

Living Educational Theory Research CPD: Practitioners researching to improve the effectiveness of their global, values-laden, professional practice

A workshop presentation by Marie Huxtable¹ and Jack Whitehead² at the 2024 British Educational Research Association Conference, 10th September, Manchester, UK.

Focus

The focus will be on professional practitioners developing their professionalism and realising their professional responsibilities through Living Educational Theory Research (Whitehead, 1989, 2019), to improve their values-laden praxis (Huxtable, 2012) and contribute to: the evolution of a professional, international educational knowledgebase; the development of educational practice, policy and theory within their employing organisation/institution and; local, national and international discourses concerning the development and implementation of educational policies to have a profound and positive influence on society.

At a conceptual level, Living Educational Theory Research is a well-established distinct paradigm and methodology. At a practical level, Living Educational Theory Research is a form of professional practitioner educational research engaged in by a practitioner to realise their professional responsibilities to hold themselves to account for their practice and contribute the values-laden knowledge they generate in the process to take their field forward with values which carry hope for the flourishing of humanity.

The focus of the workshop will be on participants becoming acquainted with a Global, Living Educational Theory Research approach to Continual Professional Development (CPD) and the resources they can access for use subsequently. The global focus will include an engagement with the Dublin Declaration (2022), the Magna Charta Universitatum (MCU 2020) and the UNESCO (2021) report on the futures of education.

Suitability

The session format will be consistent with the principles of what constitutes educational practice. Participants will be invited into an educational research conversation to share and develop understandings of education as a values-laden life-long process, with professional and global implications for enhancing the flow of values of human flourishing. The conversation will draw on over 50 years engagement with educational research since the inception of BERA in 1974. This engagement will address the implications of making a clear distinction between Education Research and Educational Research. It will address issues raised by research in BERA on close to practice research, with a Living Educational Theory Research approach to continuing professional development. This includes educational research as a necessary component of explaining educational influence in learning with values of human flourishing.

Rigour and validity

Participants will be introduced to research methods developed by Living Educational Theory Researchers, such as 'empathetic resonance' to analyse digital data (Whitehead, 2010). The introduction will include a focus on the practicalities of professional practitioners testing and improving the rigour and validity of their explanations for their educational influences in learning. This will emphasise the importance of enhancing objectivity, based on intersubjective criticism, with the mutual rational controls of critical discussion.

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Significance

The significance of the workshop for developing educational practice, policy and theory will be clarified through dialogue focused on professionals developing their ability to enhance the educational effectiveness of their practice, theory and research and help others to do so too by engaging in Living Educational Theory approach as professional development (Huxtable & Whitehead, 2022, Whitehead, 2023). The dialogue will develop as workshop participants:

- Are introduced to an international community of like-minded professionals through their living-posters at <https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/posters/homepage2021.pdf>.
- Learn how they can contribute to the global educational knowledgebase and help others do so too.
- Learn about the significance of creating and making public valid accounts of their Living Educational Theory Research, which contribute for the realisation of BERA's "... vision is for educational research to have a profound and positive influence on society.
- Are introduced to Living Educational Theory Research as a transformational methodology and professional development and learn where they can access web-based resources. The resources include examples of how professional practitioner, working in diverse fields and cultural contexts, have engaged in Living Educational Theory Researcher as CPD, integrating knowledge created through education research and scholarship, and various research methods, such as those developed in Action Research, Narrative Enquiry and Auto-ethnography.
- Explore issues and questions, such as, 'What kind of data can help me to make judgments about the quality and effectiveness of my practice and clarify and communicate my embodied ontological and social values that form my explanatory principles and living standards of judgment?',
- Cooperate to extend their own educational research literacy (Boyd, Szplit & Zbróg, 2021, 2022) and that of the group. This literacy involves both understanding the contributions that research can make to improving practice and to generating a values-laden explanation of educational influences in one's own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations that form the global context of the practice.
- Are shown how to explicate the unique constellation of values, which provide their professional motivations, explanations and evaluative standards for their professional practice.

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