Living Educational Theory Form of Action Research: My Learning Experience

Ram Punia. September 2010

Based on reflections on preparing my EdD thesis (Punia 2004) this paper presents my learning experience of Living Educational Theory form of action research Jack Whitehead of the University of Bath has developed in the UK. In EdD self-study I explored my own learning and influencing other people's learning from my CV spread over 40 years as an international educator in seven countries. The aim of this inquiry was to generate self-knowledge as a professional educator, embedded in answering the question: How did I improve what I was doing during my professional life? Self-knowledge was to include my technical competence and character based on my values and beliefs in solving professional problems.

Context of the Inquiry

When I came to the University of Bath in (1998) for a Doctorate in Education (EdD) I already had an MA & an MPhil (Punia 1992) and a long experience of professional learning and of helping others to do the same in various international contexts. I learnt that in contrast to PhDs primarily designed to produce researchers and teachers in universities, EdDs can produce educators capable of acting and producing professional knowledge.

In this context EdD was most suitable to update and extend my professional knowledge acquired from practical experience. Action research (the methodology of producing knowledge from practice), fully explored in my previous paper, seemed most suitable to produce professional knowledge based on my reflections-on-actions in various roles as an international educator.

I had used various forms of action learning and action research intuitively in the past without any formal knowledge of action research as a new research methodology suitable to generate practical knowledge from practice. After successfully completing four taught module including (1) **Research Methodologies, (2) Policy formation and Practice, (3) Curriculum Development: philosophy and practice, and (4) International Education: philosophy and practice,** I met Jack Whitehead of the University of Bath to inquire into the nature of action research with the possibility of using it for my EdD thesis.

Whitehead has developed his own brand of action research called 'living educational theory'. It took me a long time to understand and use this form of action research in producing my EdD thesis (Punia, 2004). This paper is addressed to those currently engaged in understanding and using this evolving methodology. In this paper I present the experience of learning this form of action research before starting the inquiry, process used in producing the thesis, reflections on the finished work for professional value of this inquiry, unexplored potential of this kind of inquiry for future research and the emergent image of my professional self/I
I began by exploring the professional need for such an inquiry.

Exploring personal and professional need for undertaking such an inquiry

I was not aware of the value of such an inquiry. My understanding of the value of this inquiry developed through dialogues with Whitehead and study of professional literature as follows.

First, according to the testimonials from other educators provided in my EdD thesis and observations of Whitehead, my vast technical competence acquired through continuous learning and character based on ethical principles embedded in my beliefs had influenced the learning of others through teamwork but I was not conscious of the influences of my I/self in my professional work. **Living educational theory form of action research had the potential to make my implicit self-knowledge explicit with competence to share it with other professionals**.

Secondly, I was aware of the importance of character development as an integral aspect of professional development during my professional life. However, I never tried to influence others through my character deliberately. Hence I was not conscious of its influences on others. I learnt the significance of modelling for leadership in education from the professional literature (Senge (1991), Covey (1992, 2004), Krishnamurti (1986).

Thirdly, literature research showed that there was dearth of the learning theories of professional educators. The learning theories of professional educators were valuable to promote lifelong learning and learning organisations. According to Hodkinson (2000), "In an age that rhetorically espouses lifelong learning, the longitudinal development of individual learning careers must be central academic and policy concern"(p.596)

Fourthly, discussions with Whitehead revealed that in an action research inquiry 'why did I improve what I was doing' was more important than 'how did I improve my work. 'Why' illuminated our values in making important decisions in life**.** In living educational theory form of action research, researchers tease out their implicit values, epistemology and ontology

embedded in the standards of judgement professional use in their work implicitly. They constitute the professional I/self.

Last, I have always valued embodied knowledge more than theoretical knowledge used in academic settings. Whitehead promoted the importance of embodied knowledge, and emphasised the need to make it explicit to share it with other professionals. In the beginning Whitehead tried to explain his form of action research through his writings, but it did not convince me. It was his embodied knowledge of his living educational theory, which convinced me of the need to make embodied knowledge explicit and to share it with others. I learnt the relative importance of both form of knowledge in influencing others.

In short I learnt that my professional knowledge from practical experience was embodied partial, largely implicit and fragmentary. I had to extend this knowledge and make it explicit to share it with academics from the University and other professionals. In this context I began to explore the making of my professional self/I as an international educator from my CV to produce my EdD thesis. I called it "**My CV is My Curriculum: The making of an international educator**". In the past I was largely conscious of my technical competence but ignored the influence of my character for reasons provided in this paper later. In this inquiry the focus was on presenting my character /my professional self comprised of technical competence in solving professional problems with emphasis on explicating my values, principles and outlook on life providing me with commitment towards my professional work in difficult projects in very difficult contexts. The inquiry unfolded with continuous learning with further reading, writing and professional dialogues with my supervisor.

Learning Living Educational Theory form of Action Research

Living educational theory form of action research is the most complex and the most rewarding form of action research.

The First Difficulty: significance of (I)

I read Whitehead's writings and had long and frequent professional dialogues with him to understand his living educational theory form of action research. According to Whitehead living educational form of action research presents the accounts of professional educators in answering the question, "**How do I improve what I am doing?** In the process of answering this question professionals generate their accounts of professional learning and their influence on the learning of others. He called these accounts **'living educational theories'**. Practitioners keep accurate records of the processes used in improving their practice and to

support their claim to knowledge in their final reports. I had a little problem in understanding Whitehead, as I had often followed similar procedures in preparing technical reports for aid agencies as an international educator. Mostly these were concerned with the improvement of the assigned tasks but had a little to do with the direct improvements in the context and the learning of those involved in my projects. These reports presented the perspective of the major stakeholders.

I had to learn the full significance of the question 'How do I improve what I am doing? In living educational theory form of action research the focus of inquiry is on the development of the living I/self of the researcher, not on the improvement of the task. In my past work as a professional educator the focus of my work had been on the improvement of task rather than on personal development. Due to my technical background and personal beliefs and values I had great difficulty in accepting the use of 'I' in the above question. They show that our past knowledge can be both helpful and a hindrance to acquire new knowledge.

Based on my spiritual belief and personal observations of life, I strongly believe that life is always interdependent and an integrated whole continuously flowing, and too complex to unravel by human mind. Successful human action flows mainly from teamwork based on Universal principles. Hence I had avoided any claims for personal contributions in highly successful projects I led as a consultant. I regarded individual self/I an integrated whole made of all forms of knowledge accumulated from past experiences and that it was very difficult to define because it was always in flux as a result of new experiences. Furthermore, I also believed in the existence of a Universal Self/I comprised of the whole human experience and knowledge, including that of the individual self. In this context I failed to understand how the individual self/I being part of the whole might claim individuality.

In the past I had resisted the use of 'I' in my MPhil thesis (Punia 1992). This thesis presented ten studies of 'Technical Teachers' Planning' I had undertaken in a technical institute in the South Pacific to understand their thoughts of the operational curriculum (curriculum they taught) and used their perspective of curriculum to design and install school-based curriculum development. In this thesis I claimed to have discovered a new model/ theory of school-based curriculum development grounded in collaborative efforts of teachers, management and a consultant (myself). Many stakeholders in this project, including my MPhil supervisor from the University of Bath recognised my major influence in this project but I made no personal claims for the high success in this project. I also had learnt from personal experience of this and several other international projects that **"When self of an international consultant becomes more important than the task at hand, it is very difficult to obtain collaboration**

in teamwork". I still claim many problems cannot be solved due to human self/ego importance.

I knew that it was rather difficult for many academics, particularly in the West, to accept my beliefs and observations as they were engaged in the development of the individual self through education. To me they seemed to be engaged in a conflict with the universal self rather than serving it. I respected their belief but live by my own **embodied belief in oneness of the Universe**.

So the use of the word 'I' in this inquiry generated a serious tension in my mind. I could not find the meanings of 'I' in Whitehead's writings on living educational theory. As a result of long discussions with him, study of related literature and reflections on personal experience I later realised that individual **self development is also Universal self development.** The 'I' in how do I improve what I am doing means how do I improve what I am doing from personal point of view in contrast to somebody else's point of view. **However** 'Living educational theory' of an individual/ self/I comprised of personal perspective presented the embodied standards of judgement of a professional educator, usually in the form of clusters of embodied values guiding their actions. Living educational theories explicated and shared them with other professionals. This discovery became the basis of my EdD inquiry. I still find many new researchers grappling with this concept. I would suggest that they should explain it whatever it might be. However I had to clear another doubt before I could start my work.

The Second Problem: living educational theory

The use of **'living theory'** confused me further, since the traditional meaning of theory is that it is a generalisation stable in many contexts. It took me long time to understand that in contrast to the traditional theories, living educational theories of individuals are continuously changing through learning from a dialectical process between the professional self/ (I) and its various contexts in action as shown below.


Self ⟷ text
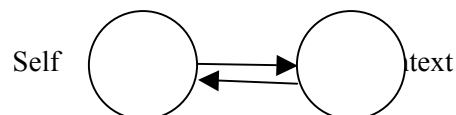
Living educational theories are accounts of one's learning and influences on the learning of others. I do believe that the use of living philosophies is more appropriate than living theories. I prefer to call living theories of education of professional educators in contrast to those derived from experiments of animal learning.

My EdD thesis (Punia 2004) includes two distinct forms of living educational theories. During the early part of my professional life it presents my professional knowledge derived from my implicit personal needs, wants and values directed towards producing and sharing my technical knowledge used in improving what I was doing as a teacher and a teacher educator.

During the later part of my professional life as an advisor/consultant my thesis provides professional knowledge based on living by the principle of 'oneness of life' as a whole. Unlike personal interests, wants, needs and values, universal principles are changeless. I had to learn to live by this principle and consciously integrate my technical competence with it. Consequently I began to use my technical competence both for personal and social development. I validated my emergent theory in the professional literature including Covey (1992, 2004), Senge, (1990) and other selected spiritual literature.

My living educational theory changed from emphasis on living according to personal values to living according to universal values/principles. It took me a long time to understand the distinction between living educational theories based on embodied personal values and embodied universal principles.

I commenced my EdD thesis with a vague idea of the nature of living educational theories as outlined above but my understanding improved during my inquiry with further study, practice and many meetings with Whitehead, my supervisor. It has not stopped growing ever since. It might have been unwise on my part to have commenced my work with doubts. Doctorate theses are completed within a time limit and they are costly to researchers. But I was amply rewarded by the depth of my knowledge gained from this inquiry. For instance, I later discovered that production of knowledge using living educational theories form of action research has a great potential for integrating self, task and context as an integrated process, illustrated below, valuable for sustainable human development on our planet.

Self   Context

Task/Action
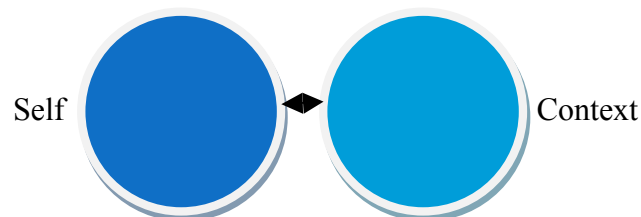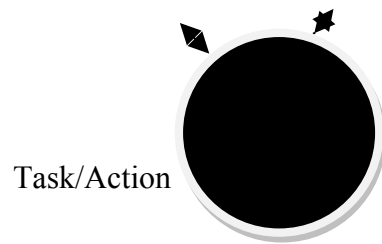
In the past I used action research inquiry only to the study of the task improvement. It might even be focused on the context improvement only. For me living educational theories study the interaction between roles, contexts and self as an integrated process. It is based on my personal learning from experience of my professional life provided in my Ed D thesis that miraculous action takes occurs when task, self and context are in harmony and the three circles in the above illustration merge into each other presenting action occurring within the principle of oneness of the living Universe in which we really exist. However, such harmony rarely exists in human action as we live in duality and use dualistic thinking. In this context learning occurs from the study of the disjunctures amongst the three components in the above diagram. We aim to work towards establishing harmony using dualistic thinking without complete success. I discovered this framework to generate living educational theories during my EdD study outlined below. It is consistent with answering the Question: 'How do I improve what I am doing' whitehead had recommended as a framework to engage in living educational theory form of action research.

The EdD Thesis Production Process

The following process used in producing my thesis appears haphazard until one learns the difference between this form of research and the traditional empirical research with set procedures to follow. In living educational theory form of action research researchers invent their own methodologies. I used the design process beginning with the general idea unfolding towards the emergence of the specific. I believe lack of adequate understanding of this form of action research was one of the reasons why a few people in the EdD programme offered at the University of Bath used living educational theory form of action research in their enquiries. This form of action research is an evolving methodology with tremendous unexplored potential. My understanding developed further from countless meetings with Whitehead, and an ongoing experience of undertaking this form of action research.

In short, I began writing with no previous experience of how I might create self-knowledge as an international educator with special traits. It unfolded gradually from the study of the limited professional literature, personal meditation (with focused attention on the past experience) to gain personal insights and many dialogues with Whitehead, my supervisor, who has developed supervision style befitting such an inquiry. Professional literature provided me with new ideas, validation for my insights. Dialogues with my supervisor provided me confidence to travel this un-chartered territory.

I further validated my personal insights with other professionals, professional literature and my past professional reports and writings. Finally, two academics from the University of Bath validated the text. The inquiry unfolded in three interrelated stages including production of a narrative of personal experiences from available data; production of a framework to interpret the narrative and to produce structure to the thesis and production of an abstract.

Stage (1) Production of a narrative from available data

It included collection of sufficient data of the nature of my professional contributions in solving difficult problems in difficult contexts and professional learning. Testimonial from other professionals, cases, stories, critical incidents and insights with deep impressions, my past writings and reports and the study of pertinent literature provided information to construct this narrative.

I became aware of the fact that the validity of my professional knowledge in my thesis might have been enhanced with the use of multimedia and recorded professional dialogues to capture reflections-in-actions and my embodied values in my various contexts. I had no such material. However, my supervisor, and examiners were able to assess my embodied values in professional dialogues. Critical incidents provided in the thesis illustrated the quality of my professional judgement in handling complex professional situations. I ensured adequate trustworthiness by providing a large quantity of material in appendices. I had produced a narrative of my professional work useful for other professionals engaged in similar work. However, my supervisor pointed to me that I had produced a Writerly text, which needed converting into a Readerly text. It meant that I had to add my interpretation of the narrative.

My interpretation was the most important part of the thesis and of my narrative inquiry. It was to present the process of the making of my professional self together with its professional significance for me and for other professionals.

Stage 2: Production of a framework for the interpretation and order in presentation

To provide order in my writing I needed a conceptual framework. It took me a considerable literature research and reflections-on-my practice to produce such a framework presented in the above diagram. This framework provided structure to my accounts of self-development and influences on the development of others in various roles and contexts. As a result I constructed a narrative of my professional selves, roles and contexts at the beginning, and at the end of each project, with the strategy used for personal and stakeholder development in solving complex educational problems.

To provide the nature of my technical competence, I presented the nature of each professional task, self and context at the beginning and at the end of the project together with the strategy used to fill the gap between the existing and the desired state. According to my professional judgement the thesis contained very useful technical knowledge to solve complex professional problems. To provide glimpses of myself in action I added authentic cases and critical incidents of my interactions with the context.

A quotation from the professional literature opened each chapter with standards of judgment I used for interpretation of the following text. Finally, I summarised the 'what' and 'how' of my professional work in different roles and contexts from various chapters of the thesis in **Appendix 1,** unaware of the fact that the thesis presented my technical competence without an adequate explanation of my values, beliefs and outlook on life embedded in my technical competence. These had played an extremely important part in the successful completion of my work in very difficult contexts. In other words I had missed the 'Why' proving the life affirming energy in my accounts.

At the end I produced several abstracts before using one of them without deep thought. Production of an appropriate thesis and a title for a thesis is a skilful and a creative task. I acquired this skill the hard way. In my abstract I claimed that the creativity of this thesis in living educational theories form of action research literature is how I integrated my technical competence with spiritual values in a variety of international contexts and roles as an international educator with high successes in my work. I argued that technical competence provided me with the ability to execute professional tasks efficiently and effectively and the spiritual values gave me the strength/power/energy to successfully relate with people, complex contexts and roles in pursuit of worthwhile ends.

In the final chapter of the thesis I presented the path my professional life had taken for the making of my present self. Beginning with dualistic thinking and moving towards holistic thinking based on the principle of oneness and interrelatedness of life. I also briefly included

possible uses of this work for curriculum development for lifelong learning, international consultants, and international aid agencies.

Based on the National Qualifications for the award of doctorates and high levels of professional learning and contributions apparent in my thesis, I, and my supervisor assessed that it was appropriate to present my thesis to the examiners. In our view the thesis provided sufficient evidence to show critical judgement and creativity of mind in solving complex educational problems in very difficult contexts, a usual University requirement to make doctorate awards.

To my surprise the examiners were not satisfied with the thesis stating that it did not satisfy the University requirements. They recommended extra work without indicating its nature. It took me almost one year to figure out the nature of extra work required to fulfil examiners requirements.

Stage 3: Matching the abstract with the text

I used my imagination to tease out the nature of the extra work required to satisfy the examiners. I carefully read my thesis like an examiner and discovered that my thesis lacked sufficient explanation to show how I integrated technical competence with spiritual values to validate my claim to this knowledge indicated in my abstract. To make up this deficiency I wrote a new final chapter summarising the making of my professional self. Basically it showed that my values originated from the belief in the oneness of the universe. They prompted me to take initiatives towards genuine contextual needs during my interaction with my contexts and how I used my technical knowledge as service. The rejection of the first submission was a painful experience but it proved useful to learn the importance of carefully matching the abstract with the body of the thesis.

It took me a long time to learn various skills from the problems involved in presenting such a thesis. It is not the role of supervisors to teach such skills. They are responsible to help students in discovering these skills for themselves. I began my thesis without a clear idea of the purpose, methodology and criteria used to evaluate such an inquiry. It was a new and deep but, costly learning experience.

Reflections on finished work for other researchers, practitioners and for personal development

First of all I reflected on the lessons learnt for prospective researchers. I had taken on an excessive workload to complete my EdD thesis. I should have focused on one or two roles in my career instead of studying my long professional career. However it provided sufficient data to support my claims to complex knowledge.

Secondly I reflected to assess the value of this kind of inquiry for practitioners in all professions. There are important value differences amongst practitioners and academics. I do not believe we have understood and reconciled them yet. Yinger (1990) provides a useful insight into the conversation of practice. For him the conversation of practice has three central partners: a practitioner, his/her collaborators and a place. For me it is conversation between self, task and context. I suggest that action research provides opportunity to understand this conversation.

As an experienced practitioner it took me four years of part-time study to complete my thesis, involving great effort and cost. At the end I felt that it was more of an academic exercise than a practical one. I also became aware of the problem of persuading other practitioners to undertake living educational theories form of action research, which seemed most appropriate for those aspiring to become academics. It was not suitable for professional learning for those not aspiring for academic qualifications from Universities. I had to discover a new epistemology of living educational theories suitable for practitioners.

 The discovery came to me from reflections on personal practice. I learnt that 'professional dialogue' expressed embodied values and technical competence of professional educators even better than those expressed in their written accounts. I proposed that **professional dialogues amongst professionals are another form of living educational theory.** Ideal examples of such dialogues are found in dialogues between Krishnamurti, a spiritual teacher of this century, and Dr Bohm, a scientist (Krishnamurti & Dr Bohm, 1985) engaged in explicating complex issues of human nature. I had experienced such spontaneous dialogues with Whitehead and with a few other professionals as an international consultant.

All forms of discourse do not constitute a professional dialogue. Professional dialogues are rooted in such values as mutual respect, trust, openness of mind to learn and the ability to express one's thoughts clearly using embodied inquiry and advocacy skills. Dialogues are also a good indicator of one's character. It makes personal presence of individuals engaged in solving authentic problems in real settings a necessity. I do not fully understand and appreciate this form of living educational theories yet. Many hierarchical organisations do not share the values and skills involved in such dialogues. In future I hope to create learning

spaces for professional dialogues to occur in order to learn and to influence the learning of the other participants.

Thirdly, I reflected on the value of this work to know and communicate myself. I first doubted the value of this work based on reflections on the past experiences. I know reality is in the present and it is difficult to capture. My work seemed to have little value for my future professional practice. I realised from the study of Collingwood (1938) that the value of my EdD work for the award of an EdD was in my present interpretation of the past actions to construct an image of **my present professional self,** which was the aim of this inquiry**.** According to Collingwood (1938), 'History is past in the present'. My present self/I consists of a professional with certain distinct traits and standards of judgement. Furthermore, living educational theories are narrative inquiries. I learnt from this inquiry that narratives are not just descriptions of what happened: They include interpretations to create knowledge.

I discovered the following standards of judgement embedded in my professional work in my EdD thesis as a professional educator. I value integration of technical development with human development as service to one universal life. For me the purpose of education is preparation for making a life not just a preparation for making a living. The following quotations express my emergent values.

We are blind until we see that, in the human plan,
Nothing is worth the building, unless it builds the man.
Why build these cities glorious, if man unbuilded goes.
In vain we build the world unless the builder also goes (Edwin Markham).

When one has humility; one is able to meet the things of life that are pressing,
because one is not important, one does not look through one's own pressures and
sense of importance; one looks at the problem for itself and then is able to solve
it (J. Krishnamurti).

To improve oneself continuously through learning from life as a whole and
dedicating one's knowledge as service to cosmic life is worship to God as the
Universal Self (Punia 1985).

Fifthly I reflected on the distinctive features of my living educational theory. I first learnt the distinction between living theories based on embodied knowledge and those based on propositional knowledge. I had drawn heavily on propositional knowledge from Senge (1991), Covey (1992 & 2004) and selected spiritual literature to validate my interpretation of my lived professional experiences. However, the emergent knowledge from my thesis and that of those engaged in living educational theory form of research at the University of Bath is

different from that of the propositional knowledge presented by these writers. The educators producing living educational theories at the University of Bath provide their embodied living educational theories. My EdD thesis presents accounts of my embodied values. I discovered that we need both propostional and embodied living educational theories. We need propositional knowledge/theories to validate our embodied knowledge and we need propositional knowledge to learn to embody spiritual principles.

Next I discovered the distinction between living theories based on personal values and Universal principles. At that time I believed my living educational theory was also different from Whitehead (1993, 1999) emphasising narratives of his struggles for living by personal values. Unlike living by personal values, **my living educational theory** was based on my spiritual principles with potential to unite people of this planet. My living educational theory began with a set of values derived primarily from personal needs (Whitehead 1989), later emphasis shifted to living in accordance with the values derived from the Universal principle of oneness and interrelatedness of life. Personal development became service to this principle. Living by a universal principle is different from and very difficult to live by than living in accordance with one's own embodied values and beliefs. It demands personal mastery and lifelong learning in transforming the self.

Mahatma Gandhi was attempting to live by such a principle. Personal character, values and principles are the most valuable asset of successful leaders. Often they are hidden. Living educational theories form of action research is an attempt to make them explicit to share them with others. "*The sources of leadership success lie below the surface. They are personal character, principles and values of the leader. The most successful leaders work to develop these roots in themselves, and the organisations they lead*" (Groberg, 1993).

Unexplored potential of such an inquiry for Personal and Organisational Development

Action research produces knowledge from action for action for improvement. At the basic level living educational theory might be viewed in the context of personal accountability to improve practice using technical knowledge. But it transcends this level when it embarks on the study of interaction between the self, role and context as an integrated process. It produces practical knowledge for sustainable human development. I believe it has opened new possibilities for understanding the nature of human action on this planet. In this section I explore the contribution of this enquiry

towards the literature on holistic human development, international education, consultancy work and for sustainable human development on our planet.

First, this thesis draws our attention for need for holistic thinking. For instance, it emphasises physical, mental and spiritual development as an integrated process (Covey, 2004). It emphasises personal, contextual and role development as an integrated process. Absence of holistic human development brought about by technology manifests itself in various relational problems in humanity. For instance, recently general decline in ethical values has resulted in decline in trust in important social organisations.

I believe Senge (1991), Covey (1992) & (2004) provide useful propositional knowledge for those aspiring for creating learning organisations, character development and for living lives of greatness. My EdD thesis together with the doctorate theses of my colleagues at the University of Bath are the lived experiences of those struggling to live by this propositional knowledge. They are the living educational theories of professionals striving for holistic personal growth to become universal people and they are influencing others to do the same. They improve their professional knowledge to solve human problems as service to all humanity, not just for enhancing their careers.

Secondly, besides making a useful contribution towards living educational theory form of action research showing how I blended my values with technical competence in influencing others to do the same my EdD thesis also makes a useful contribution towards the literature on international education by presenting the living educational theory of an international educator. It validates the Pasternak (1998) model for international education based on human values, including need for global knowledge, multicultural knowledge, and self-knowledge (including both secular and spiritual knowledge).

Thirdly, it makes a useful contribution towards the literature on international consultancy. It presents the living educational theory of an international educator who lived the following belief expressed in Block (2000):

Although consultancy is service for a fee, consulting at its best is an act of love: the wish to be genuinely helpful to another…to use what we know, feel or have endured in a way that lightens the weight on another (Block 2000).

Fourthly, living educational theory form of action research provides us with a useful strategy for sustainable social change on our planet. It replaces social change by fits and starts and it replaces technological development at the cost of human and environmental development.

Action research has many forms and living educational theory is one of its forms. But it is the most useful form of action research mostly used by academics in a few Universities in the UK. I am concerned in promoting this kind of action research as a strategy for sustainable organisational and social development in the international context. It is a useful but a formidable task. This paper is a call for readers to join me in this venture.

The Self emerging from my inquiry

In the early part of my professional life I was more of an educational technologist testing propositional and disciplinary knowledge in practice to produce personal practical knowledge. I used owning and contextualising process to convert theoretical knowledge into personal practical knowledge. After twenty years as an educator using dichotomous thinking and living by my personal values, a significant transformation took place in my professional life suddenly.

I became conscious of the spiritual principle of 'Oneness and Interdependence' of life. It is difficult to explain this change rationally. This change manifested itself in the form of spiritual experiences beyond rational explanation. I believe my prolonged international living, upbringing, and an inquiring mind may have caused flashes of spiritual experiences of contact with the universal self. My belief may have been in my subconscious mind in the early part of my life to manifest in the appropriate environment. My desire to understand these experiences led to formal initiation into the discipline of spirituality. In (1985) I received formal initiation from a spiritual Master who taught me the methodology of spiritual living. I have tried to live by my Master's teachings ever since.

This initiation influenced my later professional work. I believe my vast technical competence acquired through continuous learning in several roles and contexts and character based on spiritual values had provided me with the ability to successfully deal with important educational problems in very complex contexts. This combination of technical competence with embodied spiritual values introduced an element of service into my career.

Consequently, I claimed that the creativity of my thesis in living educational theory form of action research is how I integrated my technical competence with the principle of oneness and

interrelatedness of life providing me with the will to act beyond self interests. I seemed to meet the following standards of judgement proposed for leadership in organisations.

In terms of leadership this implies a degree of sophistication in being able to articulate a belief system and use it as a benchmark in a variety of personal and professional contexts. This is obvious area for reflection-in-action and mentoring (West-Burnaham, 2000, p.77).

During my professional career I considered myself a curriculum and staff developer engaged in planning, implementing and evaluating learning experiences for my students. However, EdD inquiry has taught me that professional curriculum developers have the competence to create learning opportunities for themselves and for all those involved in collaborative action with them. Whitehead calls such people professional educators; Senge (1991) calls them leaders of industrial and commercial organisations and Covey (2004) calls them servant leaders. I consider my emergent self a servant. This type of professionalism & leadership has the potential to promote action research, continuous learning and learning organisations as conceptualised in Senge (1991). I believe my EdD thesis offers the autobiography of a professional educator who embodied the principles advanced in the writings of Senge (1991), Covey (1992) & (2004), and Krishnamurti (1986). He was not conscious of it before the EdD inquiry.

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