Generating living-educational-theories in enhancing evidence-based educational practitioner, pedagogic research.

Paper for Jack Whitehead's presentation for the SOLSTICE/CLT Conference on the 2nd June 2021, 14:00-14:45, held virtually from Edge Hill University, UK.

Abstract

This presentation is focused on the idea that enhancing professionalism in education requires the generation and sharing of the living-educational-theories of educators as they research their educational influences in learning in their pedagogic practices. Education is a values-laden practical activity. Therefore, improvements in educational pedagogic practices are judged with respect to values of human flourishing. Digital video-data from educational practices are used to clarify the meanings of such values, as they emerge in the course of inquiries of the form, 'How do I improve my educational influences in my educational pedagogic practices?' Digital video-data are also used to communicate the meanings of the values that form the explanatory principles and standards of judgement in accounts of professionalism in education.

Living Educational Theory Research doctorates will be used to provide evidence to support the claim that generating and making public validated accounts of the living-educational-theories of educators contributes to enhancing professionalism in education globally.

Living-posters have been developed and made public by educational practitioner researchers to bring attention to their sites of practice and research passions and interests so people with similar research passions and interests might connect for mutual benefit. I will draw on the living-posters I have made public on my website to illustrate how these have been used to show the preliminary communications of Living Educational Theory Researchers.

I will draw on the freely accessible archive of papers published 2008–2021 by the Educational Journal of Living Theories to show the spreading global influence of Living Educational Theory research.

Framing for the presentation

I am focusing on how the generation of living-educational-theories is enhancing evidence-based educational practitioner, pedagogic research, with values of human flourishing. The generation of living-educational-theories as explanations of educational influences in learning is influenced by the acceptance of educational responsibility by citizen-scholars (Harper, et al. 2020).

This presentation is organised in terms of :

    i)   The use of the Chat facility to ask questions, raise issues and share emails.
    ii)   Being Professional and Being a Professional.
    iii)   living-educational-theories of educators.
    iv)   Living Educational Theory Research.
    v)   Clarifying values in values-laden educational practice with digital visual data.

vi) Values as explanatory principles in explanations of educational influences in learning.
vii) Public criticism to enhance validity and rigour'
See Peggy Kok's (1995) use of these principles at
http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/peggyrigour.pdf
viii) Using the data archive at http://www.actionresearch.net. This includes using insights from:
a) Papers accessed from https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/writing.shtml
b) Living-posters accessed from
https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/posters/homepage2021.pdf
c) Living Educational Theory Research doctorates accessed from
https://www.actionresearch.net/living/living.shtml
d) The archive of the Educational Journal of Living Theories between 2008-2020, accessed from https://ejolts.net/current

Contents of the Presentation

i) **The use of the Chat facility to ask questions, raise issues and share emails.**

The Chat facility enables participants to respond to issues and to ask questions as the presentation takes place. It enables the presenter to appreciate the issues and questions being raised and the opportunity to respond. If participants include their emails it enables presenters and others to continue to the conversations following the presentation.

ii) **Being a Professional and Being Professional**

In the UK and in many other countries, but not all, being a professional usually involves the meeting of the standards set by a professional body for entrance into a profession. There are no generally accepted standards for continuing professional development other than perhaps showing you are doing something to keep up to date with the field like going on a course or workshop. In a Living Educational Theory Research approach to professional development, a professional has an educational responsibility to make a contribution to their professional knowledgebase, through generating and sharing their living-educational-theory. A person accepting responsibility for their practice researches it to understand, improve and explain what they are doing. They test the validity of the knowledge they create and contribute to the knowledgebase of their profession.

iii) **living-educational-theories of educators.**

A living-educational-theory is an individual's explanation of their educational influence in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations that they are a member of. The focus on educational influences in learning is because not all learning is educational. History shows many examples of individuals and cultural influences in social formations that have led to learning that supported crimes against humanity and negated values of human flourishing. Stressing the importance of educational influences in learning with values of human flourishing, is intended to reduce the likelihood of such negations.

iv) **Living Educational Theory Research.**

Traditional Theories are usually presented as general explanations for phenomena. Explanations for particular instances that fall under the theory are derived from the general conceptual framework in a process of deduction from the general to the particular. In Living Educational Theory Research (EJOLTs, 2021) there is no such process of deduction from the general to the particular in generating a valid explanation of an individual's explanation of their educational influences in learning. Living-educational-theories are generated by individuals to explain their educational influences in learning. These explanations can include insights from theories in the disciplines of education, but no discipline, taken individually or in any combination, can generate a valid explanation of the educational influences of an individual in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of social formations that influence their practice and explanations. However, it is possible to conduct a meta-analysis of living-educational-theories to produce useful generalisations for distinguishing Living Educational Theory Research (Williamson & Whitehead, 2021) and for use in generating a valid explanation of an individual's educational influence in learning.

v) Clarifying values in values-laden educational practice with digital visual data.

In exploring the implications of asking, researching and answering questions of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing in my professional, educational practice, it is necessary to clarify and make explicit what counts as an improvement. Claiming that something is an improvement involves a value-judgement. Education, as a values-laden practical activity, also requires the clarification and communication of the values that distinguish learning as educational.

My introduction to the values that distinguish learning as educational was through Richard Peter's (1966) book on Ethics and Education and the British School of Analytic Philosophy. Ethical principles of freedom, justice, respect for person, worth while activities and the consideration of interests, together with the procedural principles of democracy were explicated as ethical principles in education. These meanings were clarified through lexical definitions. In a lexical definition, the meanings of value-words are clarified with other words. Values in educational practice are what constitutes the learning as 'educational'. However, the meanings of my values are not clarified solely through the value-words I use, such as freedom, justice and love. The meanings are clarified in the course of their emergence in practice. They are embodied expressions in what I do in my educational practice. I usually use digital visual data from my practice, over time and interaction with others, to communicate the meanings of my embodied values as they are clarified in the course of their emergence and expression in practice. This communication of meaning involves ostensive expressions of meaning as distinct from lexical definitions of meaning in which the meaning of a value-word is communicated in relation to other words. Lexical expressions of meaning are helpful in pointing to the meanings of ostensive expressions of meaning as these are grounded in and emerge through practice. Unfortunately, most printed text based, publications, by their nature omit or distort meanings of the relationally dynamic values that are used as explanatory principles in explanations of educational influence. This is because the clarification of the meanings of these embodied values involves their emergence through practice, rather than being solely communicated through lexical definitions. You can see how these meanings can be communicated through a multi-media narrative, involving digital visual data (Whitehead & Huxtable, 2006a) and how the omission and distortion takes place through the requirements of presentation in printed text-based publications (Whitehead & Huxtable, 2006b)

vi) Values as explanatory principles in explanations of educational influences in learning.

In Living Educational Theory Research, I understand values as explanatory principles in explaining my educational influences in learning. By an explanatory principle I am meaning a reason that explains why I do what I do. My value of freedom, for example, is a reason for doing what I am doing, when I experience my freedom being denied. Like everyone else, I have a unique constellation of values, that I use as explanatory principles in explanations of my educational influences in learning. As I explore my question, 'How do I improve what I am doing in my professional practice?' my focus on improvement is grounded in my experience and belief that I am not yet living my values as fully as I can. In other words, there is a possibility of improvement as I learn to live my values more fully in what I am doing in my professional practice

In all of the living-educational-theory doctorates accessible from
https://www.actionresearch.net/living/living.shtml , the individual practical-researcher demonstrates how they use their unique constellation of values as explanatory principles in explanations of educational influences in learning. These doctorates all draw insights from the ideas of others. In my pedagogical practice, as a tutor and supervisor of Living Educational Theory research programmes, I make available data, from the following data archive, for use as evidence in the generation of a living-educational-theory.

vii) Public criticism to enhance validity and rigour

I stress the importance of submitting for public criticism a researcher's evidence-based explanation of their educational influences in learning. Such public criticism is focused on strengthening the objectivity of an explanation, whilst recognising the subjective ground of the explanation. I use Popper's (1975, p. 44) idea that objectivity is grounded in intersubjective testing that that objectivity can be enhanced through the mutual rational controls of criticism discussion.

To enhance the validity of an explanation of educational influence in learning I recommend the use of validation groups of some 3-8 people to subject the explanation to the following questions, informed by Habermas' (1976, pp. 2-3) ideas on social validity and asked by the researcher:

i) How can I improve the comprehensibility of my explanation?
ii) How can I strengthen the evidence I use to justify my explanation?
iii) How can I deepen and extend my understandings of the sociohistorical and sociocultural influences on my practice and explanation?
iv) How can I enhance the authenticity of my explanation in the sense of demonstrating that I am living my values as fully as I can?

To enhance the rigour of a researcher's explanation of educational influences in learning I recommend the use of Winter's (1989) six principles for enhancing rigour. These are dialectical and reflexive critique, risk, multiple resource, plural structure and theory practice transformation. I use Peggy Kok's (1995) use of these principles at
http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/peggyrigour.pdf
to show how they can be applied to enhance rigour.

In relation to public criticism I advocate an engagement with Maxwell's (2021) book on 'The World Crisis – and What To Do About It: A Revolution for Thought and Action.' My focus, on contributing to the knowledgebase of education, could be criticised by Maxwell on the grounds that I am contributing to knowledge-inquiry rather than wisdom-inquiry. Maxwell lists the world crises and distinguishes between knowledge-inquiry and wisdom-inquiry as two great problems in learning. He believes the knowledge-inquiry has been successful in learning about the universe, and about ourselves and others forms of life as a part of the universe. However, knowledge-inquiry has failed in learning how to create a genuinely civilized, enlightened, wise world. He offers wisdom-inquiry as a way of solving the second great problem of learning. My response to such criticism of Living Educational Theory Research is that it is not justified because the values of human flourishing that are used to judge improvements in educational practice and as explanatory principles are precisely those values that are contributed to the generation of a civilized, enlightened, wise world.

viii) Using the data archive at http://www.actionresearch.net

In my presentations on Living Educational Theory Research I use the data archive at http://www.actionresearch.net in the following way.

a) Papers accessed from https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/writing.shtml

I usually connect a recent publication with my audience. For example, in presenting a lightning talk at the University of Cumbria on the 13th May 2021 on 'A Living Educational Theory research approach to the professional development of educators and educational practitioners.' I demonstrated how the participants could access the following paper and perhaps engage more fully with the ideas than is possible in a brief presentation. This paper is particularly relevant to the Solstice talk on 'Generating living-educational-theories in enhancing evidence-based educational practitioner, pedagogic research'.

Huxtable, M. & Whitehead, J. (2021) 'Enhancing educational influences in learning with a Living Theory approach to Pedagogical Action Research in Higher Education.' *Educational Action Research* 29(2); 310-327. Accessed from https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/jack/mhjwEAR0620.pdf

To encourage participants to generate their own living-educational-theories I advocate starting with the creation and sharing of their living posters. I show the homepage of living-posters at:

b) Living-posters accessed from
https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/posters/homepage2021.pdf

with the guidelines on how to create and share a living-poster:

> Creating a living-poster is easy! Create your poster as a single slide using a common programme such as PowerPoint. (You can create a page in a document using a programme like WORD if you prefer). A living-poster is intended as an opportunity to bring attention to your sites of practice and your research passions and interests and help you connect with people with similar research passions and interests.

Use images and minimal text to quickly communicate the essence of your sites of practice; interests; the values that motivate you and give your life meaning and purpose; research passions. Please use 'insert' (not copy and paste) and use low resolution images otherwise your file becomes huge!

Many participants, who are associated with Universities around the world, are not used to including 'I' within a research question nor of seeing doctorates awarded for an individual's explanation of their educational influences in their own learning. For this reason, I show more than 40, Living Educational Theory Research doctorates at:

c) Living Educational Theory Research doctorates accessed from
https://www.actionresearch.net/living/living.shtml

These doctorates have been legitimated at Universities around the world including in the UK, the Netherlands, Australia, South Africa, Nepal and Canada.

Because my understanding of research involves systematic inquiry that is made public, I stress the importance of making public explanations of educational influences in learning. I stress the importance of opening to public criticism, any claims to have produced an evidence-based explanation. I explain that the Journal Educational Journal of Living Theories (EJOLTS) has been publishing living-educational-theories since 2008 in presentations that are open to such public criticism and I show the most recent issue and the archive.

d) The archive of the Educational Journal of Living Theories between 2008-2020, accessed from https://ejolts.net/current . Here are the contents of issue 13(2) from 2020 to illustrate the international authorship of Living Educational Theory researchers in EJOLTs. In this issue there are contributions from the UK, New Zealand, India (with a Gujarati version), Pakistan, Canada and Bangladesh.

Contents:

Another way of making public one's research is through individual presentations and contributions at Conferences. To spread the influence of Living Educational Theory Research, and to test the validity of the idea in global contexts, I advocate presenting to conferences run by the Action Learning Action Research Association (ALARA), The Association of Teacher Education in Europe (ATEE), The Action Research Network of the Americas (ARNA), The Collaborative Action Research Network (CARN), The British Educational Research Association (BERA), The American Educational Research Association (AERA) and The International Professional Development Association (IPDA). For example, in my 2021 presentations I connect to the following Symposium presented at the 2021 Conference of AERA with the theme of 'Accepting Educational Responsibility', to fulfil the requirement of research that it is made public in a form open to public criticism.

AERA 2021 Symposium on Accepting Educational Responsibility by Educators in Global Contexts from Canada, India, Nepal, USA and the UK.
https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/aera21/2021aerasymposiumfull.pdf

Interim Conclusion 2021

Through this presentation I have tried to communicate how you could explore the implications of engaging in Living Educational Theory research, for your own pedagogic, educational practice and for your contribution to the professional knowledgebase of education. In such an exploration I have explained how you could generate and share your own living-educational-theory as your explanation of your educational influence in your own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations you work within. I have claimed that an explanation of your educational influences in learning must, as it is focused on your values-laden practice, include the unique constellation of values that you use to give meaning and purpose to your educational practice.

Using the evidence from the doctorates of other Living Educational Theory researchers I have demonstrated that it is possible to receive academic recognition and accreditation for your values-laden explanations of your educational influences in learning that make a contribution to the global educational knowledgebase. In this interim conclusion I shall now focus on the potential implications of my presentations for SOLSTICE as Edge Hill University's Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning.

The SOLSTICE model is based around the three elements of concept, people and place. The concept of curriculum design is focused on the alignment of purpose, the unique, situated characteristics of learners and teachers ant the form of teaching to ensure that learning is informed but not driven by the application of technology. The people, in teams of academics, learning technologists and information professionals are supported by the SOLSTICE Fellowship Scheme. In this scheme individuals run their fellowship projects and act as champions of technology within their faculty and provide a rich source of expertise and leadership. In terms of place SOLSTICE is governed from within the Centre for Learning and Teaching (CLT) as a hub for creative thinking and practices, development and support. The Centre for Learning and Teaching (CLT) is a central support department which actively

contributes and supports colleagues with the achievement of the aims of the University's Learning & Teaching Strategy to ensure excellence in teaching and learning. SOLSTICE is designed to:

- enhance learning of students by the dissemination of good practice across the University
- recognise and support excellence in teaching for learning and learning support activity
- strengthen the implementation of the University Learning and Teaching Strategy

Fellowships provide an opportunity to achieve personal and professional development and to share good practice across the University and to contribute within a vibrant community to sharing 'practical examples that work'. This includes contribution to the future direction of learning and teaching strategies and to the expanding base of scholarship of learning and teaching at Edge Hill University.

It is expected that Fellows will demonstrate ongoing commitment to teaching and learning development within the context of University priorities. This will be coupled with taking responsibility related to teaching and learning leadership within their subject, faculty, or service area and at University level. (SOLSTICE, 2020)

I understand the importance of progressing affiliation with the Centre for Learning and Teaching (CLT) and its research and development work through practice-based research and development of seminars and conferences. The main implication of my presentation is focused on enhancing the global reputation and significance of the knowledge-creation of staff and research students at Edge Hill University. I have tried to show how the living-educational-theories of staff and research students in Higher Education, can contribute to the global knowledgebase of education. This knowledgebase is not restricted to professional educators and educational researchers. It includes the knowledge created by professional who are researching the educational influences of their own educational practices.

I hope that we meet along the way to share and enhance the flow of our life-affirming energies and our accounts of what we are doing. I am thinking of what we are doing in our particular local and global contexts, to spread the influence of life-affirming values through the generation and sharing of our own living-educational-theories as we focus on enhancing the educational influences of our pedagogic practices.

Readings include:

EJOLTs (2021) What is Living Educational Theory (Living Theory) research and what are living-educational-theories (living-theories)? Accessed from https://EJOLTS.net/node/220

Habermas, J. (1976) Communication and the evolution of society. London : Heinemann

Harper, S. R., David, L. P., Jenkins, R. S. & Soodjinda, D. (2020) Accepting Educational Responsibility: 2021 Annual Meeting Theme. Accessed from : https://www.aera.net/Events-Meetings/2021-Annual-Meeting/2021-Annual-Meeting-Program-Information/2021-Annual-Meeting-Theme

Huxtable, M. & Whitehead, J. (2021) 'Enhancing educational influences in learning with a Living Theory approach to Pedagogical Action Research in Higher Education.' *Educational*

Action Research 29(2); 310-327. Accessed from https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/jack/mhjwEAR0620.pdf

Kok, P. (1995) Improving the rigour of your research, in Whitehead, J. (Ed.) (1995) *Advanced Bluffer's Guide for Educational Action Researchers. Improving the quality of Educational Practice and Creating Living Educational Theories for Cultural renewal.* Accessed from https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/jack/95contents.pdf

Maxwell, N. (2021) *The World in Crisis – and what to do about it: A Revolution for Thought and Action.* London; World Scientific.

Na'ilah Suad Nasir, N, S., Peele-Eady, T. & Tipton, E. (2021) Theme for AERA 2022: Cultivating Equitable Education Systems for the 21st Century. Accessed from https://www.aera.net/Events-Meetings/Annual-Meeting/2022-Annual-Meeting-Presidential-Program-Theme

Peters, R. S. (1966) Ethics and Education. London: Allen and Unwin.

Popper, K. (1975) The Logic of Scientific Discovery, London; Hutchinson & Co.

SOLSTICE (2020) About Solstice. Accessed from https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/solstice/about/?tab=about

Whitehead, J. (2020) A living educational theory approach to action research and pedagogical practice. Keynote to Action Research on Pandemic Pedagogy Webinar hosted in Malaysia on 20 June 2020. Accessed from https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/jack/jwmalaysia200620.pptx

Whitehead, J. (2014) Enacting Educational Reflexivity in Supervising Research into Creating living-educational-theories. *Journal Educational Research for Social Change* 3(2); 81-93. https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/jack/jwERSC6-2-031014.pdf

Whitehead, J. & Huxtable, M. (2006a) How are we co-creating living standards of judgement in action-researching our professional practices? Multi-media text presented at the World Congress of ALARPM and PAR 21-24 August 2006 in Groningen. Accessed from https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/jack/jwmh06ALARPMmulti.pdf

Whitehead, J. & Huxtable, M. (2006b) How are we co-creating living standards of judgement in action-researching our professional practices? Printed text in the Conference Proceedings of the World Congress of ALARPM and PAR 21-24 August 2006 in Groningen. Accessed from https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/jack/jwmhalarpmtext06.pdf

Whitehead, J. & Huxtable, M. (2016) Creating a Profession of Educators with the living-theories of Master and Doctor Educators, *Gifted Education International*, 32(1) 6-25. Accessed from https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/gei2015/jwmh.pdf

Williamson, B. & Whitehead, J. (2021) Living Meta-Analysis: what contribution could the Living Educational Theory research literature make as a resource that informs our meta-analytic inquiries? *Educational Journal of Living Theories*, 14(1) (in press).