

**Jack Whitehead's introductory comments for the module on Teaching and Action Research in the programme on Teaching in Educational Innovation in University Teaching at the University of Saint Simon, in Cochabamba, Columbia, September 2016.**

I first want to thank the organisers of the module for inviting me to lead the module. It is a pleasure and privilege to be here. If you would like to know more about me, and my Living Theory research into action and other forms of research you can access a brief curriculum vitae at:

<http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/jack/jwcv2016bolivia.pdf>

You can also access my web-site at <http://www.actionresearch.net> .

My priority is to respond to your questions and issues. Over the course of the module I also hope to share ideas on the following:

- i) Clarifying and communicating the values that matter to you. We all have our own unique constellation of values. In my case these include love, inquiry learning, knowledge-creation, freedom, justice, dignity, responsibility, pleasure and economic security.
- ii) Focusing on what concerns you in your professional practice that you want to improve, with the importance of a question of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing?'
- iii) Constructing an action-plan with an action-reflection planner to improve your educational practice. Gathering data and distinguishing this from evidence.
- iv) Constructing a valid, evidence-based explanation of your educational influences in your own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations that influence your educational practice and understandings.

As University academics I think that you will be used to the idea that knowledge is shared mainly through academic writings that is through printed pages of text. Your national and international reputations together with the reputation of Saint Simon University is likely to rest on the quality of your academic publications in your subject.

In researching your teaching in educational innovation I am asking you to trust me in exploring a different view of knowledge. I am asking you to trust my judgment that in this room there is a great depth and extent of educational knowledge **embodied** in yourselves and that you are expressing this knowledge in what you do in your professional practices as educators and researchers. You are expressing this knowledge every day in your relationships with each other and your students.

I am also asking you to trust me for a few days that I know what I am doing in supporting you to make public and share your embodied knowledge. It is not just a case of making your embodied *educational* knowledge public but you

researching into the educational influence it is having in your own learning, the learning of others and social formations to improve it and to test the validity of your knowledge and claims to know your practice

Rather than giving priority to your reading of other peoples ideas (including my own) I shall focus on a process of researching into your own practice, that includes action research, self-study, narrative inquiry and autoethnography, as you express and make public your embodied, educational knowledge. I shall be encouraging you to talk with each other about your values, about what you wish to do to improve your practice. I shall be asking you to bring and share evidence with each other about the educational influences you have having in your own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations within which we live and work.

My intention is to help you to enhance the reputation of your University through the knowledge you are creating and sharing by bringing the innovative approaches of some forms of action research and Living Theory research into your pedagogy and research. I am hoping to encourage you to work at your knowledge-creation so that you can share it at the 1<sup>st</sup> Global Assembly for Knowledge Democracy in Cartagena on the 16<sup>th</sup> June 2017 and in the Action Research Network of the Americas (ARNA) Conference on Participation and Democratization of Knowledge: New Convergences for Reconciliation in Cartagena on June 12-16, 2017. See <http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/brief.pdf> for the Brief and Call for Participation in English and <http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/arna/ARNA2017briefspanish.pdf> for the Brief and Call for Participation in Spanish.

The success of the module will depend on the questions you are asking and on our responses that help you in your professional learning and in creating your explanations of your educational influences in learning.

My email is [jack@actionresearch.net](mailto:jack@actionresearch.net) and I do encourage you to let me know your questions and the issues you would like to discuss.

Most of the learning will be cooperative in the sense that we will be learning from and with each other. I shall be bringing to you resources from around the world that should help you to locate the global significance of **making public your own knowledge**. I am hoping that everyone will be sharing their own values with your intercultural understandings that distinguish the Bolivian historical and cultural influences in your own practice. You will hear me stressing the importance of clarifying and communicating the meanings of the expression of your **embodied values** that distinguish your practice as educational. When I refer to values I am meaning what really matters to you, in your life and work as an educational practitioner and researcher **that carries hope for the flourishing of humanity**. Because of the importance of these values as explanatory principles in your educational influence, I intend focus on your expression of values in practice in all our sessions. Because of their importance I shall begin by asking you to spend some 10 minutes that is 5

minutes each, with a person next to you sharing what really matters to you in your life in general and in your work in education in particular. I shall then ask for your questions that you would like answering over the course of the module and any issues that you would like to see addressed.