

Researching To Improve Educational Practice For The Public Benefit With Living Citizenship And 5X5X5=Creativity

Successful Proposal for presentation at the British Educational Research Association Conference 4-6th September 2012 in Manchester, UK.

With Penny Hay, Bath Spa University; Marie Huxtable, Liverpool Hope University; Mark Potts and Steve Coombs, Bath Spa University; Jack Whitehead, Liverpool Hope University.

Overview

The Objects of BERA are to encourage the pursuit of educational research and its application for both the improvement of educational practice and for the public benefit (BERA, 2010). Ball and Tyson (2011) in introducing the theme of the 2012 AERA conference as 'To Know Is Not Enough', point out that that educational researchers around the world have only weakly fulfilled the aim of improving educational practice for the public benefit, whilst at the same time they have fulfilled the aim of advancing knowledge about education and encouraging scholarly inquiry related to education.

There have been recent discussions about the desirability of changing the name of BERA from the British Educational Research Association to the British Education Research Association. The presentations in this symposium cohere around the principle that as educational researchers rather than education researchers we aim to fulfil the objects of BERA, by focusing on both improving educational practice for the public benefit whilst making contributions to educational knowledge. A clear distinction is made between education researchers whose contributions to knowledge are focused on disciplined forms and fields of knowledge related to education and educational researchers whose knowledge-creation is focused on educational knowledge. The educational knowledge of educational researchers includes insights from the theories, methods and methodologies of education researchers.

Each of the presentations retains a focus on improving practice and generating educational knowledge. The enquiries are grounded in a social value of responsibility for living citizenship in relation to the public benefit. Taken together the presentations include researching young people researching their world in 5x5x5= Creativity, an action research organisation; researching the extension of educational opportunities for all; the clarification and communication of energy-flowing values as explanatory principles and living standards of judgment with multi-media narratives; the transformation of educational knowledge through legitimating living standards of judgment including living citizenship in the Academy.

Ontological coherence is provided by the commitment to develop knowledge and understanding that will contribute to education and wellbeing in characterizing all work with values arising from love and hope (Liverpool Hope University 2010). Epistemological coherence is provided by energy-flowing and living standards of judgment for evaluating the validity of the contributions of educational knowledge. Methodological coherence is provided by narrative and autoethnographic

explanations. These include video-data from professional practice to clarify and develop ostensibly the meanings of living standards of judgment including living citizenship.

Researching Children Researching The World

Penny Hay, Bath Spa University.

Background

Paulo Freire (1972) described educational conversations as 'a process of self-awareness through collective self-enquiry and reflection.' In educational conversations individuals go beyond the given curriculum in expressing themselves within their living curriculum using different media in a creative space.

5x5x5=creativity is an independent, arts-based action research organisation which supports children, teachers, artists and parents in their exploration, expression and development of creative skills for life. Now established as an independent charity, 140 research settings have been involved to date, across 8 Local Authorities: Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset, Oxfordshire, Somerset, London, South Gloucestershire

Foci

The emphasis is on researching different ways of knowing and thinking about art and life: intuitive, practical, expressive and intellectual in educational contexts.

Methods

The methods focus the 'triangles' of educator, artist and cultural centre'. Each 'triangle' has a mentor who maintains regular supportive contact throughout the project. The mentor team includes experienced artists, educators, local authority advisers, consultants and university lecturers. Mentors respond to the specific needs of the triangle members, the artist, the educators and colleagues in the cultural centres.

Framing

The project is inspired by the creative educational approach in Reggio Emilia.

The key philosophical principles of 5x5x5:

- children are seen as innate and creative knowledge builders, explorers and co-constructors of their learning
- educators and artists are enablers and companions in the children's learning within a culture of listening
- learning is focussed on the process of the children's explorations, not the end product
- documenting children's learning journeys is our method for evaluating

- and reflecting upon the children's thinking and learning
- the development of a creative learning community of teachers, artists, co-workers in cultural centres, parents and children
- involving family and community in life-long learning

Findings

The findings are reported in case studies on: thinking imaginatively; becoming a mathematician; making a museum; sensory experience; creative expression; beyond words and a masters dissertation on *Trusting in the ideas of children. An exploration of creative collaborative enquiries with young children.* (Elders, 2010)

The commitment between educators, artists, pupils and parents to work in collaboration was found to be most significant key in interpreting and exploring the meaning of the events taking place in addition to that of the researcher. The commitment to collaborate between educators included a shared an interest in the research aims and questions for their own professional development purposes.

Bringing Living Citizenship As A Living Standard Of Judgment Into The Academy.

Mark Potts, Bath Spa University.

Steve Coombs, Bath Spa University.

Background

The BERA professional user review of 2003 asks: How do we learn to become good citizens? Members of the 5x5x5 = Creativity project team, suggest:

“ a democratic society depends on everyone taking responsibility and contributing what they can, which is possible only when each of us feels we belong and are seen as uniquely creative, capable and self-determining individuals. ” (John and Pound, 2011 p. 1)

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Researching how to make a difference to people’s lives by:

Embedding and sustaining an international educational partnership.

Evaluating how the education of the participants have been influenced through the activities of the partnership.

Addressing questions about how to deliver the goal of more informed citizens through citizenship education.

Researching the transferable pedagogical protocols for designing and developing international education as part of a new CPD framework.

Providing advice for government ministers on how best to extend educational partnerships.

Methods

The methods are distinguished by the idea of methodologically inventiveness (Dadds and Hart, 2001), to synthesise existing methodological approaches to create one which best suits the researchers’ professional working needs (Gardner and Coombs, 2009). The methods include:

- action reflection cycles to generate knowledge that is useful in improving practice.
- qualitative methods, including triangulation of data, to analyse the extensive amount of qualitative data, including video footage.
- procedures of validation to overcome researcher bias.
- Procedures for resolving ethical issues related to the 2011 BERA ethical guidelines.

Framing

The presentation includes the following analytic frames:

A perspective on action research from which to synthesise a useful and unique approach that develops Whitehead and McNiff's (2006) concept of a living educational theory as narrative-based inquiry.

The use of a typology of research that distinguishes between the experimental paradigm assumptions of "prove" versus "improve" (Coombs & Smith, 2003).

The use of a self-study reflective research paradigm in one's practice as a professional educator to show how narrative-based inquiries can be fed back into improvements in teaching (Doyle & Carter, 2003)

The integration of principles of participation and democracy (Reason and Rowan, 1981).

Findings

- An original and transferable way of analysing qualitative data to increase validity
- The clarification and communication of shared values to distinguish international educational partnerships
- Transferable pedagogical protocols for teaching citizenship through international educational partnerships (IEPs)
- A clarification of the notion of 'living citizenship' in CPD for participants in international projects.

How do I improve what I am doing with a living theory praxis?

Marie Huxtable, University of Bath.

Background

There has been much discussion in BERA and AERA about the appropriate forms of representation for the educational theories generating by practitioner-researchers in their educational research (Eisner, 1988, 1993, 1997, 2005; Bruce Ferguson, Whitehead 2008a, Laidlaw, 2008; Adler Collins, 2008). Recent discussions in Research Intelligence have suggested that an epistemological transformation in what counts as educational knowledge is underway in the living educational theories being produced by practitioner-researchers with multimedia narratives.

Foci

In this self-study of my professional practice as an educational psychologist, leading the development of *inclusive* gifted and talented *educational* theory, practice and provision, I explicate the relationally dynamic standards of judgment that can be used to validate and legitimate in the Academy, the embodied educational knowledge of practitioner-researchers.

The explanations of educational influence I present include the recognition, expression, clarification and communication of energy flowing ontological values of loving recognition, respectful connectedness and educational responsibility and values of an inclusive, emancipating and egalitarian society. These values are integrated within a concept of living citizenship. The explanations include analyses of, and creative educational responses to, government and local government policies on gifts and talents in education.

Methods

The Living-Theory methodology (Whitehead, 2008b) draws insights from a range of methods from phenomenological, ethnographic, case study, grounded theory and narrative approaches to educational research (Cresswell, 2007) as well as autoethnography in the generation of my living-theory praxis. It includes a multimedia narrative to explicate the meanings of the energy flowing values and understandings that constitute explanatory principles of educational influences. Rigour is enhanced using the methods advocated by Winter (1989) and social validity is enhanced using the principles advocated by Habermas (1976, 2002).

Framing

Whitehead's (1989, 2008) Living-Theory and Living-Theory methodology; Hymer's (2007) generative-transformational framework for gift creation; Rayner's (2005) idea of inclusionality; Biesta's (2006) ideas on moving beyond a language of learning into a language of education through the exercise of educational responsibility; Huxtable's (2011) idea of living-theory praxis.

Findings

The significance of the paper is in the contribution it makes to an educational knowledge-base of practice, theory and systemic influence in the development of a new, inclusional educational epistemology with a form of praxis that includes living citizenship.

Can educational influences in learning be explained with values emerging from hope and love?

Jack Whitehead, Liverpool Hope University.

Background

There has been much discussion in BERA and AERA about the appropriate standards of judgment for evaluating the quality and validity of the educational knowledge generated by practitioner-researchers. Schön (1995) has called for the development of a new epistemology for the scholarship of teaching. Snow (2001) has called for the development of methodologies for making public the professional knowledge of teachers. McGettrick et.al. (2010) have called for a new professionalism in education with values arising from hope and love. Both the Objects of BERA and the Mission of AERA focus on research that improves practice and contributes to the public good.

Foci

There are three research questions addressed in this presentation:

- 1) Can values emerging from hope and love form the explanatory principles used by individuals to explain their educational influences in their own learning, the learning of others and the learning of the social formations in which they live and work?
- 2) Can multi-media narratives communicate the meanings of the embodied practical principles, including living citizenship, that individuals use to explain their educational influences in learning?
- 3) How are the living boundaries that sustain and transform what counts as educational knowledge in the Academy legitimating the embodied knowledge of practitioner-researchers with insights from 5X5X5=Creativity?

Methods

Action reflection cycles are used to clarify and develop the meanings of ontological values in educational relationships. Methods of validation (Habermas, 1976) show how these energy-flowing values can be formed into living epistemological standards of judgment. Visual narratives are used in explaining educational influences in learning with methods of empathetic resonance and validity. These include Winter's (1989) six criteria for enhancing rigour. Lather's (1991) catalytic validity is used to show the influences of ideas from the research in international contexts.

Framing

Answers to the research questions include the analytic frames:

Biesta's (2006) language of education; Bourdieu's (2000) ideas of habitus and social formation; Charles's (2007) guiltless recognition and societal reidentification; Delong's (2002) culture of inquiry; Farren's (2005) pedagogy of the unique and web of betweenness; Huxtable's (2011) living theory praxis; McNiff's (2006) my story is my living educational theory; Rayner's (2006) idea of inclusionality; Vasilyuk's (1996) psychology of experiencing; Walton's (2011) co-operative enquiry; Whitehead's (1989, 2008) ideas of living educational theories and living theory methodology; Laidlaw's (1996) idea of living standards of judgment.

Findings

The use of multi-media narratives can communicate shared meanings of energy-flowing explanatory principles, including living citizenship as living standards of judgment.

