

Generating living-educational-theories with love in transforming excessive teacher entitlement

Jack Whitehead, University of Cumbria, UK/North West University, South Africa.

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Abstract

This chapter explores the implications of acknowledging one's own excessive entitlement and living contradictions in contributing to Living Educational Theory Research. The analysis emphasises the importance of accepting one's educational responsibility for one's own continuing professional development in inquiries of the kind, 'How do I improve my professional educational practices in education with values of human flourishing?'. This responsibility includes making public evidence and values-based explanations of educational influences in learning, in contributing to the global knowledgebase of education.

The notion of excessive teacher entitlement was coined by Ratnam (Ratnam & Craig, 2021) to characterize the putative deficit view of teachers that is projected onto them. Craig developed the concept, the teachers' 'best-loved self,' to embrace teachers' input (ibid) in promoting the learning and well-being of all in the institutions they serve. Living contradictions are identified in relation to excessive entitlement in relation to one's best-loved self and other values of human flourishing. Whitehead and Huxtable (2016) developed the idea of a Living Educational Theory Research approach to professionalism in education. Delong and Whitehead (2023) have explained their educational influences in learning with values of human flourishing. They refer to these explanations as living-educational-theories.

Keywords: Excessive entitlement; living-educational-theories; professional development; values of human flourishing; practitioner-research; best-loved self.

Generating living-educational-theories with one's best-loved self in transforming excessive teacher entitlement

Jack Whitehead, University of Cumbria, UK/North-West University, SA

Introduction

My purpose is to share valid, evidence and values-laden explanations of the implications of accepting one's educational responsibility for addressing one's own excessive entitlements in relation to my best-loved self in living values of human flourishing as fully as possible and helping others to do so too. These values include a flow of life-affirming energy with one's best-loved self. This responsibility is expressed in my continuing professional development in inquiries of the kind, 'How do I improve my professional educational practices in education with values of human flourishing?'. It involves the recognition of myself as a

living-contradiction and includes making public, evidence and values-based explanations of educational influences in learning, in contributing to the global knowledge-base of education. Experiencing oneself as a living-contradiction is not viewed as a negative, or in seeing oneself as a problem, as it stimulates the imagination to create possible ways of enhancing the flow of values of human flourishing.

Born into excessive entitlement

I was born on the 29th August 1944, when Normandy was liberated after the D Day landings on the 6th June 1944. During the battle of Normandy over 425,000 Allied and German troops were killed, wounded or went missing. Concentration camps were murdering millions of people. I shall begin by acknowledging how much I owe to those who gave their lives to uphold the values of human flourishing in the face of these crimes against humanity. In benefitting from these sacrifices, I have been able to live in security, to live within democratic governance, benefitting from health, economic and educational opportunities and choices in decisions about leading a productive life. I continue to draw inspiration from Frankl's (1946, 2019) and Eger's (2017) responses to their experiences of being concentration camp survivors at the end of World War 2. They both focus on the choices we have in responding to conditions that sometimes negate our values of human flourishing. As Frankl concludes, 'Say Yes to Life in spite of everything'.

Because of these sacrifices of others and the opportunities/entitlements provided for me by the individuals who survived the war and rebuilt the UK on democratic values, I have enjoyed the benefits of excessive entitlements when compared to the opportunities of many millions across the globe, over a career long commitment to education. Using Charles' (2007) ideas of guiltless recognition and societal reidentification I do not feel guilty for these excessive entitlements. Whilst recognising how I have benefitted from them Charles' ideas highlight the importance of this recognition in sustaining a flow of life-affirming energy, without experiencing a debilitating feeling of guilt. They serve to highlight the conditions under which many millions are living, whose quality of education and opportunities would be enhanced, through accessing such entitlements. My best-loved self, motivates me to contribute to enhancing the quality of life and educational opportunities with those who at present are not as fortunate as myself. I do this by working and researching with those who are seeking to enhance the flow of values of human flourishing with Living Educational Theory Research.

My experiences of being a living contradiction are grounded in a tension between my best-loved self and my experience of excessive entitlements in benefitting from these entitlements in the economic, political, health and educational contexts that have influenced my life and learning.

Perspective

The perspective is that of Living Educational Theory Research in which individual practitioner- researchers generate their validated, evidence and values-based explanations of educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations that influence their practice with values of human flourishing. The perspective draws insights from the disciplines of education including Critical Theory (Habermas, 1987). It also draws insights from other methodologies such as autoethnography, action research, phenomenology, self-study and narrative inquiry. I do not want this range of

insights to distract from the focus of generating my own living-educational-theory from experiences of myself as a living contradiction between my excessive entitlements as my best-loved self. Yet, the insights from different methodologies are important.

Autoethnography emphasises the importance of placing oneself within cultural influences. Action Research emphasises the importance of the action-reflection cycles of planning, acting, evaluating and modifying in responding to practical problems. Phenomenology emphasises the importance of beginning from within the experiences of the phenomenon one is seeking to understand. Self-study emphasises the importance of including 'I' within an educational inquiry and Narrative Inquiry emphasises the importance of recognising that an explanation of educational influences in learning will be presented within a narrative.

My best-loved self, is grounded in a flow of life-affirming energy with values of human flourishing, including love. The perspective is humanistic, rather than religious, whilst recognising the importance of religious faiths in the lives of many people across the world. As a humanist, my living-educational-theory perspective includes what I experience as a cosmic flow of life-affirming energy that I attach to my productive orientation to life. I use Fromm's (1947) distinction between a productive and a marketing orientation to life in relation to resisting the pressures of the policies of economic rationalism that lead to de-valuation and de-moralisation. Economic rationalism is a term that not only suggests the primacy of economic values. It expresses commitment to those values in order to serve particular sets of interests ahead of others. It disguises that commitment in a discourse of 'economic necessity' defined by its economic models. In facing the living contradictions, in the tensions between one's best-loved self and excessive teacher entitlement, we can move beyond the reductionism which leads all questions to be discussed as if they were economic ones (de-valuation). We can from a situation where moral questions are denied completely (de-moralisation) in a cult of economic inevitability (as if greed had nothing to do with it) (McTaggart, 1992, p. 50). I am not underestimating the difficulties of moving beyond this reductionism by retaining one's integrity in living values of human flourishing as fully as possible. One way in which I have continued to avoid this reductionism is to emphasise the importance of using values of human flourishing in explanations of educational influences in learning. In my supervision of living-educational-theory masters and doctoral degrees I have emphasised the use of these values as explanatory principles and living standards of judgment in evaluating the validity of the knowledge-claims.

Fromm (1956) alerted me to the idea that giving form to life itself, is a form of art and that one of the greatest arts is the 'Art of Loving'. I continue to emphasise the importance of living as loving a life as possible, in enhancing the values that carry hope for the flourishing of humanity. I also seek to unite with the world in the spontaneity of love and productive work rather than seek a kind of security within economic rationality that destroys my integrity and freedom (Fromm, 1942). Hence, I identify with Saunder's (2023) point that 'It's OK to be Angry about Capitalism.' Using Critical Theory (Habermas, 1987) has helped to unmask the sociohistorical and sociocultural influences of capitalism in what I do and understand, as I generate my living-educational-theory. I am seeking to live as fully as possible, values of human flourishing with the art of loving and my experience of excessive entitlement within the world as it exists. In the present this means recognising and responding to wars between Russian and Ukraine and Israel and Hamas amongst others. In responding I see myself as a global educator who understands the need to campaign for the strengthening of international treaties and laws that can guarantee peace and security within internationally recognised sovereign borders.

My understanding of my excessive entitlement, and its influence in experiencing myself as a living contradiction in my professional practice, is in a continuous process of evolution. It is evolving in a tension between my best-loved self, my other values of human flourishing and my responses to my excessive entitlement. I don't want to give the impression that I am responding to my excessive entitlement with any sense of guilt. I am using my response to this excessive entitlement in the continuing motivation to spread the influence of Living Educational Theory Research with values of human flourishing. In responding to my excessive entitlement, I draw insights from Charles' (2007) understanding of guiltless recognition and societal reidentification in bringing Ubuntu as a standard of judgement into the Academy.

Before I explain how I am responding to my excessive entitlement, with guiltless recognition and societal reidentification, I will clarify my meaning and experience of excessive entitlement as they have been evolving over my professional life-time in education starting with the professional and economic opportunities opened up to me from within my particular social contexts through passing various academic examinations, beginning with the 11+ in 1955 up to the present award of an honorary D.Litt. degree from the University of Worcester in 2023 (Whitehead, 2023).

My professional excessive entitlement

In 1955 my passing of the 11-plus examination in England opened up the opportunity to attend Morecambe Grammar School. Passing or not passing the 11-plus was understood as a defining moment in many lives, with education viewed as a central influence in enhanced social mobility. Passing 3 Advanced Level and 2 Scholarship Level science subjects in 1961 enabled me to attend University (Durham), along with some 4% of the school population. I received a full grant from the State. Compare that with today when more than 40% of young people start undergraduate degrees – but it comes at a cost. Today's students leave with debts of £40,000 and upwards to pay back over their working lives. My science degree, awarded in 1965, opened up an extensive range of professional and economic opportunities and I chose to study for my Diploma in Education for a further year to begin my lifelong professional engagement in education.

In 1967, at a time of full employment, with no sense of my excessive entitlement, I began as a comprehensive school science teacher at Langdon Park School in London's East End. Between 1968-1970 I studied for my Academic Diploma at the Institute of Education at the University of London. This Diploma was based on the disciplines approach to Educational Theory in which this theory was held to be constituted by the philosophy, sociology, psychology, and history of education. Whilst studying for a master's degree in the psychology of education between 1970-1972, I began to question the validity of the discipline's approach to Educational Theory. My rejection of this approach changed my sense of vocation from being a science educator, to that of being an educational researcher contributing to the generation of a valid form of Educational Theory. The master's degree opened up opportunities to enter Higher Education. In 1973 I accepted an appointment as a Lecturer in Education at the University of Bath where I worked with a tenured appointment until 2009 with my last doctoral supervisions successfully completed in 2012. The award of my doctorate from the university in 1999, my successful supervisions and my publications, opened up offers of Visiting Professorships at Liverpool Hope University, the University of Cumbria, Edge Hill University, Ningxia Teachers University in China and North-West University in South Africa. These opportunities are continuing at the time of writing in 2023.

When I began teaching in 1967, as I have said, I had no sense of excessive entitlement. By passing the above examinations, I understood that I was entitled to the opportunities opened up by these accreditations. My awareness of how these entitlements could be understood as excessive entitlements developed with my understanding of being a global citizen and global educator with educational responsibilities for enhancing the influences of values of human flourishing, especially the value of equality. I now look upon the benefits I have enjoyed as entitlements as excessive entitlements when judged from the value of equality from an international or global perspective. My experience of being a living contradiction is grounded in the tensions I experience between my best-loved self and responding to the inequalities I see from the global perspectives analysed by Brown (2021), in terms of global health; climate change and environmental damage; nuclear proliferation; global financial instability; the humanitarian crisis and global poverty; the barriers to education and opportunity; and global inequality. I am not responding from any sense of guilt but from the experience of hope and worthwhile activities involved in actions that are intended to enhance the flow of values of human flourishing. Hence, I am stressing that I experience my excessive entitlement, in relation to my best-loved self, as an opportunity to contribute as much as I can to enhancing the flow of these values in overcoming inequalities and injustices.

The perspective of this chapter includes a Living Educational Theory Research approach to enhancing professionalism in education. A distinction is made between being a professional, in the sense of fulfilling the criteria for membership of a professional body, and being professional in the sense of accepting a responsibility for one's own professional development in a life-time's commitment to research one's own professional practice. This commitment includes a continuing process of improving practice and contributing the knowledge one generates in the course of researching one's practice to the global educational knowledgebase.

Issues of validity and rigour are essential in a Living Educational Theory Research perspective. The validity and rigour of draft explanations of educational influences in learning can be strengthened by subjecting the explanations to the mutual rational controls of critical discussion (Popper, 1975, p. 44) in validation groups of usually between 3-8 peers. The critical discussions seek to strengthen the validity of the explanations by answering questions that include modifications of Habermas' (1976, pp. 1-2) 4 criteria of social validity of comprehensibility, evidence, sociohistorical and sociocultural understandings and authenticity. Rigour can be enhanced by applying Winters' (1989) 6 criteria of reflexive and dialectical critique, risk, plural structure, multiple resource and theory practice transformation. Kok (1991a) has given a very clear demonstration of how this can be done in enhancing the rigour of her Living Educational Theory Master's dissertation on the Art of an Educational Inquirer (Kok, 1991b).

Methodology and Methods

The methodology of Living Educational Theory research is based on the methodological inventiveness of each practitioner-researcher as they generate their explanations of educational influence in learning in transforming excessive teacher entitlement with one's best-loved self. This inventiveness draws insights from self-study, narrative inquiry, action research and autoethnography. Methods include action reflection cycles and the use of empathetic resonance with digital visual data for clarifying and communicating the meanings of the embodied expression of values of human flourishing.

All living-educational-theories are self-studies in that enquiries of the form, ‘How do I improve my professional practice with values of human flourishing?’, are grounded in the ‘I’ of the researcher. However, a living-educational-theory has boundaries that distinguish a living-educational-theory from those of many self-studies. The boundaries are constituted by the necessary condition, of Living Educational Theory Research, of producing and sharing a valid, evidence and values-laden explanation of educational influences in learning with values of human flourishing. As long as self-study fulfils this necessary condition it is a living-educational-theory.

In Whitehead (1993) I explained in some 10 chapters how I produced my methodology as I responded to my experience of being a living-contradiction in generating my living-educational-theory. The responses to my contradictions (in bold below) were grounded in the relations between my excessive teacher entitlement and my best-loved self as I persisted, in the face of hostile pressures, to produce publications with my values of human flourishing. This persistence is perhaps best illustrated below in responses to my experience of being a living contradiction within the University as I held together a judgement from the University Secretary and Registrar that my writings were not consistent with my duties as a University Academic with my own judgement that my writings were consistent with my duties as a University Academic. The conclusion of a Senate working paper that was established to inquire into prima facie evidence that related to a breach of my academic freedom was that my academic freedom had not been breached but this was because of my persistence in the face of pressure that could have dissuaded a less determined individual. I video-taped a re-enactment of a meeting with the Senate Committee to respond to a draft report in which they concluded that my academic freedom had not been breached, but there was no mention of my persistence in the face of the pressure I had been subjected to. You can access this video (Whitehead, 2013, video 4, p. 6) to see if I communicate how my best-loved self has rechannelled my anger in having my persistence in the face of pressure, ignored:

I have included this video-clip on the grounds of authenticity. To understand the educational significance of the video of my keynote of March 2008, in my explanations of educational influence, requires an understanding of the significance of the rechanneling of the energy in the anger in the above video. I expressed this rechanneling in the keynote. This rechanneling was related to a persistence in the face of pressure. This persistence was possible through remaining open to the flows of loving dynamic energy in the passion for improving practice and contributing to educational knowledge. (Whitehead, 2008, p.117-118)

I presented my generation of my living-educational-theory in the dialectical form of responding to the following living-contradictions. The responses alternated and interaction with a series of publications. The contradictions are emphasised in bold, with the publications in italics:

1976 Living contradictions - I am a University Academic. I am not.

1977 Improving learning in Schools - an in-service problem;

1980 In-service Education, The Knowledge-Base of Education;

1980 Living contradictions - I am a creative academic. I am not a creative academic. I can question the judgements of examiners. I cannot question;

1985 An analysis of an individual's educational development - the basis for personally orientated action research;

1987 Living contradictions - My writings are consistent with my duties as a University Academic. No they are not;

1989 Creating living educational theories from questions of the kind, 'How do I improve my practice?'; 1990 How do I improve my Professional Practice as an Academic and Educational Manager? A dialectical analysis of an individual's educational development and a basis for socially orientated action research;

1991 The actions of a Senate Working Party on a Matter of Academic Freedom;

1992 Paper - How can my philosophy of action research transform and improve my professional practice and produce a good social order? A response to Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt.

Further explications of my living-educational-theory methodology have been published (Whitehead, 2008; 2019). It is important to recognise that every Living Educational Theory Researcher creates their own methodology as they seek to live as fully as possible their unique constellation of values of human flourishing. In doing this they can draw insights from a range of other methodologies. For example, I drew insights from Connelly's and Clandinin's (1999) approach to narrative inquiry, in an action research master's course on leadership I tutored at Bishop's University in Canada (Whitehead, 1999a). A living-educational-theory, as an explanation by an individual of their educational influences in their own learning and in the learning of others, can be understood as a form of narrative inquiry in that it begins with the experiences as lived and told by the researcher. Within the narrative what distinguishes the story as a living-educational-theory is an explanation of the educational influences of the individual in their own learning and in the learning of others. Not all narratives are living-educational-theories, but all living-educational-theories are narratives. A living-educational-theory can also use insights from autobiography as this is written and recorded by the individuals who are the subject of the study (Ellis, 2004). I have used narrative autobiography, through the generation of my Living Educational Theory Research as I generate valid, evidence and values-laden explanations of my educational influences in my own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations within which my practice is located, with values of human flourishing (Whitehead, 1967-2023).

Living-educational-theories are also phenomenological in that they begin from the experience of the phenomenon the researcher is seeking to understand. The purpose of a living-educational-theory differs from the basic purpose of phenomenology in that the purpose of phenomenology is to produce a description of a universal essence whilst the purpose of a living-educational-theory is to produce a unique explanation of the individual's educational influences in learning. I am using phenomenology by starting within my experience of the phenomena I am seeking to understand in asking, researching and answering my question, 'How do I improve what I am doing in my professional practice with values of human flourishing?'. From Husserl's general phenomenology, I understood the importance of avoiding the imposition of methodology in my inquiry as the methodology emerged in the course of the inquiry:

“... in the transcendental sphere we have an infinitude of knowledge previous to all deduction, knowledge whose mediated connections (those of intentional implication) have nothing to do with deduction, and being entirely intuitive prove refractory to every methodically devised scheme of constructive symbolism.” (Husserl, 1912, p. 12).

I want to be clear about an important distinction between Action Research and Living Educational Theory Research, in generating living-educational-theories with love in transforming excessive teacher entitlement. I first explicated my use of action-reflection cycles in Whitehead (1976) in a local curriculum project with 6 teachers over 18 months that focused on improving learning for 11-14 year olds in mixed ability Science Groups. I continue to use the action-reflection cycles, from Action Research, of acting, planning, evaluating, and modifying, in seeking to resolve the practical problems I encounter in my inquiries, 'How do I improve my professional practice with values of human flourishing?'. However, there is no requirement, in these action-reflection cycles, of generating and sharing valid, evidence and values-laden explanations of one's educational influences in one's own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations within which the inquiry is grounded. This requirement is a defining characteristic of Living Educational Theory Research.

Another defining characteristic is that a Living Educational Theory Researcher generates their own unique, living-educational-theory methodology as they explore the implications of asking, researching and answering questions of the kind, 'How do I improve my professional practice with values of human flourishing?'. This methodology emerges and is clarified in the course of its emergence in the inquiry (Whitehead, 2008). Its uniqueness is grounded in the fact that each individual practitioner-researcher has their own unique constellation of values of human flourishing that they are seeking to live as fully as possible. A unique constellation of values generates a unique living-educational-theory methodology in the course of its emergence in the production of a valid, evidence and values-laden explanation of educational influences in learning. Unlike other forms of research where methodologies are often defined at the beginning of the research and are applied as the research proceeds, a living-educational-theory methodology emerges in the course of generating the explanations of educational influences in learning. Whilst insights from other methodologies are often used in the generation of a living-educational-theory methodology other methodologies are not applied in the inquiry.

For example, autoethnography is an autobiographical genre that connects the personal and cultural through multiple layers of consciousness. It involves examining social and cultural aspects of one's experience through an ethnographic lens, revealing a vulnerable self that may refract or resist cultural interpretations. Autoethnographic texts, typically written in first-person voice, include short stories, poetry, fiction, novels, photographic essays, personal essays, journals, fragmented writing, and social science prose. These texts reveal concrete action, dialogue, emotion, embodiment, spirituality, and self-consciousness, influenced by history, social structure, and culture. I often use insights from Critical Theory to comprehend and respond to my excessive entitlements through my best-loved sense in cultural influences in my practice and understand, especially the political and economic influences. The use of such insights in responding to gender injustice can be seen in Dhungana (2023).

As a Living Educational Theory Researcher, I identify closely with autoethnography than the other methodologies whilst continuing to draw insights from the other methodologies such as Narrative Research (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, 1999), Self-study Research (Tidwell, Heston & Fitzgerald, 2009), Phenomenological Research and Action Research (Corey, 1953; Creswell, 1987). I particularly like the following about autoethnographic texts:

In these texts concrete action, dialogue, emotion, embodiment, spirituality, and self-consciousness are featured, appearing as relational and institutional stories affected

by history, social structure, and culture, which themselves are dialectically revealed through action, feeling, thought, and language. (Ellis & Bochner, p. 739)

My doctorate (Whitehead 1999b) can be seen, in the above sense, as an autoethnographic text. It is also a living-educational-theory, autoethnography in the sense that the relational and institutional stories are presented within an explanation of my educational influence in my own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations that influence my practice and understandings. The doctorate traces my educational influence in learning as I integrated insights from other theorists into my living-educational-theories. It also includes the evidence and values-laden explanation of my educational influences in the learning of my students as I supervised the generation of their own living-educational-theories, for their masters and doctoral degrees.

In the course of generating my living-educational-theory I have found it necessary to create the method of empathetic resonance (DeLong, et al., 2013) using digital visual data, for clarifying the meanings of the expressions of embodied values in the course of their emergence through practice. These are the values that I use as explanatory principles in explanations of educational influences in learning. Feyerabend (1975, p. 17) alerted me to the importance of clarifying the meaning of an embodied expression of a value in the course of its emergence in practice. In using the method of empathetic resonance, a cursor is moved backwards and forwards along digital visual data from one's educational practice to the point of greatest resonance that communicates the expression of a value of human flourishing that one uses as an explanatory principle in an explanation of educational influence in learning.

I want to emphasise a limitation of a printed text-based medium of communication for communicating meanings of the embodied expressions of values of human flourishing. Part of the limitation is because of what Vasilyuk (1991) refers to as 'The Energy Paradigm'. Flows of energy are involved in whatever we do. Hence it is necessary to include flows of energy in the explanatory principles we use for explaining our educational influences in what we are doing. My continuing motivations, for supporting the generation of living-educational-theories, include a flow of life-affirming energy with values of human flourishing. The problem with printed text-based media for communicating meanings is that they are limited in being able to communicate the meanings of the expressions of flows of life-affirming energy with values of human flourishing. This limitation has been analysed in Whitehead & Huxtable (2006 a & b). The 2006a paper is a multi-media presentation at the World Congress of ALARPM. The 2006b paper is a printed text-based presentation produced for the Proceeding. This followed the instructions for inclusion in the Proceedings and had to be a printed text-based presentation. The differences between the two presentations illustrate what can be communicated with the aid of digital visual data in relation to the expressions of embodied values and what is omitted in these communications in printed text-based communications. This has implications for the communication of the meanings of one's best-loved self in responding to living-contradictions with excessive entitlements. It is my contention that these communications will require the use of digital visual data in valid and evidence-based explanations of educational influences in learning. This difference in meaning can perhaps be best illustrated by differences between lexical definitions and ostensive expressions of meaning. My studies of ethics and education between 1968-70 focused on the lexical definitions of values in which the meanings of values were defined in terms of other words using a Kantian form of transcendental deduction in which given proposition x is true, if it can be demonstrated the proposition y is implied in x then there are good grounds for believing that proposition y is true. The limitation for me in this approach

to defining values was that my embodied expressions of my meanings of values could not be clearly defined by this method. Hence I developed the method of empathetic resonance for clarifying and communicating the meanings of my embodied expressions of my values.

Findings

The findings are related to the planning process for the fourth International Conference on Transformative Education Research and Sustainable Development, to be held in Indonesia in 2024. The first three conferences were hosted by the University of Kathmandu in Nepal and the Proceedings of the Third Conference can be accessed (TERSD, 2022). I am benefitting from my excessive entitlements in having the economic security to spend whatever productive life-time I have left in doing whatever I chose. My choice in supporting the planning group for TERSD 2024, with this excessive entitlement, is focused on the desire of my best-loved self, to make a contribution to sustainable development with values of human flourishing. My findings in relation to the Indonesian Transformative Education Research Group (TERSD, 2023-24) are focused on the living-posters that each participant has produced, with details of their context, practice and values. I am contributing to the generation of each participant's living-educational-theory by encouraging each participant to generate a values and evidence-based explanation of their educational influences in learning. For example, Yuli Rahmawati's original living-poster includes the claim that 'I endeavour to empower my student teachers, as social agents, to participate in creating a better world?'. A video-recording of a conversation with the group includes my focus on the importance of gathering data that can be used to justify a claim that Rahmawati is empowering her student teachers to participate in creating a better world. The video includes my encouragement of all the participants to analyse each others' living-poster, for such values-laden claims, and to respond with suggestions about the data that needs to be gathered and to be used as evidence in justifying the validity of an evidence-based explanation of educational influences in learning.

The findings are also related to the support I am giving to the generation and sharing of Living Educational Theory Research in the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching at Durban University of Technology led by Nalini Chitanand in the Academic Induction Programme (DUT 2023). This homepage presents the evidence that each participant in the programme has produced and shared their living-poster with the details of their values and research as they begin the generation of their living-educational-theory.

The findings in over 50 living-educational-theory doctorates (LET, 2023), provide the evidence to show how generating living-educational-theories with one's best-loved self can transform excessive teacher entitlement in improving educational practices with other values of human flourishing. I draw your attention to these doctorates as I supervised over 30 of these as an expression of my productive life in education in using the benefits of my excessive entitlements in realising the values of my best-loved self. Hence I shall focus on how living educational theories with my best loved-self have been used to transform excessive teacher entitlement to improve educational practice. My excessive entitlement in my work at the University of Bath between 1973-2012 included my tenured appointment. This protected my economic security and academic freedom, a protection not given to a majority of university academics throughout the world. This protection meant that I could pursue unpopular activities without fear of losing my employment. For example I could support practitioner-researchers in doing research which included 'I' within the title. I could encourage the inclusion of digital visual data in explanations of educational influences in

learning. I could also encourage the clarification of embodied values and their use as explanatory principles in explanations of educational influences in learning.

For example, the first doctorate at the University of Bath with love in the title was Lohr's (2006) 'Love at work: what is my lived experience of love, and how may I become an instrument of love's purpose?'. The significance of this thesis is in bringing love, as an academic standard of judgement, into an original contribution to knowledge. It is focused on making explicit the embodied experience of love in a pedagogy of presence that includes action research, phenomenological, hermeneutical, physical, emotional and spiritual knowledge.

Briganti (2021) takes a global perspective in her Living Theory of International Development. This includes her value of gender justice in supporting women in Afghanistan to create a women's taxi service. In August 2021, the Taliban took back control of the country and closed down such enterprises as well as stopping the educational opportunities for girls and young women. This example serves to emphasise the importance of the political context in influencing the generation of living-educational-theories for human flourishing with one's best-loved self. Another example of Living Educational Theory Research that highlights the influence of politics is in South Africa where Nelson Mandela was influential in including the value of Ubuntu in the 1994 South African Constitution. In my 2011 Inaugural Nelson Mandela Day lecture, at the University of Durban (Whitehead, 2011), I outline the importance of including the values of Ubuntu in the creation of living-educational-theories. In this outline I draw on Charles (2007) living-educational-theory doctorate in which he brings Ubuntu as a living standard of judgement into the Academy. This original contribution to knowledge is a significant finding in moving beyond decolonisation through societal reidentification and guiltless recognition. I find the idea of guiltless recognition very helpful in making positive responses to my excessive entitlements, especially my entitlement to economic security due to my academic tenure. Rather than feeling guilt as I benefit from this entitlement it enables me to remain open to a flow of life-affirming energy with my best-loved self that directs my excessive entitlements, especially, as I have been emphasising, that of my economic security, into enhancing the flow of values of human flourishing in supporting the creation and sharing of living-educational-theories. Charles' thesis also included digital visual data to help with clarifying and communicating the meanings of his embodied values. My academic tenure enabled me to contribute to a Senate Working Party that recommended a change in the regulations governing the submission of research degrees, to include the submission of e-media.

Other findings of Living Educational Theory Research, in relation to responding to living contradictions in the tensions between excessive entitlement and best-loved self, can be seen in the living-educational-theory of the Indian researcher Swaroop Rawal (2006, 2011, 2023). Rawal acknowledges the importance of Hindu spirituality in her motivations to support the most vulnerable children in India. This focus is on the use of a life-skills programme she developed, based on drama. Without proselytizing, Rawal acknowledges the importance of Hindu values and beliefs in her own motivations whilst accepting and valuing different spiritualities with values of human flourishing.

Reflecting on my vulnerabilities

I have been asked about my own vulnerabilities and about how my vulnerabilities provide a way of reflecting on excessive entitlement. My experience of vulnerability is complex. In a

positive sense I think of my vulnerability in terms of an empathetic awareness of the feelings of others. This includes an openness to the feelings of distress and pain and others. In a negative sense I think of vulnerability as a response to pain, distress and hostility that can hinder the expression of one's professional educational responsibilities. This kind of pressure can sometimes affect one's mental health to the detriment of fulfilling one's professional responsibilities. For example, in the description above, the conclusion of a Senate working paper was that my academic freedom had not been breached because of my persistence in the face of pressure that could have dissuaded a less determined individual. In my experience some individuals, that have been subjected to such threats to their employment, have experienced the negative vulnerability of their mental health being affected to the extent that they can no longer perform their professional responsibilities.

I have found Freud's (1966) analysis of 10 defence mechanisms we can use to strengthen the negative sense of vulnerability, very helpful in sustaining my own robust mental health:

So far as we know at present, the ego has these ten different methods at its disposal in its conflicts with instinctual representations and affects. It is the task of the practicing analyst to discover how far these methods prove effective in the processes of ego resistance and symptom formation which he has the opportunity of observing in individuals. (p. 44).

Conclusion including Significance

Each one of us will have a different experience of how excessive teacher entitlements are influencing the generation of our living-educational-theories. Each of us can exercise choice in the way we respond to these external conditions (Eger, 2017).

The significance is focused on facing and responding to the living contradictions grounded in holding together our valuing of our best-loved self with responses to our excessive entitlements that are related to the global contexts defined by Brown (2017) and Saunders (2023). The significance is related to the productive orientation of my best-loved self. I identify my best-loved sense in terms of what it is to produce something as a human being. I express my best-loved self in the generation and sharing of living-educational-theories with values of human flourishing and helping others to do so too.

In answering the question, 'What is it to produce something as a human being?' I draw on the insight used by Bernstein (1971, p. 48), from the early writings of Marx in which he explained that each of us would have been twice affirmed in producing something as a human being.

In producing and sharing my living-educational-theory and in your use of insights from my theory we are twice affirmed. In my production I objectified my individuality and its particularity, and in the course of this activity I enjoy an individual life. In viewing my living-educational-theory I experience the individual joy of knowing my personality as an objective, sensuously perceptible, and indubitable power. In your satisfaction and your use of insights from my living-educational-theory I have the direct and conscious satisfaction that my work satisfied a human need, that it objectified human nature, and that it created an object appropriate to the need of another human being:

I would have been the mediator between you and the species and you would have experienced me as a reintegration of your own nature and a necessary part of yourself; I would have been affirmed in your thought as well as your love. In my individual life I would have directly created your life, in my individual activity I would have immediately confirmed and realized my true human nature. (Bernstein, 1971, p. 48)

The life-affirming flow of cosmic energy I experience, within my best-loved self, motivates my productive life in supporting the generation, sharing and enhancing of living-educational-theories with values of human flourishing. I recognised above that I have benefitted from excessive entitlements in the economic, political, health and educational contexts that have influenced by life and learning. I have acknowledged my debt to those who gave their lives in the second world war so that, since my birth in 1944 I have benefitted from excessive entitlements, when compared to the majority of human beings, in the political, health and educational contexts that have influenced me. I have also benefitted from the excessive entitlement of the economic security of a tenured appointment for my working life in the University of Bath. I am continuing to document my stories and experiences with excessive entitlement in the generation and sharing of my living-educational theories (Whitehead, 1967-2023)

In responding to the living-contradictions of my best-loved self, responding to these excessive entitlements, I continue to live a productive life in the generation of my living-educational-theories and in supporting others to do so too. In supporting others to do so too, I draw your attention to ‘Delving into Living Educational Theory (LET) research: A conversation with Jack Whitehead’ in the Malaysian Action Research Journal, (Shaik-Abdullah, et al, 2023).

In this article, we draw on insights from the work of Jack Whitehead, a leading LET researcher, to provide a comprehensive overview of the approach. Jack explores the concepts of valid explanation and video recording and their role in capturing and validating actions. Jack also discusses the relationship between LET and research theories and offers insights into how the research approach can contribute to human flourishing. Jack concludes with a discussion of the impact of published articles on others’ learning and how research impact can be evaluated.

This is illustrative of the freedom I enjoy, as part of my responses to my excessive entitlements, with my best-loved self in continuing to respond to requests for support in different global contexts, in the generation and sharing of Living Educational Theory Research (LET, 2023).

In generating living-educational-theories with love in transforming excessive teacher entitlement I continue to value the public sharing of such living-educational-theories (Whitehead & Huxtable, 2023, Whitehead, 2023b, Delong & Whitehead, 2023). This public sharing, for example in this book, is important in testing the validity of the ideas and offering an invitation to others to use those ideas they find valid and useful in the creation of their own living-educational-theory. As well as testing the validity of knowledge claims such making public the knowledge claims, can enable a connection with a reader. This connection can elicit empathy and understanding of the struggles and tensions one in my position may have through self-narratives. I am thinking of the kinds of understandings that another may find useful in the generation and sharing their own living-educational-theories.

I make myself more vulnerable within this paper in the positive sense above, through deepening and extending my sociocultural and sociohistorical understandings, in my concerns, activities and responsibilities as a global citizen. My reflective examinations of my educational influences of my educational influences in my own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations within which my practice is located, could provide the reader with examples of how they, too, can examine their own living contradictions between their best-loved self and excessive entitlements, in generating and sharing their own living-educational-theories.

In continuing to defend and strengthen my own robust mental health I acknowledge a resistance to eliciting empathy and understanding of the struggles and tensions I have experienced through self-narratives that focus on overcoming threats to mental health. I have chosen to focus on the expression of a professional, educational responsibility in responding to living contradictions between my best-loved self and my excessive entitlements. I have done this in the hope that this may be useful to readers in the generation and sharing of their own living-educational-theories, with values of human flourishing.

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