INTERVIEW WITH JOSÉ PACHECO

9th November 2007, Braga, Portugal

JOSÉ: Your last book is about learning curriculum and life politics. What can you say about this book?

IVOR: There is a series of books called The World Library of Educationists so the first books were Elliot Eisner, who I think you know, and Howard Gardner followed by several other European people, so we have a good coverage of American and European top educationists. And the idea was to put a sort of top ten educational people into their collected works and I was asked to do that, to select my top twenty articles written over the last period of my life, so I decided to create a collection which looked at the three main things I am interested in, one is curriculum I have been working on that for thirty years, the second is my continuing interest in children’s learning, so there are a numb of articles in there about what the work on curriculum tells you about learning and then the third section which is the life politics in the title, so...

JOSÉ: Curriculum, learning children and life politics, the three main ideas of your work…

IVOR: Right. And life politics is looking at these things you and I have been talking about, the life and work of people and how that relates to what they do in their practise, so the teacher’s life works with their educational practise and their lives.

JOSÉ: Are you now publishing a new book? What is the title of the book?

IVOR: The title is Investigating the Teachers’ Life and Work and now will be published simultaneously in about six languages and maybe in Portuguese, we don’t know yet about that.

JOSÉ: Is it related to your research project?

IVOR: I have working on three different projects as the professional knowledge project which, maybe I should say that they are about studies in seven European countries, how teachers knowledge…. and… also the knowledge of others professional groups… how their professional knowledge relates to their lives and work, what they want to do in their lives.

JOSÉ: You wrote a book about professional knowledge, professional lives, what is the proposal or of this book?
IVOR: The proposal is that to understand... teachers knowledge and how teachers respond to government reforms... and this is a time of big government reforms everywhere in the world... to understand how teachers respond to reform, we have to understand their lives and work, by which I mean, what is their main idea of their lives, why did they want to teach, what is their life mission, what is their sense of vocation what sort of teachers are they...

JOSÉ: The 1980’s and the 1990’s were a time of government curriculum reforms?

IVOR: It was an important thing and you have to realise that of all of the reforms in the world, one of the first countries to try to reform teacher education and the curriculum was Great Britain, they were very much, you know, leading this reform, some of the reform I don’t like but...

JOSÉ: With Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan...

IVOR: Yes, but once you have... you have to understudy in economical terms... once you have what is called ‘Global Deregulation’...

JOSÉ: But the curriculum reform in the 80’s and the 90’s have two different directions, in Portugal a direction to decentralise reform based in the curriculum autonomy and in the United States, in the United Kingdom, the direction is to the national curriculum. Do you agree?

IVOR: Yes, that is right. It is a very interesting difference and I think it relates...and of course you have... had a movement related to the ‘Nation at Risk’ publication in America to try to get a more nationally organised curriculum in America so in both countries there is a centralising attempt, in other European countries, as you rightly said, is true... Scandinavia as well as Portugal... there is decentralising, however I would say that is because Britain and the United States came early to the new economic reforms and I think what is happening in other countries is they are slowly catching up with that moment, so the moment in Portugal now is the moment where there is more central activity, wouldn’t you say?

JOSÉ: Reading your books, we identify some influential names, for example Bernstein and Stenhouse.

IVOR: Yes, they are two major influences for me. Lawrence Stenhouse was a big influence for me, I knew him, when I went back to England it was to take out a similar professorship in the University of East Anglia.

JOSÉ: Has Stenhouse died?

IVOR: He died at in 1982 and he was 56... but we were at the University of East Anglia which is where I returned to...

JOSÉ: Is Stenhouse a known author in the United States?

IVOR: No. One of the things that always surprises me is that so far no English education people are known in America. I don’t think they get known in America... I don’t understand why...and Stenhouse was not known at all, and a lot of other