

# **Identifying and Meeting the Professional Needs of Teachers with Living Educational Theory Research**

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# Abstract

## **Identifying and Meeting the Professional Needs of Teachers with Living Educational Theory Research**

A Living Educational Theory Research approach to professional development is used by professional-practitioners to research their practice to understand and improve it, and generate evidence-based, values-laden, explanations for 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.

The conference questions, about teachers' expectations, their satisfaction levels, and the consequences of unmet needs, provide a framing for the discussion.

The importance of recognising the relationship between a teacher's embodied professional values of human flourishing, the contextual pressures they experience, and how they can productively work with those tensions to improve education, is highlighted.

Research accounts are drawn on to illustrate how this approach helps educators in Europe, and worldwide, to identify and meet their professional needs, and help others do so too.

# The purpose of this presentation

1. To introduce you to Living Educational Theory Research
2. To show you how Living Educational Theory Research has enabled contemporary teachers working in diverse contexts to realise their values-laden responsibilities as professional-practitioners to contribute to learning with values of human flourishing
3. To motivate you to explore the use of a Living Educational Theory Research approach to identify and meet your professional needs as a contemporary teacher and provide you with links to communities of practice and resources to support you

# Our research and practice:

Our research and practice has been focused on spreading knowledge, understanding and practice of Living Educational Theory Research to :

- Support professional-practitioners realise their humanitarian values-laden responsibilities for:
  - the consequences of their practice by researching it and
  - contributing the knowledge they generate in the process to a global educational knowledgebase all can benefit from.
- Contribute to the development of education, research and pedagogical practices with values of human flourishing, by teacher and teacher educators, “to ensure that education truly transforms lives in the world” (Education 2030 Incheon Declaration, p.70)

Our publications and presentations can be accessed from:

Jack’s website <https://actionresearch.net/>

Marie’s website <http://www.spanglefish.com/mariessite>

## Our assumptions

- You are professional-practitioners, working as teachers, who want to make a difference to people learning to flourish and help others to do so too, (White 2007) and contribute to Humanity flourishing as a benign presence in the world
- You are faced with waves of innovation, fresh forms of accountability and pressure to 'deliver' 'results' which makes it difficult for you to keep a focus on making a difference to your pupils/students learning that is important to you.

White, J. (2007) What schools are for and why. Impact No. 14. London; Philosophy of Education Society. Great Britain.



# Living Educational Theory Research (Whitehead, 1985)

- ... is a form of professional practitioner educational research.
- It is used by practitioners to address questions of the form, ‘how do I improve my practice?’ with the intention of improving the learning of individuals and social formations to flourish, help others do so too, and contribute the validated knowledge generated in the process to a global educational knowledgebase; a “... reservoir of the best that has been known and thought” (Said, pp. xii-xiv, 1993) of a world of human flourishing.
- The knowledge contribution includes accounts by professional-practitioners of their living-educational-theory, which is a valid explanation by the practitioner-researcher for their educational influence in their own learning, the learning of others, and the learning of the social formation that is the context of their practice.

# Living Educational Theory Research

**‘Education’ is recognised globally and locally as a values-laden process :**

Education is a human right and a force for sustainable development and peace. Every goal in the 2030 Agenda requires education to empower people with the knowledge, skills and values to live in dignity, build their lives and contribute to their societies. (UNESCO, 2016)

Global Education is education that enables people to reflect critically on the world and their place in it; to open their eyes, hearts and minds to the reality of the world at local and global level... It involves respect for human rights and diversity, inclusion, and a decent life for all, now and into the future. (A European Strategy Framework for Improving and Increasing Global Education in Europe to the Year 2050’ (GE 2050, 2022, p.1)





# Living Educational Theory Research and a living-educational-theory

- At a conceptual level, Living Educational Theory Research is an academically well-established, professional practitioner educational research, paradigm and methodology.
- At a practical level, it is the process that a practitioner engages in to create their own living-educational-theory, as they research into their practice to understand, improve and explain it.
- A living-educational-theory is the term coined by Whitehead in the 1980s for a valid, values-laden explanation, generated by a practitioner for their educational influence in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations, which form the context of the practice

# What distinguishes *educational* meaning of education.

Education as a life-long process of learning

- to lead a life that is personally flourishing and
- to help others to flourish too.

Education as a life-long values-laden practical activity

...values which carry hope for the flourishing of Humanity, such as expressed in by the International Cooperative Movement and in the meanings of Ubuntu and Ikigai

“What is the goal of education?” he would ask, “When all is said and done, we want [...] to grow up to be decent human beings, a ‘mensch’, a person with compassion, commitment, and caring.” (Ginnot, 1972, p.10)

# How Living Educational Theory Research has enabled contemporary teachers working in diverse contexts to realise their values-laden responsibilities as professional-practitioners to contribute to learning with values of human flourishing

critically and creatively engage with the work of others Improve their educational learning and expertise in the field of their practice, as they

- Hold themselves to account for the consequences of what they do, by continually seeking data to enable them to understand, improve and evaluate the educational, values-focused influence of they are having
- contribute to the social formations realising all their raisons d'être which are the context of realising its values-based purposes
- enjoy the pleasure that comes with realising your educational values as fully as you can in practice in a researching Community of Practice in a local and global real world



# Education – what's in a word?

On the first day of the new school year, all the teachers in one private school received the following note from their principal.

Dear Teacher,

I am a survivor of a concentration camp. My eyes saw what no man should witness:

Gas chambers built by *learned* engineers.

Children poisoned by *educated* physicians.

Infants killed by *trained* nurses.

Women and babies shot and burned by *high school* and *college* graduates.

So, I am suspicious of education. My request is: help your students become human. Your efforts must never produce learned monsters, skilled psychopaths, educated Eichmanns.

Reading, writing and arithmetic are important only if they serve to make our children more human. (Ginott, 1972, p.317)

# What gives teachers satisfaction?

What gives teachers satisfaction – making a positive difference to people’s lives – not only the ability of people to economically prosper but also their ability to live humanely, satisfying, productive worthwhile lives, help others do so too and contribute to Humanity flourishing as a benign presence in the world.

Examples from <https://actionresearch.net> and <https://ejolts.net> :

- Joy Mounter (UK) – educator - ‘*A Living Educational Theory Research approach to professional development*’ (see <https://www.actionresearch.net/living/2024MounterPhd.pdf>)
- Samantha Kahts-Kramer (South Africa) – Higher Education lecturer and educator - *From “participation” to “transformative participation”: My living-educational-theory of Facilitating Transformative Continuing Professional Development*. (see <https://web-cdn.org/s/1445/file/node/17-1.pdf>):
- Swaroop Rawal (India)– educator – ‘*The Role Of Drama In Enhancing Life Skills In Children With Specific Learning Difficulties In A Mumbai School: My Reflective Account*’ (see <https://www.actionresearch.net/living/rawal.shtml>)
- Sadruddin Bahadur Qutoshi (Pakistan) – teacher educator. His doctorate on ‘*Creating Living-Educational-Theory: A Journey Towards Transformative Teacher Education in Pakistan*’, awarded in 2016 by the University of Kathmandu, Nepal (see <https://www.actionresearch.net/living/sadruddin.shtml>)



... what now:



For resources and support visit -

<https://actionresearch.net/>, <https://ejolts.net/>  
and <http://www.spanglefish.com/livingtheory/>



Create and submit a paper to EJOLTs - <https://ejolts.net/>

Create and send us your living-poster to add to those  
on: <https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/posters/homepage2021.pdf>

