished his final exams, he combined job-hunting, like his classmates, with dedicating time to help sell raffle tickets to raise funds for the new environmentally friendly green buildings which Strathmore is still constructing, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Strathmore “brand”³⁴. One of the staff members who was actively involved in the fund-raising told me that Cleophas spent many hours at a supermarket in a shopping mall near the university, where the tickets were being sold to customers. When possible buyers objected to purchasing the tickets because they thought that Strathmore is a university for the rich and wealthy, Cleophas would explain to them that he was born and bred in Kibera, and that he managed to go through Strathmore and obtain his degree through the efforts of his father. He presented himself as living proof that the university is open to all, and worthy of receiving the help of everyone because anyone can benefit from the university’s programmes. In this way and with these and similar arguments, he convinced very many people to purchase the raffle tickets, and so contributed greatly to the fundraising initiative.

³³ This video may also be viewed at: <http://youtu.be/41fTTrIYC-Y>

³⁴ Strathmore exists as a university since 2002. It received its charter as an independent private university in April 2008. The university developed from the partnering of Strathmore College and Kianda College, both of which opened in Nairobi in January 1961. See <http://www.strathmore.edu/50/> for more details.

As a consequence of his commitment to “giving back” to Strathmore in this way, he was offered a job by the Managing Director of the company which donated the main prize, a car, for the raffle. In September 2011, I was asked by the company to write a reference letter for Cleophas, which I was very happy to do.



Photo 5 Cleophas in the Toyota Office where he works (first from the right)

Through the story of Cleophas, I am showing that my educational influence has had a spiraling effect, moving from one person to many others, in various ways and to different extents, even to the point of spiraling back to myself as I too got involved in his project. It is difficult to illustrate this spiraling effect as, in some cases it moves from one person to the next in a linear process, and in others, it moves to the sides, giving rise to other spiraling effects, and probably further consequences that I am not aware of. This diagram may illustrate something of the interlinking stories which move from one person to many people.

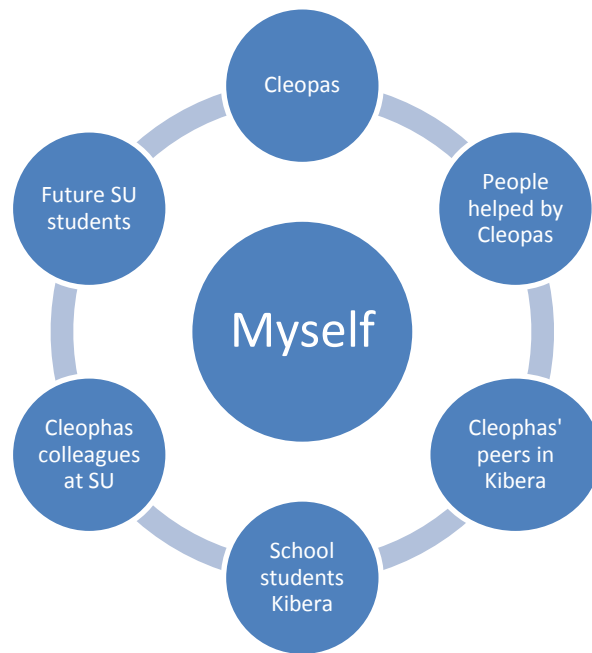


Figure 1 The ripple effect of my work through Cleophas

The story continued on 27th August 2012, when I invited Cleophas to speak to the two groups of students that I was teaching at the time, about the impact of Philosophical Anthropology and learning how to use one's freedom in his own life.



Photo 6 Cleophas speaking to a group of Philosophical Anthropology students

Some comments from the students on his presentation, in the end of semester feedback were:

- It was really nice hearing from Cleophas when he talked about the hardships and things we might not necessarily relate to; that was really thoughtful of the lecturer. (LN).
- The idea of the guest speaker was good since it gave me hope that no matter where one comes from, anything is possible as long as one doesn't give up (AI).

When Cleophas came for these sessions, I had an interview with him which was recorded by the Graduate Assistant who was helping me at the time. Many other initiatives which Cleophas has fostered in Kibera came out in the conversation.

At one point I asked him about the things I heard him explaining to the Soweto Baptist High School students on the first day I went there, with Elsie O., one of my colleagues. His answer, as explained in the clip below was very interesting. From seconds 00.35 to 00.40 he explains that ultimately, he was moved by the fact of applying to his life in Kibera, the things he was learning about the virtues, etc. in Principles of Ethics. His passion comes across as he speaks, as well as the empathetic resonance we share around his concern for his young friends in Kibera, for whom he wants to be an older “brother”.



Clip 3 Y-3 Interview with Cleophas about Soweto Baptist High School

In January 2013 I received a mail from Cleophas as follows:

I hope you have been well ever since we last got in touch.

I also hope you are fairing on well at work and instilling values that are really essential to students once they leave for the corporate world.

I have a proposal which you may, or may not be able to assist me with.

After a year and some months of working in Toyota Kenya, I have realized that work ethics is really a miss here.

Some people come drunk to work, stealing of parts and some unfaithfulness to the employer here and there. This has led to an increased workforce turnover as many people get fired.

I thus thought of organizing for an ethics knowledge share for employees and I would like you to help me in this, with material, ideas and availability if possible.

I think that, if we hold this knowledge share, it would help individual employees and Toyota in general.

I look forward to a reply from you. (E-mail, 23rd January 2013).

This mail reflects the amazing capacity which Cleophas has developed of identifying ethical issues in whatever circumstances he is in. He then seeks ways of helping other people to learn more about themselves and how being ethical can help them to develop as persons. Currently Cleophas, who had already discussed the idea with his Manager, is working with another staff member from SHSS to design a programme that may be acceptable to the company.

In this Appendix to Chapter Eight I have shown how my *passion for the person*, manifested in the personal development projects which I first created in 2008, has had further impact on others, through my colleagues at Strathmore and my students. As St. Thomas Aquinas put it, goodness diffuses itself (1947, ST I. Q. 5, a. 4). And goodness and love can be synonymous. My love for the person has grown, spread and extended itself to other people through my efforts to live my values in my life and practice, as I have shown here and in the other parts of Chapter Eight.

Appendix Z: Trinitarian Studies and Unity in Diversity

The Trinity in contemporary theology

From the historical perspective the study of the Blessed Trinity is rooted in Sacred Scripture and the living Tradition of the Catholic Church founded by Christ himself.

The development of Trinitarian theology over the centuries is well summarised by Emery and Levering in their Introduction to *The Oxford Handbook of the Trinity* (2012, pp. 1-12). This text provides an excellent and comprehensive study of the Blessed Trinity. Part One discusses Trinitarian revelation in Scripture and early Christian symbols and professions of faith. In Part Two, these are interpreted from the perspective of Eastern and Western writers such as Tertullian, Origen, Athanasius of Alexandria and Basil of Caesarea in the context of the fourth century heresies which led to the Councils of Nicea (A.D. 325) and of Constantinople (A.D. 381). An entire chapter is dedicated to Augustine of Hippo and his work on the Trinity, especially his *De Trinitate*.

Part Three is dedicated to medieval Trinitarian theology up to the fifteenth century. We read of thinkers from Alcuin of York, John Scotus Eriugena, Gottschalk and Anselm of Canterbury. Twelfth-century theologians such as Peter Abelard, Peter Lombard, Bernard of Clairvaux and Richard of St Victor are discussed. Bonaventure and Aquinas share a chapter which highlights the centrality of the Trinity in the thought of both, their areas of agreement and their distinctive features. Byzantine theologies from the ninth to the fifteenth-century are presented including Photius and in particular Gregory of Palmas.

Part Four is dedicated to nine articles discussing Trinitarian studies from the sixteenth to the twentieth century inclusive. Catholic and Protestant theology in this period is discussed from Ignatius of Loyola to Jonathan Edwards, Michael Servetus and Faustus Socinus. Kant's marginalization of Trinitarian doctrine and Hegel and Schillings' use of triadic dynamisms are discussed in depth. Schleiermacher's influence on Isaac Dorner and Johann von Hoffman is shown as his idea that Trinitarian theology has been too isolated from the experience of salvation is drawn out. Nineteenth-century Catholic theology is discussed with reference to Giovanni Perrone, the Tübingen School, Matthias Josef Scheeben and the mystical theology of Elizabeth of the Trinity.

Twentieth-century Protestant Trinitarian theology is discussed from the perspective of Barth, Moltmann, Pannenberg and Jüngel. The chapter on Catholic Trinitarian theology draws out the ideas of Rahner and Von Balthasar, showing how they were influenced by Maurice Blondel's more fully historical theology of grace. The contemporary Orthodox theological position on the Trinity is presented highlighting the influence of the ideas of Bulgakov, Lossky and Zizioulas.

Part Five, dedicated to Trinitarian dogmatics, highlights some of the current trends in Trinitarian theology such as the place of the mystery of the Trinity in theological discourse; the analogous application of the notion of 'person' to the intratrinitarian relations in God and to the human person; Trinitarian theocentrism which incorporates the theology of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; the relations between the Son and all those created in the likeness of the Son; Trinitarian pneumatology regarding the identity of the Holy Spirit and his role in the work of creation and redemption; traditional and contemporary views on the human person as an image of God, the use of analogy in relating the created world with the triune God and contemporary views on the ontological links between the Trinity and creation; theology of the Church from the perspective of the missions of the Son and the Holy Spirit and how we human beings can share in the relationships of the divine persons; the role of faith and the sacraments in bringing about the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and adoptive sonship in the Son so that Christians already live in the Trinity while on earth.

Part Six deals with the Trinity and Christian life from various angles such as the liturgy, prayer and the moral life. These are complemented by some articles on the Trinity and feminism, the Trinity in Christian visual art and the Trinity and politics.

Finally Part Seven looks at Trinitarian theology and ecumenism, Jewish-Christian dialogue and interreligious dialogues. The last chapter deals with globalization, post-modern theories of culture and the Trinity. The editors provide a conclusion on Prospects for Trinitarian Theology.

As may be seen, *The Oxford Handbook of the Trinity* is a comprehensive work in terms of breadth and depth of analysis thanks to the calibre of the various contributors. The Introduction and Conclusion by the editors adds to the intellectual weight of the work and its contribution to Trinitarian studies.

The Cambridge Companion to the Trinity (2011) edited by Peter Phan aims to provide a similar guide to understanding the development of Trinitarian theology over time. The Introductory section explains the development of the doctrine of the Trinity and systematic issues in Trinitarian theology. Part two looks at the sources for Trinitarian theology, with one chapter each on the Trinity in the New Testament, the Greek Father and Latin Trinitarian theology. This is followed by a section called Renewing the Tradition, with a chapter each on Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventure, the Trinity in the Protestant Reformation and Christian Trinitarian thinking after the Reformation.

Part Four discusses contemporary theologians and perspectives on Trinitarian theology. Barth, Rahner and Von Balthasar each have a chapter, followed by one on Moltmann and Pannenberg. The Trinity in contemporary Orthodox theology is discussed, followed by a chapter on the life-giving reality of God from black, Latin American and US Hispanic theological perspectives. This section concludes with a chapter on Feminist theologies and the Trinity.

The fifth section looks at Trinitarian theology in relation with Confucianism, Taoism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism and Islam. The final section looks at some issues in systematic theology from the perspective of the Trinity: Trinity, Christology and pneumatology; Liturgy, sacraments and mysticism; the Trinity and socio-political ethics.

In general *The Cambridge Companion* seems to be a synopsis on the Trinity, with certain elements highlighted, in comparison with *The Oxford Handbook*. It does not claim to be a manual or a textbook, but rather, as the title indicates, a “companion” which shares the bread of knowledge with its readers without providing everything. Both coincide in some of the thinkers they discuss as would be expected. *The Oxford Handbook* is deeper in its approach to the themes, as seen in the space dedicated to Sacred Scripture, Patristics and historical matters for example. *The Cambridge Companion* is perhaps more original in the section on interreligious dialogue as it reaches out to Eastern traditions more explicitly and in more depth. The contributors also represent a broad range of theological viewpoints and diversity in terms of gender, ethnicity, and geography. Phan claims that this is “to honor the global character of contemporary theology” (Preface, p. xiv). The contributors to *The Oxford Handbook* also represent the international nature of Trinitarian studies. The Introduction provides a useful background to the theme which facilitates an understanding

of the work it presents, whereas the Preface by Phan to *The Cambridge Companion* is rather short although helpful.

A third large work dedicated to Trinitarian studies which was published in 2011 is *Rethinking Trinitarian Theology: Disputed Questions and Contemporary Issues in Trinitarian Theology*, edited by Maspero and Wozniak. This text does not aim to be a comprehensive explanation of Trinitarian studies nor Trinitarian theology. It seeks to illustrate the fruits of the “revival” of Trinitarian studies in the twentieth century through a collection of essays which show the vitality of Trinitarian theology when it is placed at the heart of Christian theology. It combines the outcomes of a historical search for the true meaning of the original doctrinal formulations regarding the Trinity with creative, constructive theological work which rethinks the mystery in the context of the present moment in time and space. The ultimate aim of such an approach is a deeper and fuller understanding of the mystery God’s intimate life and love. The work contains essays with an historical perspective along with others which represent new approaches to Trinitarian theology. It presents these contemporary approaches in a systematic manner while maintaining a clear ecumenical perspective.

The first part reviews historical issues in Trinitarian theology as they are being reconsidered in contemporary thought. The second part (Modern Analytic Perspectives) presents revisions in the historical understanding of concepts such as ‘person’, ‘substance’, ‘freedom’ and ‘perichoresis’. The third part offers new readings of some ontological and epistemological dimensions of Trinitarian faith (patristic Trinitarian ontology; Trinitarian theology and a supreme phenomenology, etc). Part four draws out the anthropological paradigm in current Trinitarian theology (Trinity and community, becoming a person, social Trinitarianism and Trinitarian spirituality). The fifth and last part offers some new systematic perspectives for Trinitarian theology such as the Trinity at the centre of Christian theology, the Paternity of God and the Trinity from the paschal perspective.

This work is clearly different to the two which I have discussed above as it focuses almost exclusively on the specificity of the themes that characterize the Trinitarian renewal of the twentieth century. As such it is a useful references text and a source of inspiration for further research.

The three texts refer to the recent renewal of interest in Trinitarian theology in the twentieth century. Emery and Levering (2012, p. 3) describe it briefly in historical terms in their Introduction to *The Oxford Handbook of the Trinity*. Phan (2011, p. iii) discusses it as a given fact in his preface and uses it as a starting point to explain how *The Cambridge Companion to the Trinity* illustrates the meanderings of Trinitarian theology in the past and present. The two chapters of the Introduction, also written by Phan, further explain developments in the doctrine of the Trinity and systematic issues in Trinitarian theology. The Introduction to *Rethinking Trinitarian Theology* by Maspero and Wozniak, explains the Trinitarian renaissance of the twentieth century in detail. Other authors hold a similar opinion regarding this renewal.

Pless (2004, p. 2) sustains that Barth paved the way for Trinitarian renewal with his idea that the doctrine of the Trinity has both a positive and critical function in Christian theology. The root of the Trinity for Barth is in the fact that God reveals Himself as Lord. As Pless indicated Barth begins his dogmatic treatment of the Trinity by asserting:

God's Word is God Himself in His revelation. For God reveals Himself as the Lord and according to the Scripture this signifies for the concept of revelation that God Himself in unimpaired unity yet also in unimpaired distinction is Revealer, Revelation, and Revealedness (Barth 1975, p. 295 quoted in Pless 2004, p. 2).

Barth reclaims and employs traditional Trinitarian terminology. God's being *ad extra* corresponds to His being *ad intra*. God does not become an economy that is alien to His essence. Barth seeks to speak of God as He is in Himself. He does not begin with an abstract definition of the Deity but with God's fundamental revelation of Himself in Christ. for Barth, all speaking about God must be Trinitarian if it is to be Christian (Pless 2004, p. 2).

In Catholic theology Barrachina Carbonell (1999, p. 6) claims that Rahner has been the most influential in opening up horizons for Trinitarian theology. Rahner demonstrated the harmony between “oikonomia” and “theologia” or immanent theology and historical-salvific theology (economy) and so made it possible to discover the proper and unique role of each divine person in salvation history. He asserted what would come to be known as Rahner's Rule: "The 'economic' Trinity is the 'immanent' Trinity and the 'immanent' Trinity is the 'economic' Trinity" (Rahner 1995, p. 195). Sesboue (1991, p. 212) and Congar (1983,

p. 454) both acknowledged the importance of Rahner's original contribution to contemporary Trinitarian theology.

Barrachina Carbonell (1999) and Pless (2004) hold that Moltmann in *The Crucified God* and *The Trinity and the Kingdom* further developed an openness to Trinitarian theology. For Moltmann, the theology of the cross is the hermeneutical key that provides access to the mystery of the Trinity (Pless 2004, p. 5).

I myself have tried to think through the theology of the cross in Trinitarian terms and to understand the doctrine of the Trinity in light of the theology of the cross. In order to grasp the death of the Son in its significance for God himself, I found myself bound to surrender the traditional distinction between the immanent and the economic Trinity, according to which the cross comes to stand only in the economy of salvation, but not within the immanent Trinity (Moltmann 1981, p. 160 quoted in Pless 2004, p. 5).

Like Moltmann, Jüngel sees the doctrine of the Trinity as christologically anchored in the event of the cross. The doctrine of the Trinity is inexplicable apart from the death and resurrection of Jesus. But what is revealed in the cross corresponds to the way God is within Himself. There is relationality within God. God's involvement in history *ad extra* corresponds to the divine life *ad intra* (Pless 2004, p. 6). He also affirms the position of Rahner:

Karl Rahner's thesis should be given unqualified agreement: '*The economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity and the immanent Trinity is the economic Trinity.*' This statement is correct because God himself takes place in Jesus' God-forsakenness and death (Mark 15:34-37). What the passion story narrates is the actual conceptualization of the doctrine of the Trinity (Jüngel 1983, pp. 369-70 quoted in Pless 2004, p. 7).

Barrachina Carbonell (1999) also claims that Von Balthasar has had a great influence in opening up horizons for Trinitarian theology. Through his deep reflection on the paschal event of the death and resurrection of Christ as the moment where the definitive revelation of the Trinity takes place, where God finally shows the tremendous mystery of his eternal paternity, which is identified with Love, where Christ is definitively shown to be the eternal Son of his love and where the Holy Spirit appears as the eternal and unbreakable communion of Love between the two, Von Balthasar managed to substitute a metaphysics of the spirit for a metaphysics of love in the explanation of the Trinity beginning with the

Father (Barrachina Carbonell 1999, p. 7). This approach was adopted by other contemporary theologians such as Kasper (1985, p. 227) and Forte (1988, pp. 97-102). Other theologians were part of the development of Trinitarian renewal such as Zizioulas (1985); LaCugna (1991); Jenson (1982; 1999). Many writers and theologians took up the ideas around the Trinitarian revival to develop them further, offer synthesis and explanations etc. For example, Cartledge (2008), Letham (2004), Pless (2004), Sauter (2003), Davis, Kendall and O'Collins (2002), Leup (2008), Grenz (2004), Sanders (2004), Levering (2004), Gunton (1990; 1998; 2003), Siemon-Netto (2002) and Emery (2011).

In spite of Maspero and Wozniak's explanation of the Trinitarian renaissance in the Introduction to *Rethinking Trinitarian Theology*, the very first Chapter "Catholic Trinitarian Theology beyond and before its modern 'revivals'" by Ayres queries to what extent such a 'revival' actually occurred. He concludes

Fostering good Trinitarian theology will require of us not merely new narratives of tradition that can be incorporated into the 'constructive work of the systematician, but much careful thought about how theology's speculative moment is frequently to be found in the opening of historical conversations, allowing 'newness' to arise without assuming that we need consciously to 'construct' it (Ayres 2011, ch. 1, para. 40).

Perhaps this apparent contradiction is simply in accordance with the subtitle of *The Cambridge Companion*, which is *Disputed Questions and Contemporary Issues in Trinitarian Theology*. This work contains a broad variety of diverse opinions on the matter.

The tendency to suggest that the Trinitarian revival was not as significant as many theologians thought is starting to appear in some writings such as Holmes (2011). Treier and Lauber (2009) take a more moderate stance in their collection of papers presented at the 2008 Wheaton Theology Conference on the practical, ecclesial implications of Trinitarianism. They encourage some revision of the enthusiasm with Trinitarian renewal, while not rejecting it completely.

Given the human condition, it is understandable that after fifty years or more of growing interest in Trinitarian theology which has brought the mystery of the Trinity back to the centre of theological reflection, people will begin to seek other ways of looking at events.

However what cannot be denied is the increase in publications of works on the Blessed Trinity from the 1960s on. Yet writings on the Trinity cannot be limited to books and

essays that deal with this topic exclusively. Emery and Levering (2012, p. 3) suggest the following general classification:

1. Some new treatises devoted exclusively to the Trinity such as those by Karl Barth, Michael Schmaus, Karl Rahner and Jürgen Moltmann.
2. Theologians who have placed the consideration of the Trinity at the heart of their dogmatic proposals. For example E. Jüngel, H. Von Balthasar, W. Pannenberg, R. Jenson. At a different level but with a similar perspective: W. Kasper, B. Sesboue, C. LaCugna, etc.
3. In recent decades many books and essays have dealt with one aspect or another of Trinitarian doctrine. For example Y. Congar, G. Fee, C. Journet, B. Studer, L. Ott, etc. Others have studied particular periods of the history of Trinitarian doctrine, such as T. Torrance, L. Ayres, M. Levering, A. Hunt, C. Gunton, etc.

I would add to this classification the following:

4. New short treatises, manuals or textbooks on the Trinity. For example, G. Emery, L. Ladaria, J.H. Nicolas, G. O' Collins, C. Schwöbel, E. McGrath, etc.
5. New books explaining the Blessed Trinity in simpler ways and how Christians can live the life of the Trinity here and now. For example J. Socias, L. Schroeder, L.A. James, R. Washington, R. LeBlanc, etc.
6. New series of re-editions of old works on the Trinity which publishing companies consider are culturally important in their original archival form. For example, A. Taylor (1923/2012); Philotriados (1714/2010); W. Sherlock (1691/2010); Anon (1697/2011); J. Boehme (1575-1624/2010), etc. These will be important sources for further research into Trinitarian doctrine from the historical perspective.

In my opinion the proliferation of publications related to the mystery of the Trinity over the last 60 years does indicate that there has been a renewal in the Christian understanding of the centrality of the Blessed Trinity in theological reflection and in the daily life of a Christian.

Unity and Diversity: origins and theological debate

As may be seen in my dissertation the reality of learning to live in a diverse socio-cultural context has been an on-going challenge for me from the time I relocated to Rome (1989) and particularly since my move to Kenya (2004). At the same time I have also reflected on some of the theoretical aspects of fostering unity in diversity during my study of ecumenical theology while doing my Masters, as I describe in Chapter Four. I learnt a lot from the lecturer and how he presented the ideas of *Unitatis Redintegratio* (Vatican Council II 1964) and *Ut unum sint* (John Paul II 1995) on ecumenism. These documents are considered to be important steps in the ecumenical theology of the Catholic Church in terms of how they explain the intricacies of seeking union while respecting the diversity of the various Christian churches (Flynn 2006, pp. 201-2; Murray 2011, pp. 278-9; p. 284; Kasper 2004). Even outside the Catholic tradition, the relevance of *Ut unum sint* (John Paul II 1995), along with *Orientalis Lumen* (John Paul II 1995) has been acknowledged (Carter 2010, p. 412). As I explain in Chapter Four, these ideas influenced my understanding of and my approach to diversity in my daily life in Rome and especially my first few years in Kenya. In Chapters Five and Six I discuss my adjustment to socio-cultural diversity more explicitly. My work experience with staff and students at Strathmore University was also, implicitly, an effort to adapt to diversity. The Unity and Diversity project which I designed for my students in February 2008 was a response to a specific socio-cultural need at the time as I explained in Chapter Eight (B). Hence my understanding of unity within diversity and the way I seek to foster it has both a theological and a socio-cultural foundation.

The origins of the idea of ‘Unity in Diversity’ are difficult to establish with exactitude. Hansen (2012, p. 34) in an article on church unity reaches back to classical antiquity, specifically to Plato (*Parmenides* 370 B.C.) and his distinction between the one and the many. This gives rise to the interplay of terms such as one and multiple, being and becoming, universality and particulars. I would say it also gives rise to the terms unity and diversity.

Hooker (1996) explains that the observation of the world of phenomena leads many cultures to believe that the infinity of things and their changes can ultimately be related back to a single object, material, or idea. The problem of finding the one thing that lies

behind all things in the universe is called the problem of the one and the many³⁵. If we assume that the universe is one in spite of the multiplicity of things which it contains, then there must be one unifying aspect behind everything. I would agree that this phenomenological approach of observation of the world, or the human person seems to indicate a oneness (or unity) which persists in spite of the plurality/many (or diversity) which the world and the human person exhibits. The nature of the unifying principle has been and continues to be a topic of debate in philosophy, the natural sciences, cultural studies, etc.

Hooker (1996) explains that Philosophy in the Western world begins with the earliest Greek philosophers who mainly concerned themselves with this question. Effectively the Pre-Socratic philosophers sought this unifying principle in material things such as water, air, fire and atoms. According to Hooker, as a result, the problem of the one and the many still dominates Western concepts of the universe, including modern physics, which has set for itself the goal of finding the theory that will "unify" the laws of physics.

On the other hand in China, the one thing that unifies the universe is the **tai chi**, or Great Ultimate. The Great Ultimate is divided into two opposite forces (yang and yin) and five material agents. Beyond this, the Great Ultimate is undefined. In Taoism, the "way" or Tao constitutes this Great Ultimate; it is equally undefined (Hooker 1996).

All this points to the natural human tendency to reflect on the world and our own experience in search of answers to the deepest questions about reality, as I discussed in Chapter One of my dissertation. I find a more profound answer to the question on the origin of unity and diversity in the Metaphysics of Aristotle and Aquinas. The source of unity in the real world is the act of being (*esse*) which all that exists must possess in order to exist. Our diversity lies in our essence or nature, which specifies our particular way of being, or existing. In each substance, or existing thing, we find both *esse* and essence, that is real act of being, which exists in a particular way thanks to the essence. In a sense, every existing thing resolves in itself the problem of achieving unity in diversity by the fact that it exists as the unique, diverse thing that it is, due to the act of being which makes it be. The greater difficulty appears when we look at the diversity of existing things, which all

³⁵http://www.faculty.umb.edu/gary_zabel/Courses/Phil%20281b/Philosophy%20of%20Magic/Dante.%20etc/Philosophers/Idea/www.wsu.edu_8080/~dee/GLOSSARY/ONEMANY.HTM

possess an act of being that individualises them, and ask how can these diverse realities co-exist in unity? In particular, how can human persons who, while possessing the same human nature, are so diverse amongst themselves live in unity?

This challenge becomes greater in the context of Christianity where people who claim to believe in the same God and in Christ, are divided amongst themselves into different denominations and churches. As Njoroge (2000) explains, the tensions and competitiveness between Protestant and Catholic missionaries in East Africa was a cause of scandal to non-Christians. Similar experiences in West Africa contributed to an initial cause of concern amongst Catholic and Protestants at the end of the nineteenth century. Parallel to this lack of unity amongst the missionaries in their territories, Protestant and Catholic theologians began to reflect on the same problem from the first half of the twentieth century. Over time, various proposals or ecumenical theories on how to achieve unity amongst all Christians developed.

The Lutheran Church functioned with the goal of achieving the organic unity of all Christians, ‘all in each place’ (Carter 2010, p. 411 quoting the 1961 New Delhi Statement) from 1961. In 1968 at Uppsala, the World Council of Churches was challenged to remain faithful to the principle of ‘conciliar fellowship’ which it had developed previously (Flynn 2006, p. 203, Note 28). In 1977 the World Lutheran Federation adopted the term ‘reconciled diversity’ to express the type of unity in diversity which it aimed to achieve (Flynn 2006, p. 203; Carter 2010, p. 411; Hansen 2012, p. 34). Carter explains the meaning of the term as follows:

a unity of previously divided denominations in mutual acceptance and communion in faith, life and mission, which would not, however, involve the renunciation of denominational traditions but would preserve them. Sometimes, this was envisaged simply as a step on the road to organic unity, sometimes as a longer-term development (Carter 2010, p. 411).

The term ‘reconciled diversity’ was brought into Catholic ecumenism by Yves Congar (1984). However it has given rise to debate in ecumenical circles as I will discuss below.

Subsequently in Catholic circles other concepts have appeared to express the ecumenical effort. In the early 2000s, the term ‘receptive ecumenism’ came into use (Flynn 2006, p. 208; Murray 2008; 2011, pp. 287-8, pp. 291-2; Carter 2010, pp. 417-8). The meaning of the term is explained most clearly by Murray who sees this ecumenical approach as giving

priority to how Catholicism, can be re-imagined in the light of its ecumenical others while retaining its integrity (Murray 2008, pp. 32-3 and pp. 39-40). As we continue walking towards more visible and structural unity in the ecumenical dialogue, we need to foster the positive attitude of learning from our 'ecumenical others' (Murray 2008, p. 37, p. 39, p. 42). This involves identifying out own weak points, at the individual and structural levels, and with an open, receptive approach, seeing what we can learn from other Christian churches which could help us to transform ourselves. Receptive ecumenism involves individual learning and growth along with communal, ecclesial conversion through learning from other traditions in ways which can help us to flourish (Murray 2008, p. 32). Murray holds that the evolution of Congar's thought over time from his earlier to his later ecumenical writings indicates that he was a forerunner of receptive ecumenism (Murray 2011, p. 284). He carries out a convincing analysis of three key texts by Congar which illustrates his awareness of the need for receptive ecumenical learning to enrich our understanding and meaning of concept of catholicity and that the Catholic ecumenical commitment must be linked to the willingness for Catholic reform (Murray 2011, p. 292). Murray shows how Congar explained the importance of Catholics taking the first step to reach out to other traditions, accept the other as other while striving to understand the other. This requires that we admit that the other may have a contribution to make to our own tradition and that we keep our mind open to this (Murray 2011, p. 296).

Murray refers to another concept which has developed more recently, 'spiritual ecumenism', which appears in the writings of Kasper (2004; 2006) and Rowan Williams (2003) and claims that it resonates with receptive ecumenism.

In a paper delivered at the Ninth Forum on Bilateral Dialogues organized by the Faith and Order Commission in 2009, Henn spoke about the Catholic vision of unity today. As well as referring to the apparent slowing down in the process of ecumenical dialogue, he highlights positive steps which have been taken in the ten preceding years. He then indicates three elements which he considers were learnt by the various traditions through the process of reaching the agreements he had referred to previously.

- a. Differentiated consensus: discovery that we agree on the same doctrine although we may use different terminology (Henn 2009, pp. 269-70, 273).

- b. Broadening perspectives: learning to view aspects of doctrine more widely by taking the other part's understanding of it into account (Henn 2009, p. 270).
- c. Re-reception: receiving or learning again some aspect of Church teaching in a new way through the process of ecumenical dialogue (Henn 2009, p. 270).

Henn concludes on a positive note:

The progress in understanding unity in faith by means of what has been called “differentiated consensus”, contextualization within a framework of the whole of doctrine and re-reception, along with deepening agreement about the nature and exercise of teaching authority within the Christian community, have opened the door to imagining new ways of overcoming divisions in faith and of appreciating the compatibility of unity with legitimate diversity (Henn 2009, p. 276).

In my opinion this text echoes somewhat the approach taken by ‘receptive ecumenism’. At the same time the three elements highlighted by Henn are compatible with the desire for ‘receptive learning’. Together they may offer hope in the ecumenical dialogue.

Gehlin (2010) reporting on a plenary meeting of the Faith and Order Commission (October 2009) explains that the Commission is still searching to understand the kind of unity it seeks (Gehlin 2010, p. 309, p. 315) with other Christian churches. It is also striving to understand the diverse nature of Christian unity and the difference between diversity and division in greater depth (Gehlin 2010, pp. 308-9, p. 311, p. 315). Gehlin concludes that through the 2009 meeting, the members of the Commission have developed a growing awareness that the aim is a unity that serves diversity and a diversity that serves unity (Gehlin 2010, p. 316). This report highlights the fact that in Protestant ecumenical circles, just as in Catholic ecumenical circles, there is ongoing debate about the nature of the unity in diversity which Christians wish to achieve.

Reconciled diversity in the Catholic context

Congar, one of the most important Roman Catholic ecumenical theologians took the term ‘reconciled diversity’ from the World Lutheran Federation and brought it into his work on *Diversity and Communion* (1984, p. 1, p. 4, p. 149; Flynn 2006, p. 203; Carter 2013, p. 412; Murray 2011, pp. 286-7). At this point he was seeking ways of achieving unity among Christians where there would be more space for their diversity. He refers to ‘pluralist unity’ or ‘reconciled diversity’ (1984, p. 1). He was trying the difficult task of combining a

recognition of the very real differences that exist among the Christian traditions with a true unity, without ignoring these differences, or settling for peaceful co-existence or falling into the trap of an apparent unity while significant differences of belief, structure and practice still existed (1984, pp. 2-4). Any of these possibilities would give rise to a false unity in diversity in the ecumenical context.

Congar sought a 'unity that allows for quite widespread diversity' and refers to 'reconciled diversity' in the Lutheran sense for the first time in this context (1984, pp. 3-4). He clarifies that the interpretation of the term by the World Council of Churches to support a conciliar community of diverse confessional groups which are structurally separate but coexisting alongside each other is inaccurate (1984, pp. 149-150). He explains that 'reconciled diversity' is not about simply agreeing to accept one another's diversities nor is it an homogenization or absolute unification which excludes diversity; neither of these cases would be true unity in diversity. Rather, he stresses that reconciled diversity involves assimilation of the truth possessed by the other, while excluding their exclusive diversity thus giving rise to unified or reconciled diversity (1984, p. 150). Congar explains that in 'reconciled diversity' the type of diversity involves partial expressions of greater, complex, multifaceted aspects of the One Truth. In this case the apparently contrasting positions simply express different aspects of reality, or different ways of looking at the same reality and so they are not mutually exclusive but rather, legitimate diversities. As such these diversities can exist in an all embracing unity giving rise to what he describes as an 'organic totality' (1984, p. 151).

Congar illustrates that his explanation of 'reconciled diversity' is in accordance with the genuine Lutheran understanding of the term by supporting his argument with an Appendix containing relevant Lutheran documents (1984, pp. 153-158). Commenting on these texts he insists that 'reconciled diversity' does not involve the 'persistence of the coexistence of separate confessional groups' (1984, p. 156). He also explains that reconciliation between the previously separate confessional groups will only be possible through a process of renewal and change at the heart of the different confessional identities (1984, p. 156). 'Reconciled diversity' requires the redefinition of the various confessions through dialogue (1984, p. 157). Evidently 'reconciled diversity' is not a simplistic or easy lumping together of confessional differences for the sake of achieving unity. Rather it is the outcome of a careful dialogue which allows the parties involved to clarify what they have in common

and their diversities, identify the nature of these differences and discern whether or not they are reconcilable through the One Truth. This involves a certain purification, redefining and renewing of each confessional tradition in a quest for unity through their diversity as Murray suggests (2008, p. 298). As Congar puts it, 'reconciled diversity' involves

Reconciliation and community through the vigorous affirmation of the other with his otherness redefined, in a way which shows its legitimacy (1984, p. 157).

Debate arose in ecumenical circles about the meaning of Congar's 'reconciled diversity' and the appropriateness of the concept in expressing the Catholic ecumenical intent. Some authors consider that Congar goes too far in endorsing diversity in Christian unity (Flynn 2003, p. 323-3). For Flynn the main concern is whether the term 'reconciled diversity' evades institutional/structural transformation in favour of the harmonious coexistence of separate confessional churches? (Flynn 2006, p. 203 and Note 28). Others approve of how Congar explains that differences largely remain within a restored unity and that he explains appropriately the unified multiplicity of the church (Jossua 1982 as quoted by Murray 2011). Murray is of the opinion that Congar gives the term 'reconciled diversity' an appropriate Catholic articulation, providing a challenging vision of expanded catholicity into which Roman Catholicism has yet to grow (Murray 2011, p. 301).

In my opinion, Congar's explanation and use of the term 'reconciled diversity' is a convincing model for ecumenical dialogue because he manifests respect for the diversity of the various confessional traditions, explains how the differences may be evaluated in terms of reconcilability with the Supreme Truth or otherwise, expresses sensitivity regarding the impact that the need for change, renewal and redefinition in the various traditions may have based on this type of dialogue and presents the possible ensuing unity as an organic totality that embraces legitimate diversity. His analysis is logical and respects the order of reality in which we find an underlying unity which brings together the wealth of diversity in which this unity is expressed. I see an analogy here with the mystery of the Blessed Trinity in which we find the real diversity of the three persons which subsists in the unity of the divine nature through their relational communion of love.

My understanding of Unity in Diversity as harmony

Regarding my understanding of Unity in Diversity as illustrated in a slide I used to explain the Unity in Diversity project of February 2008 to my students (Chapter Eight (8)), I explained that unity in diversity involves respecting and appreciating our mutual diversities while fostering unity amongst us all through loving every human person due to their intrinsic dignity. When I refer to ‘learning to value our diversity and conserve it by harmonizing our differences’ (Table 5) I mean that moved by love for unity we can find ways of living out our differences in a manner that fosters harmony (unity in diversity) amongst us all. The example of Gladys offering her agricultural knowledge due to her ethnicity, to someone from another ethnic group who would not appreciate agriculture, in order to help that person provide food for their family shows how we can use our differences to help one another and so create unity (Appendix P). I understand harmony as the fruit of diversity operating in unity. A harp is another good example. Each string has a different note or key. If it is not played well the different strings can produce a dreadful sound of disharmony. However, if the harp is well played and each string’s diversity is used appropriately wonderful, harmonious music may be heard.

During my Viva I said that the expression ‘reconciled diversity’ sounded strange. I understood the term, without knowledge of its origin, as “putting up with” or “bearing” diversity for the sake of a constructed unity. It sounded a bit false and as if there was no real appreciation for that diversity. This is why I said that when thinking about unity in diversity I preferred the term “harmony”. I already knew that I understood “harmony” as the blending of diversity in the sense that it is respected and positively used to foster unity. I now understand Congar’s use and explanation of the term ‘reconciled diversity’ and as I stated above, I think that it is a useful model for ecumenism in the way it brings together diversity in unity. However, beyond the field of ecumenism where the term may not be familiar, I would still prefer to use the idea of “harmony” to express my understanding of unity in diversity as I have explained it above. This is because, in my opinion, it would be easier for my students and other people to understand and relate to “harmony” than to “reconciled diversity”.

In a sense my understanding of harmony is linked to my use of the expression ‘spiration of love’, in that this concept also brings together unity and diversity as I will now explain.

Spiration of love

The expression “spiration of love” appears in the title of my dissertation because it is one of the living values which motivates my life and practice. The term is inspired in a technical concept which I have taken from Trinitarian theology. Emery defines “spiration” as follows:

Act of the Father and of the Son who “breathe” the Holy Spirit who proceeds; “common notion” of the Father and the Son inasmuch as they are the one principle of the Holy Spirit (that is to say: relation of the Father and of the Son to the Holy Spirit) (Emery 2011, p. 202).

The term expresses the eternal origin of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son as one principle within the intimate life of the Blessed Trinity. It highlights that the Father and the Son together form one single principle of the Holy Spirit as Augustine had explained earlier in his *De Trinitate* (1968, p. 223). In this context the term “spiration” appears for the first time in the teaching of the Catholic Church in a decree of the Second Council of Lyon (1274).

We profess faithfully and devotedly that the Holy Spirit proceeds eternally from the Father and the Son, not as from two principles, but as from one principle; not by two spirations, but by one single spiration (Tanner 1990, Vol. 1, p. 314).

Both the teaching and the term were repeated at the Council of Florence (1439).

The Holy Spirit proceeds from both (the Father and the Son) eternally as from one principle and by one single spiration (Tanner 1990, Vol. 1, p. 526).

The Council of Florence (1439) clearly stated that the Son receives the power to spirate the Holy Spirit from the Father as he is eternally generated by the Father (Tanner 1990, Vol. 1, p. 527). As a consequence we can say that the Holy Spirit is truly the Spirit of them both.

Thomas Aquinas used the term “spiration” to express the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son before it was employed in the Second Council of Lyon. In his *Commentary on the Sentences*, Book I he explains:

The Holy Spirit is said to be principally from the Father because the authority of spiration is in the Father, from whom the Son has spirative power (Aquinas 1929, *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum*, Bk. I, dist. 12, q. 1, a. 2, ad 3).

The term “spiration” is significant in that it expresses the reality of the diversity and unity of the three divine persons in Love. Based on the Augustinian idea that the Holy Spirit is the mutual love of the Father and the Son (Augustine 1991, 15.19.37), Aquinas explains that the Holy Spirit is the Love who proceeds from the Father and the Son (Aquinas 1946, ST I, q. 37, a. 1). The Father and the Son love each other in a common act of which the Holy Spirit is the personal “fruit”. As the Father loves the Son and the Son loves the Father, in the single act that the Son receives from the Father, together they spirate the Holy Spirit, the Love Person.

Father, Son and Holy Spirit as distinct persons (diversity), are all involved in the communication of the one divine love (unity) in the intimate life of the Trinity. At the same time, the Holy Spirit is mysteriously, that Love personified. As John Paul II expressed it in the Encyclical Letter *Dominum et Vivificatem*:

In his intimate life, God is love, the essential love shared by the three divine persons; personal love is the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of the Father and the Son (1983, *Dominum et Vivificatem*, n. 10).

Emery employs the term “spiration” in his explanation of the procession of the Holy Spirit as he refers to the writings of Aquinas among other author (2011, pp. 134-158).

I use the term “spiration of love” to express, by analogy, the communion of love which I try to establish with the different people I interact with, be they my students, members of staff, friends or family. For me the concept illustrates the personal diversity and distinction characteristic of each human being, along with the possibility of establishing loving relations amongst ourselves as persons.

Unity in Diversity in social discourse

Regarding social discussion, the idea of ‘Unity in Diversity’ is very broad in terms of the *loci* or contexts in which it may be found. From interorganizational unity and disunity and negotiation processes in sport (Crump 2005), to the use of Danish diversity management to analyse text-audience relations in rhetoric agency within theories of communication based on the fact that “unity in diversity has become a rallying call for organizations that strive to

‘reflect the composition of the population,’ see ‘difference as an asset,’ and aim to ‘innovate through multiplicity’” (Just and Christiansen 2012, p. 323). Forum discussions in anthropology which reflect diversity and unity of anthropological thought on human nature. Some thinkers note humans’ connection to other primates, and others emphasize our distinction from ancestral patterns. Several reflect on cultural change, globally and locally, while others problematize what we might mean by, and who we include in, a “human” nature (Fuentes et al. 2010; Cabrera 2011). Unity and diversity in the context of language and linguistics is another field of interest (Ilson 1985; Bowker 1996; Kraus 2000; Adamson 2008; Fitch 2011), along with the unity and diversity of the biological world (Starr et al. 2012). The theme of diversity and inclusion or unity in organizational theory to achieve business success is also common (Harung and Harung 1995; Ali 1998; Howe 2004; Smith 2007; Saz-Carranza and Ospina 2011; Thiederman 2013).

Other areas which show concern about unity and diversity issues are education (Holmes 1978; Brademas 1983; Carter and Vuong 1997; Parker 1997; Henzell-Thomas 2004; Spencer 2007; Kantor and Lowe 2007; qualitative research (Atkinson 2005); the universality of economic and cultural diversity (Bienaymé 2008); unity of knowledge and historical classification systems (Trompf 2011); the religious meaning of culture (Forte 2006; Manning 2013) and unity and diversity in Islam (Kosugi 1999; Kalin 2011) amongst other themes.

Marsella (2009) writes about diversity in the global era, rejecting the tendency of the West to impose its world view on existing or emerging nations from other geographical and cultural contexts. He highlights how this “global monoculturalism” leads to conflict in various forms as the ‘oppressed’ groups react. Marsella recommends education in world citizenship, global leadership, diversity education and training, positive attitudinal shifts, universal human rights, and the development of the full-functioning global citizen to promote and sustain global diversity and solidarity. He concludes

Different ethnocultural traditions represent different perceptual templates for experiencing and negotiating reality. Each opens us to a new and varied spectrum of possibilities for beliefs, values, and behaviors. Ethnocultural differences offer us choices to re-invent and re-define ourselves as individuals, societies, and nations. We can re-new ourselves again and again in different and meaningful ways not by running away from diversity, but by understanding its virtues. Life is diversity! Diversity is the very defining characteristic of life itself (Marsella 2009, p. 133).

These words resonate with me as they express my own experience of personal growth through my exposure to ethnocultural diversity. At the same time, they contain a profound truth regarding the real world. The natural world and human beings all manifest a radical unity of being, which we could call the act of being (*esse*) in Aristotelic terms, or the fact of existence, along with our diverse ways of being, which Aristotle and Aquinas would express as our essence (*essentia* = way of being real).

Marsella refers to cultural diversity, a theme which is also very present in the literature in various ways. For example, explanations of the diversity existing amongst the peoples of one nation or geographic region (Voll and Voll 1985; Lawton 1993; Pool 1997; Gottlob 2007; Lähdesmäki 2012); cultural diversity in relation to citizenship, cosmopolitanism, multiculturalism and interculturalism (Kelly 2002; Wikes et al. 2013; Delanty 2011; Touraine 2011; Meer and Modood 2012).

Kim (2012) provides an interesting analysis of three multicultural approaches to education and then proposes a model for multicultural religious education from a Trinitarian perspective. However the depth of explanation and the understanding of the mystery of the Trinity is weak (pp. 255-6) and quickly moves into a social Trinitarianism approach following Boff and LaCugna. The insights are interesting but the distinction between education, multicultural education, religious education and multicultural religious education is not clear (Kim 2012, pp. 258-9). The author does not distinguish between the educational setting and the general socio-cultural setting as the model is explained. At the same time there is no reference to having implemented this model in practice, which would be an interesting project in order to evaluate the validity of the theoretical proposal.

Wiredu (2005) offers interesting reflections from the African perspective on the unity amongst all peoples due to our rationality and our sense of morality. He then proceeds to discuss cultural diversity by identifying the elements of culture, and focuses on customs as the most significant distinguishing features of any culture. He argues that these customs are easily assimilated by other cultures, which could lead to greater cultural unity over time. He encourages cultural dialogue which can lead to cultural diversification, as long as the preservation of a culture is respected. The specific examples used to make his points are very enlightening regarding traditional African culture in general terms, although I would not personally agree with his interpretation of the idea of God in African religions.

He speaks from the perspective of Ghana and generalises, however I have often heard Africans insist that there are significant differences amongst the various ethnic communities in terms of their worldview and customs. As he is speaking to a non-African audience perhaps the generalizations are not too important.

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