International Teaching and Learning and Technology Enhanced Learning with a Living Educational Theory Research Approach to Professional Development.

A presentation at the Solstice/CLT Conference on the 12-13th June 2024 at Edge Hill University

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Summary

This presentation has evolved from previous Visiting Professor, Solstice/CLT presentations on: *'Using technology globally in evidence-based pedagogic research in living-educational-theories'* (Whitehead, 2023); *'Researching your educational influences in teaching and learning'* (Whitehead, 2022); *'Generating living-educational-theories in enhancing evidence-based educational practitioner, pedagogic research'* (Whitehead, 2021); *'An educational response to teaching, learning and assessment in the time of the pandemic'* (Whitehead, 2020).

This year's evolution is focused on the content of two books, Delong & Whitehead (2023) on *You and Your Living-Educational-Theory: How to conduct a values-based inquiry for human flourishing* and Whitehead & Huxtable (2024) on *Living Educational Theory Research as an Epistemology for Practice: The Role of Values in Practitioners' Professional Development.* It includes a transformative response to the 2024 definition of professionalism from the Chartered College of Teaching (Müller and Cook 2024). It is intended as a contribution to discussions on 'Global Citizenship Education and the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Westheimer, 2020).

A definition of professionalism is offered that is grounded in the creation and sharing, by professionals, of their valid, evidence-based and values-laden explanations of their educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of social formations within which their practice is located, with values of human flourishing. The explanations include those generated from international teaching and learning and technology enhanced learning with a Living Educational Theory Research Approach to professional development.

This presentation is focused on the forms of representation we can use in explanations of enhancing the professionalism of educational practitioners as we ask, research and answer questions of the kind 'How do I improve my educational practice'. It is based on a view of professionalism that includes our educational responsibility to research such questions and to contribute the educational knowledge we generate to the global knowledge-base of education as we engage in our own continuing professional development

I am asking you to consider the implications of developing a new collective imaginary (Drewell & Larsson, 2019) for grounding our contributions, as participants in Solstice/CLT conferences at Edge Hill University, in developing a view of professionalism that is grounded in explanations of the professional learning and development of doctor educators. I am

thinking of a view of professionalism that enhances the flow of values of human flourishing, through the generation and sharing of the living-educational-theories that are being created and shared through researching professional development and learning. A living-educational-theory uses each professional practitioner's unique constellation of values, as explanatory principles in their explanations of their educational influences, in their own learning in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations within which their practice is located.

Introduction

I shall begin by identifying ideas on professionalism, from Müller and Cook (2024) of the Chartered College of Teaching, with which I agree. I shall then focus on what I see as limitations in their working definition of professionalism before offering a Living Educational Theory Research approach that overcomes these limitations. Müller and Cook (2024) accept Mezza's (2022) model with amendments that focus on: the concept of 'practice-informed theory' to highlight the importance of recognising teacher expertise as an essential aspect of evidence-informed practice; a commitment to teacher wellbeing and mental health; authority, prestige, esteem and status sit outside Mezza's Venn diagram.

In creating an alternative to this representation, of their working definition of professionalism, I draw on Eisner's ideas. Eisner (1988) emphasised the primacy of experience and the politics of method in researching educational practices. He emphasised the importance of different forms of understanding in the future of educational research (Eisner 1993) and examined the problems and perils of alternative forms of data representation (Eisner, 1997).

I offer a Living Educational Theory Research approach to professionalism from the living-educational-theories of educators as an alternative to this representation. The alternative is grounded in analyses of the professional learning and development of educators. These can include digital visual data from the educational practices of professionals who are engaged in professional development and learning inquiries of the kind, 'How do I improve my educational influences of my professional practice with values of human flourishing?'. These include the generation of valid, evidence-based and values-laden explanations of the educational influences of the professional in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formation that is the context of their practice and those who comprise it.

In offering this view of professionalism I draw on my 2023 Solstice/CLT presentation on 'Using technology globally in evidence-based pedagogic research in living-educational-theories' (Whitehead, 2023). That presentation focused on a process of communication that was intended to captivate your imaginations in using technology globally in generating evidence-based explanations of your educational influences in learning and teaching in higher education. This, in turn, evolved from previous Solstice presentations on: 'Researching your educational influences in teaching and learning' (Whitehead, 1922), on 'Generating living-educational-theories in enhancing evidence-based educational practitioner, pedagogic research' (Whitehead, 2021) and on 'An educational response to teaching, learning and assessment in the time of the pandemic' (Whitehead,2020). The

evolution included the use of technology in generating living-educational-theories in pedagogic, community-based educational research in different cultural contexts in the UK, USA, India, Nepal and South Africa. In particular the technology included the use of digital visual data and a process of empathetic resonance to clarify and communicate the embodied expressions of values of human flourishing (Huxtable, 2009; Whitehead, 2010; Delong & Whitehead, 2023) These values are used as explanatory principles in explanations of educational influences in learning. I include my own story of my professional learning and development, as a professional educator, to support my case for this alternative form of representation of professionalism to that proposed by the Chartered College of Teaching.

Between 1973 – 2012 I developed a Living Educational Theory Approach to professional development. During this time I supervising to successful completion over 30 living-educational-theory doctorates and 40 masters degrees, in which individual practitioners generated their evidence-based and values-laden explanations of their educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations within which their practice was located. In 1999 I was awarded my doctorate from the University of Bath for my thesis, 'How do I improve my practice? Creating a discipline of education through educational enquiry'. In 2023 I was awarded my D.Litt. degree (honoris causa) from the University of Worcester for my contributions to a Living Educational Theory Research approach to professional development.

I shall now introduce the model of professionalism proposed in a 2024 working paper from the Chartered College of Teachers on Teacher Professionalism (Müller & Cook, 2024) before offering a different, Living Educational Theory Research approach to teacher professionalism. This draws on validated knowledge generated by professionals to explain their own professional learning and development as they research the educational implications of asking, and answering questions of the kind, 'How do I improve the educational influences of my professional practice with values of human flourishing?' This knowledge includes the original contributions of Mounter (2024) and the living-educational-theories of professional educators in Ireland (Glenn, 2006; Sullivan, 2006; McDonagh, 2007; Roche, 2007) who formed and are helping to sustain the Network of Educational Researchers in Ireland (NEARI). These contribute to an International understanding of teaching and learning and technology enhanced learning with a Living Educational Theory Research Approach to professional development.

A model of professionalism

Müller and Cook (2024) offer the following diagrammatic representation of professionalism:
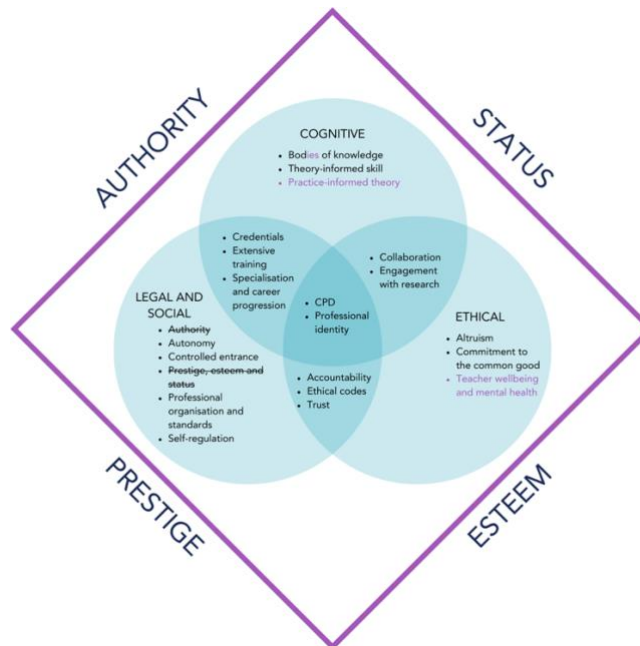
Working definition of professionalism (adapted from Mezza, 2022) (p. 16)

I agree with the following changes to Mezza's model:

> One of the changes to Mezza's model is to expand it with the concept of 'practice-informed theory' to highlight the importance of recognising teacher expertise as an essential aspect of evidence-informed practice. Furthermore, and as proposed above, we suggest that the plural of 'bodies' of knowledge be used instead of the singular so as to highlight the importance of listening to multiple voices, especially those who are traditionally underrepresented. This will support the development of more equitable teaching practices.

> In the ethical domain, we believe that altruism and a commitment to the greater good need to be balanced with a commitment to teacher wellbeing and mental health in order to make teaching more sustainable and improve teacher retention.

> Finally, we propose that authority, prestige, esteem and status sit outside the Venn diagram itself as we perceive them to be outcomes of the mechanisms described within the model rather than mechanisms that are restricted to the social and legal domains. If teachers receive high-quality initial and continuous training opportunities, are encouraged to engage critically with research evidence and collaborate with their peers and given the autonomy to take the decisions that work best for them and their students, teaching will likely develop into a prestigious, highly-esteemed profession where professionals want to stay.

In creating an alternative to the above model, I draw on Eisner's (1988, 1993, 1997) ideas on the primacy of experience and the politics of method (1988), on forms of understanding and the future of educational research (1993) and the promise and perils of alternative forms of data representation.

In advocating an alternative form of data representation, to that used in the model of professionalism above from the Chartered College of Teaching, I begin with the following digital representations of the educational practices of professions. These professionals are engaged in professional development and learning inquiries of the kind, 'How do I improve my educational influences of my professional practice with values of human flourishing.

Such digital visual data from professional, educational practice, are a fundamental part of my case for generating an alternative to the model of professionalism proposed by the Chartered College of Teaching.

Digital visual representations of professional, educational practice

The first example is a still image and 1:16 hour video of the symposium presentations, presented at the 2023 Conference of the Collaborative Action Research Network Conference with the title, 'Educational responses to reaching out to people and communities with Action and Living Educational Theory Research.' (Delong, et al., 2023). The presenters at the Symposium, Clockwise - from top left - Jacqueline Delong, Jack Whitehead, Mairin Glenn, Michelle Vaughan, Tara Ratnam.


The video can be accessed from: https://youtu.be/kGj9NS6Zsmc

The educational responses presented in this symposium have evolved over several years. They include three symposia at the American Educational Research Association on educational responsibility (Delong et al. 2021), equity (Delong et al. 2022) and consequential educational research (Delong et al. 2023). They include the educational responses from the 2022 CARN Symposium on 'Changing Lives through Action Research and Living Educational Theory Research in Cultures of Inquiry' and the 2023 CARN Symposium on 'Talking locally connecting globally across the living boundaries of cultures of inquiry.' The educational responses are focused on the epistemological contributions of generated individual and community-based explanations of educational influences in learning with values of human

flourishing. The importance of combining individual explanations, with community generated explanations, has relevance for collaborative action research, with their units of appraisal, standards of judgment and living-logics that define the rationalities of the explanations.

The explanations are influenced by cultural influences from Canada, Republic of Ireland, USA, India and UK. The relationally dynamic values, that form explanatory principles in the explanations of educational influences in learning include Delong's research on international mentoring and Cultures of Inquiry, Glenn's research on sharing school-based research, Vaughan's research on giving voice to teacher researchers, Ratnam's research on excessive entitlement and best-loved self and Whitehead's research on the generation of living-educational-theories with values of human flourishing. Through their collaborative research they also share their community generated explanations of educational influences with their values of human flourishing as they explore researching and answering their real-world questions, 'How do I/We improve my/our professional practices?'

Mounter (2024) has examined the literature on Living Educational Theory Research and revealed a limitation in understanding the explanatory principles that can explain educational influences in the learning of social formations. Vaughan et al. (2024) have clarified a new collective, educational imaginary for Living Educational Theory Research with values of love and care as explanatory principles for explaining educational influences in the learning of social formations. This collective, educational imaginary includes the unique constellation of the values of individuals together with relationally dynamic values that hold individuals in working together within a culture of inquiry. Delong & Whitehead (2023) have explained how to conduct a values-based inquiry for human flourishing whilst Whitehead and Huxtable (2024a) have explicated an Epistemology for Practice from Living Educational Theory Research. Mounter (2024) has responded to the limitation in Living Educational Theory Research by proposing a new representation for the relationally dynamic values that can explain educational influences in the learning of social formations. Mounter's representation of these explanatory principles transforms the linear representation of ~i~we~I~us~ relationships into their non-linear representation. The ~ (tilde) represents relational nurturing responsiveness deepening over time to nurturing connectiveness of educational influences in learning. The problem with the linear representation is that we read from left to right and the linear representation can give the false impression of a movement from left to right. The non-linear representation is intended to correct this mistaken perception (Whitehead & Huxtable, 2024b). This non-linear representation of explanatory principles in educational influences in professional learning is directly relatable to the digital visual data representation of professional practice and learning.
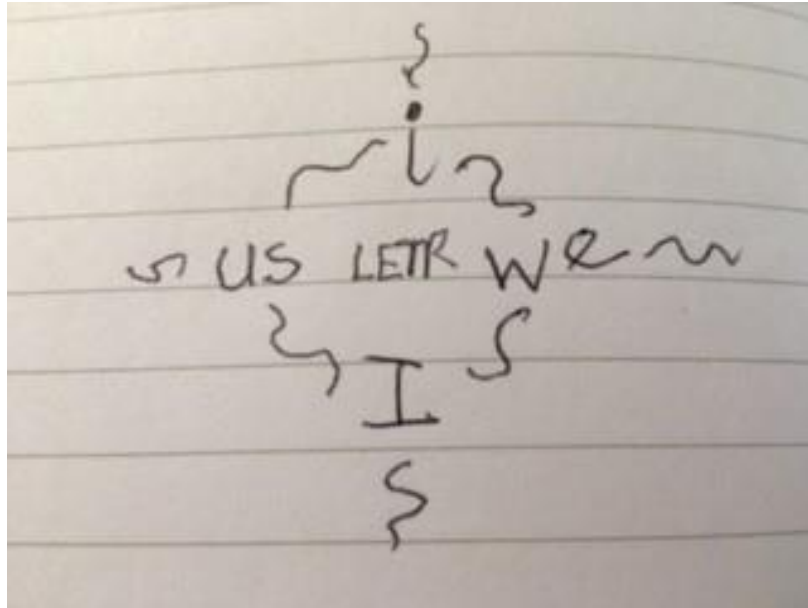
I do urge you to access Mounter's (2008) paper on 'Understanding Learning and Learners assignment, Can children carry out action research about learning, creating their own learning theory?' This was co-created with her 6 year olds pupils as they responded to their learning experiences with Thinking Actively in a Social Context (TASC) in which their talk:

> …about theories had awakened a keen need to begin planning and articulating their ideas to form a learning theory of our own. Following the idea that TASC meant something when you looked at each letter, the children talked in pairs for a special word of their own to summarise the learning theory. I was amazed as 'A' suggested the word 'Quiff', quite quickly. The children liked the sound of the word and began thinking what the individual letters could stand for, just like in TASC. They didn't have to argue or even debate ideas, they quickly agreed and all ideas seemed to come from the group almost as a collective mind.

Q 'questions we all have to ask to learn'

U 'understand – making sense of things around us and ourselves which is harder'

I 'I am important'

F 'feelings' so important as a learner
F 'focus' to be able to concentrate and persevere

Mini disc recording of the children talking about their developments for the TASC Wheel
The video-clip has been separated into a clip of the children responding to a question about the usefulness of the TASC Wheel and a clip of them responding to a question about what they think of the TASC Wheel.
You can access the clip:

'What use is the TASC Wheel?'

at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hH2-5xexbAQ

and you can access the clips:
'What do you think of the TASC Wheel?'

at:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ti4syOrIDdY

and at:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LSqg1phEEaM

The understanding of professional learning and development offered in this presentation is grounded in the valid, evidence-based and values-laden explanations of educational influences in learning of doctor educators such as Mounter. I am also offering a collective, educational imaginary of the Network Educational Action Research Ireland (NEARI, 2024) to show how the creators of the network, developed their original doctoral contributions to Living Educational Theory Research (Glenn, 2006; Sullivan, 2006; McDonagh, 2007; and Roche, 2007) into a Special Interest Group of the Educational Studies Association of Ireland (ESAI).

> NEARI is for all educational action researchers, whether beginners or lifelong researchers. It is a platform for sharing research stories and provides opportunities

for personal and critical engagement as well as for resource sharing, It links action researchers within Ireland and with the broader global action research communities. Please check the **NEARI Ethics Statement** at http://eariblog.edublogs.org/neari-network-for-educational-action-research-in-ireland/neari-ethical-statement/.

NEARI people come together to share the story of their learning in various institutions three times a year and these meetings (**NEARIMeets**) are held at the goodwill of hosting institutions and members. The members of the network are mainly people who are involved in self-study action research and/or practitioner research. They communicate regularly through their discussion group and website (http://www.eari.ie/)

You can access the technological innovations of digital visual data from the NEARI Meet of the 16th September 2023 to see the relational dynamic between participants at http://www.eari.ie/2023/10/11/notes-from-autumn-nearimeet-29-september-2023/. Whitehead & Huxtable (2023) have explained, in a presentation to the Educational Studies Association of Ireland, the importance, for Educational Research and Living Educational Theory Research, of explicating the values that distinguish something as educational. Whitehead presented to the NEARIMeet of the 2nd April 2022, on 'Critical Reflection in Educational Practice', This presentation built on the NEARIMeet of the 29th January 2022 (see the notes at http://www.eari.ie/2022/02/08/notes-from-nearimeet-29-january-2022/) with its theme of Transforming Practices. Kemmis (2022) provided the keynote with ideas from his book on 'Transforming Practices'. I explored the implications of including 'educational' in Critical and Creative Reflection in Educational Practice for members of NEARI, whilst working from a different educational perspective to that offered by Kemmis. I agreed with Kemmis' idea that:

> Once education systems and the work of schools are conceptualised principally in systems terms, their essential *lifeworld* character, their grounding in the everyday life of people's lifeworld is obscured and then ignored... Obscuring and ignoring these lifeworld processes, many PEP (Pedagogy, Action and Praxis) researchers argue, is to obscure and ignore the very substance of the process of education. Neoliberal approaches to educational systems management throw the baby of education out with the bathwater. (p.28)

My different 'educational' perspective is focused on the generation and sharing of living-educational-theories, with values of human flourishing as explanatory principles in explanations of educational influences in learning and as embodied, evaluative standards of judgment. A living-educational-theory is an individual's explanation of their educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations within which the practice is located (Whitehead, 1989). Such explanations help individuals to answer questions of the kind, 'How do you know that your practice has improved?' and 'what standards of judgement do you use to justify a claim that your practice has improved?'.

This perspective is related to Ciara O'Brien's account, to the NEARIMeet of the 29th January 2022, in her research into her practice and the solutions that emerged as she spoke about 'Finding the way with Critical Reflection'.

My focus on critical reflection in educational practice can also be understood as a response to the recent publication in Irish Educational Studies, on 'Exploring trans-generational and trans-institutional learning: educational action research possibilities in a virtual environment', by Bernie Sullivan, Caitriona McDonagh, Cornelia Connolly, Máirín Glenn & Mary Roche (2022):

> We explain the generation of a living-educational-theory from the research community, which was convened by the authors. We have created both a face-to-face and an online professional development community of action researchers...

> The original contribution of this paper is the creation of an open and shared learning community to support action research practitioners in their processes of accessing, collaborating in and undertaking research. The significance of our paper is in the emergence of socially constructed knowledge in a fluid and flexible space that is underpinned by our lived values of inclusion and respect. (Sullivan et al., 2022, p.1)

Rather than the above model of professionalism proposed by Müller and Cook (2024) I am suggesting that an understanding of professionalis should be based on visual digital data from the professional practice, learning and development of professionals, such as this image below and the video from which it was taken:
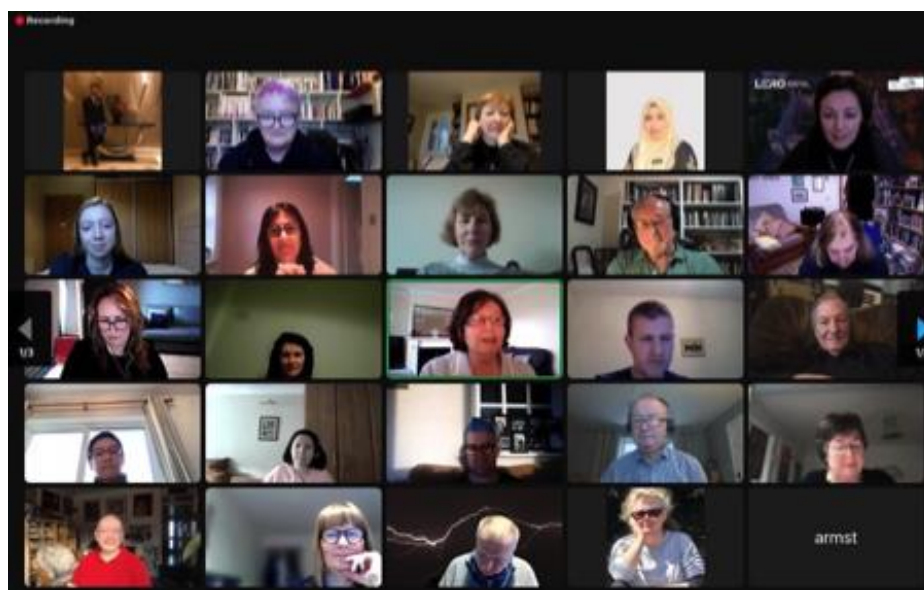
 Projecting ourselves into a future, with the purpose of bringing into being a world we want to live in, involves living as fully as we can values of human flourishing in creating a new collective, educational imaginary. I am suggesting that participants, in NEARIMeets, in the ESAI, NEARI SIG, and in

our Solstice/CLT meetings at Edge Hill University could develop a language, with the help of digital visual data, to share meanings of the expression of their embodied values that bring them together as a community (Whitehead & Huxtable, 2022) of global citizens and educational researchers. I am also suggesting that this sharing of meanings could take place in a way that enhances your original contributions to educational knowledge in the process of improving your professional educational practice. Rather than using the model of professionalism proposed by Müller and Cook (2024) I am suggesting that we ground our understanding of professional learning and developing in the creation and sharing of our own living-educational-theories that draw on insights from the living-educational-theories of others and insights from the conceptual frameworks and methods of validation of other disciplines of education.

For example, I think that we all have much to learn from Glenn's (2007) doctoral research as she developed her epistemology of practice to explain her educational influences in learning. In developing your own living-educational-theory of your professional learning and development I think that you might use insights from Glenn's research as she came to see: the interconnectedness of people and their environments as a locus of learning which may be embraced through technology; developing a living theory of a holistic educational practice, through collaborative multimedia projects, with evidence grounded in the multimedia narrative of a research account. I think the final paragraph of Glenn's abstract below deserves repeating because of its significance:

> A distinctive feature of my research account is my articulation of how my ontological values of love and care have transformed into my living critical epistemological standards of judgement, as I produce my multimedia evidence-based living theory of a holistic educational practice. Through working with collaborative multimedia projects, I explain how I have developed an epistemology of practice that enables me to account for my educational influences in learning.

Glenn's Abstract:

> This thesis is the narrative account of my research programme that has enabled me to make my original claim to have developed a living epistemology of practice that is grounded in dialogical, holistic and creative ways of knowing. From my belief that each individual is capable of developing their potential for learning and knowledge creation, I have come to see the interconnectedness of people and their environments as a locus of learning which may be embraced through technology.

> Through my research I have developed my capacity for critical engagement, especially in relation to critiquing many normative practices in dominant forms of education; specifically in terms of their underpinning technical rational ontologies and epistemologies of fragmentation. My original contributions to knowledge are to do with how I show that I can account for how I have transformed my own erstwhile fragmented epistemologies into holistic and inclusional forms of knowing and practice. From the grounds of my research-based practice, I am able to make my original claim

that I have developed my living theory of a holistic educational practice, through collaborative multimedia projects, and I ground my evidence in the multimedia narrative of my research account.

A distinctive feature of my research account is my articulation of how my ontological values of love and care have transformed into my living critical epistemological standards of judgement, as I produce my multimedia evidence-based living theory of a holistic educational practice. Through working with collaborative multimedia projects, I explain how I have developed an epistemology of practice that enables me to account for my educational influences in learning.

In creating our living-educational-theories, of our professional learning and development, we could project ourselves, as a community, into a future that enhances the flow of values that carry hope for the flourishing of humanity. In creating this future we will be contributing to transforming our world through global citizenship education and the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Westheimer, 2020). In the future NEARIMeets, participants could show how we are living our educational responsibilities, as fully as we can, in researching questions such as, 'How do I improve what I am doing in my educational practice and helping others to do so too?' I am thinking of contributions such as that being made by Michael Russell (2021), in his doctoral research on 'Privileging Tacit Knowledge within a Software Engineering Curriculum: A Living Educational Theory of Practice,' at Maynooth University; Merna Mayer (2019) in her doctoral research on 'Becoming participatory artists, researchers and teachers: my living theory of Art Education.' and Swaroop Rawal (2024) through her post-doctoral work in writing India's new school curriculum with insights from her research into life-skills education.

In concluding my 2024 Visiting Professor address on International Teaching and Learning and Technology Enhanced Learning with a Living Educational Theory Research Approach to Professional Development, I have looked back over my professional engagement in education (Whitehead 1966-2024) and drawn your attention to the educational knowledge I have contributed to in researching my own professional learning and development. I have looked forward with the potential of a model of professionalism that is grounded in the creation and sharing, by professionals, of their valid, evidence-based and values-laden explanations of their educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of social formations within which their practice is located, with values of human flourishing. You can follow my educational research into my own professional learning and development with its beginning in my first study on professionalism on my initial teacher education course (Whitehead, 1967). For the following 57 years of professional engagement it includes my Masters' Degree (Whitehead, 1972), my Doctoral Degree (Whitehead, 1999) and my D.Litt. Degree (Whitehead, 2023). I hope that you can see and evaluate these contributions as possible contributions to your own living-educational-theories of professional learning and development, with values of human flourishing. If I am fortunate in being able to give my 2025 Visiting Professor address to our SOLSTICE/CLT Conference I might be able to show that we have engaged in educational conversations through which we can show the evidence that we are learning from our personal and international engagements how to enhance our educational influences in

technology enhanced teaching and learning as we contribute to enhancing professionalism in education. If you would like to engage in such educational conversations you might find useful the questions and answers on Living Educational Theory Research at
 http://www.spanglefish.com/livingtheory/index.asp?pageid=712048 on:

What is Living Educational Theory Research?
What is your interest?
Why do Living Educational Theory Research.

The kind of response I have in mind is that provided by Dr. Brian Williamson and Dr Suresh Nanwani in their powerpoint slides for a seminar on Living Educational Theory at the University of Bolton at
https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/bolton/LETseminaruofb220524.pdf

I also have in mind the kind of response made by Mounter (2024) in her doctoral thesis on 'A Living Educational Theory Research Approach to Continuing Professional Development in Education'. Whilst drawing insights from a Living Educational Theory Research approach to professional development, Mounter reveals a limitation in explanations of educational influences in the learning of social formations, before presenting an original contribution that explains how to overcome the limitation.

If you would like to participate in this conversation do please contact me at
jack@livingtheory.org

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