

Mentoring In Living Educational Theory Cultures Of Inquiry For Teacher Professionalism in Creating the Future

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Introduction

In this paper I share some of my thoughts, experiences and vision on teacher professionalism based on my over 40-year career in primary, secondary and tertiary education in Ontario, Canada and in the last 5 years as an international mentor of graduate and post-graduate teacher-researchers. I begin with my socio-historical-cultural context as a teacher and union and system leader in a 30,000-student school district where I encouraged and supported teacher research as professional development. Finally, I advocate for the creation of living-educational-theories in cultures of inquiry using dialogue as research method with visual data and for intercultural education for improving teacher professionalism for the future and for human flourishing.

Socio-historical-cultural context

One of the features of primary and secondary education in Ontario, Canada's largest province, is the strength of the teacher unions, much stronger than other provinces in Canada and perhaps the strongest in the world. Ontario Secondary Teachers' Federation (OSSTF) in financial and political resources, OSSTF is often viewed as the 'economic juggernaut' and it maintains a well staked out place in Ontario's educational arena (Duane, Townsend & Bridgeland, 1985, p. 53). The effect of this power is that most decisions about education are made in partnership although not without tension, conflict and sometimes work withdrawal. Having been a District President and Ontario Teachers' Federation governor for OSSTF, I can share that the union is formidable and tenacious in its protection of teachers, their workload, benefits and pensions. It offers first-rate professional development and, at the time that I was involved, that included action research supports for teachers.

One of the fights that the unions lost was the Ontario College of Teachers (OCE). Established in 1997, judged by Ontario teacher unions as a "top-down' mechanism to limit teacher and union autonomy under the veil of professionalism" (MacLellan, 2014, p. 67), OCE was "legislated to regulate the profession of teaching and to govern its members, develop,

establish and maintain qualifications for membership in the College, to accredit professional teacher education programs and ongoing education programs and to set standards” (otc.ca) Despite teacher union concerns, OCE has served as a structure that contributes significantly to teacher professionalism. In recent years, there has been some incursion by the provincial government in reducing the size and power of the college.

The Ontario Education Act prescribes that the school year calendar include up to 9 days for professional development and the Ontario Ministry of Education, school districts and teacher unions all provide funds for teachers’ professional activities. Ontario teachers are highly educated and accredited. While students are tested provincially, the results are not used for student grades or school funding purposes.

It was in this context that I, as a superintendent of education for 13 years, introduced the Living Educational Theory model of professional development building it from a small group of 7 teachers and school administrators to a critical mass of teacher-researchers across the system (DeLong, 2002). We created 8 volumes of *Passion in Professional Practice* (DeLong, 2001-2008) which was the repository of the classroom research. I invited teachers to create their own-living-educational theories and to personalize their own learning as continuous professional development, not through my or anyone else’s agenda. This model of professional growth links research and practice and leads to substantive change where we ‘both explore and theorise practice’ (McAteer, 2013, p.13). Bev McDonald, one of the early adopters in the Brant Country Board of Education, wrote that she had “grown as a professional” and “I have had the opportunity to reflect and review Literacy in the Primary Grades and to implement a very exciting literacy program in my classroom. Throughout the whole process, I have felt in complete control of all aspects, along with my two colleagues.” (Halsall & Hossack, 1996, p. 24).

As a university adjunct professor, I organized and taught this process for accreditation at the Master’s level for cohorts of educators in several school districts (DeLong, 2002). Subsequent to that, I was a consultant with another school district to implement a Living Educational Theory research as professional development (Griffin, 2011; Campbell, 2011, 2019). An excellent description of our context was written by Liz Campbell, one of the students that I have mentored, in her doctoral thesis:

In my 20 plus years of experience in the public system, I witnessed, first-hand, dedicated, diligent, and compassionate people acting in ways that honour a belief that everything is interconnected; ... at the same time I witnessed these very same people, including myself, acting in ways that suggest the opposite is true. (Campbell, 2019, p.6)

For the last 5 years, I have mentored graduate and post-graduate practitioner-researchers around the world to create their own living-educational-theories in global cultures of inquiry and publish their results. Intercultural education leads to increased understanding and empathy through co-learning.

Support is a critical component in the learning and growth and includes opportunities to dialogue, living cultures of inquiry, critical friends, and guidance from mentors (DeLong, 2021). “Engaging in dialogue also calls for participants to develop a sense of mutual respect towards one another and developing an awareness of one’s own and one another’s fragility is paramount.” (Glenn, 2021, p. 20). In this next section, I delineate what I propose for an approach to professional development for the future by creating one’s own living-educational-theory in a living culture of inquiry (DeLong, 2002). Jack Whitehead and I recorded a dialogue on these 11 points:



Jackie and Jack’s dialogue on
A Living Educational Theory Research approach to professional development
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SXgMTZO4Nys>

A Living Educational Theory Research approach to (continuing) professional development

Introduction

Living Educational Theory research is a form of professional practitioner self-study research which generates valid accounts of their values-based “explanations of their educational influence in their own learning, the learning of others, and the learning of social formations” (Whitehead, 1989). It is expected that the research will explicitly explain the form of logic,

epistemology, standards of judgement and units of appraisal – all necessary to generate a living-educational-theory, while asking the question, ‘How can I improve my practice?’. The authors’ “life-affirming and life-enhancing values as they live and work, recognizing and resolving contradictions as far as they can” needs to be explicit. <https://ejolts.net/files/284.pdf>

When supports are in place in a living culture of inquiry (DeLong, 2002), creating one’s own living-educational-theory:

1. Focuses activities on learning and improvement

The focus on improvement can be seen in the grounding question of a Living Educational Theory Research approach to professional development: ‘How can I improve what I am doing?’ The practitioner-researcher focuses her attention, actions and data collection on how to get better at a particular aspect of her work. She tries to restrict her focus to a small enough area so that the project is doable and recognizes the constraints of working and researching at the same time.

The focus on learning can be seen in the knowledge generated in a Living Educational Theory Research approach to professional development. The knowledge is generated and shared as an individual’s explanation of their educational influences in their own learning in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations that influence practice and understanding.

2. Facilitates self and peer assessment

In Living Educational Theory Research, there is a concern with enhancing the validity of the researcher’s explanation of educational influences in learning, through self and peer assessments that focus on the mutual rational control of critical discussion. Self-assessment is a necessary part of an evidence-based claim to have improved practice and student learning. However, judgments of self may be influenced by bias and error. Hence it is important to supplement self-assessment with peer assessment in validation groups of between 3-8 peers that enhance the validity of evidence-based explanations through the mutual rational controls of critical discussion. In Living Educational Theory Research validation groups help to strengthen the validity of the self-assessment explanation by responding to questions (Habermas, 1976, pp. 1-2) such as:

How can I improve the comprehensibility of my explanation?

How can I strengthen the evidence I use to justify my claims to knowledge in my explanations?

How can I deepen and extend my sociocultural and sociohistorical understandings in my explanations of educational influences in learning?

How can I enhance the authenticity of my explanations in the sense of showing that I am living my values as fully as possible?

With the “I” at the centre of the research, the investigation is a self-study. However, we rely on others to hold us accountable for our claims to know. In order to avoid “smooth stories of self” (MacLure, 1995) when we engage others to hold us accountable for our claims to know, to have lived according to our values and to have improved.

3. Increases the sense of self-awareness, control, and confidence

A Living Educational Theory Research approach to continuing professional development, increases the sense of self-awareness, control and confidence. Evidence to support these claims can be accessed as follows:

Self-awareness – The explanations of educational influences in learning that can be accessed freely from <https://www.actionresearch.net/living/living.shtml> and

<https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/ActionResearch/passion/index.html>

all demonstrate an increase in self-awareness in learning to live values of human flourishing as fully as possible. Self-awareness is increased in the recognition of the need to recognize the biases and errors in one’s own self-assessments and how peer-assessment can help to overcome such biases and errors.

Control – To have control over one’s own professional development increases confidence and professionalism. The practitioner-researcher is the person best placed to determine where she needs to act to improve her teaching practice. The process of this determination is important for the longterm commitment to the research process. Only through feeling an internal need to improve will the commitment be realized.

The use of the methods of Living Educational Theory Research, such as action-reflection cycles, digital visual data, dialogue as method, and living-posters emphasise the importance of enhancing control over oneself and one's own research in improving practice and generating and sharing the knowledge one is generating.

The experience of the practicing teachers is that they felt in control of the whole process and felt trusted.

Confidence – Those practitioner-researchers using a Living Educational Theory Research for continuing professional development enhance their confidence as they present at local, national and international conferences and see their work appearing in research journals.

The risk for the school district is that once teachers have confidence in and recognize their embodied knowledge, they will be reluctant to give the control back to the school and system leaders.

4. Provides a different and wider lens for the practitioner and her students/colleagues

Explaining educational influences in learning while taking account of sociocultural and sociohistorical influences requires an engagement with different and wider lenses for understanding self and the social formations that influence practice and understanding.

Creating one's own living-educational-theory is even more exciting when the teacher and students become co-researchers and peer assessors. Having responsibility for one's own learning and living according to one's own values is a life skill for improving our lives, the world around us and contributing to the flourishing of humanity.

5. Fosters a continuous cycle of action, reflection and review

Action-reflection cycles are a distinguishing feature of a Living Educational Theory Research approach to continuing professional development. This involves a continuing process of: expressing concerns when values are not being lived fully; imagining improvements and choosing an action plan to act on; acting and gathering data on which to make a judgement on the effectiveness of actions in terms of improving practice and living values as fully as possible; evaluating the effective of actions in improving practice; modifying concerns, plans and actions in the light of the evaluations.

Once we start down this path of taking action, reflecting on its effectiveness, reviewing the next action, it becomes a way of life, a process of continuous reflection and assessment.

5. Creates and shares new knowledge

A Living Educational Theory Research approach to continuing professional development includes two related strands – improving practice and generating and sharing knowledge. Hence it includes a focus on creating and sharing new knowledge.

As long as knowledge is seen as theoretical and emerging from theoretical academics in universities where the gate-keepers reside and control, the knowledge of the practitioner will not be available for the improvement of education and learning. The teacher and the students in the classroom are the experts on where improvement needs to occur and what actions need to be taken to effect that change. When they research and share their own learning and teaching, they contribute to the knowledge base of teaching, learning and assessment of the real world, the practice of education.

6. Recognizes and confirms individual ways of knowing and embodied knowledge

For much of the life of the academy, research has been confined by quantitative, statistical and propositional ways of knowing. More recently, intuitive, artistic, and women's ways of knowing have been more widely-accepted and promoted. In addition, teachers and students have been seen as consumers and adopters of the ideas of others, not as knowledge-creators. This restrictive view of education promoted the consumption model and limited inquiry-based learning and access to the embodied knowledge of practitioner-researchers of all ages.

A Living Educational Theory Research approach to continuing professional development, by its nature in generating explanations of educational influence in learning, recognises and confirms, through the use of self and peer-assessment in validation groups, individual ways of knowing and embodied knowledge. It is essential to make public the embodied knowledge of practitioners and to evolve the knowledge that is made public in the course of its emergence through practice.

7. Strengthens the voice of the practitioner and the student

‘Talking at’ has been the professional development way of conducting in-service training, for the most part. This method rarely works in terms of transforming practice so that learning is enhanced. The intended transfer from theory into practice does not occur because the learner, practitioner or student is not engaged, the learning is not personalized and the commitment to change is not aroused. For learning to improve, for knowledge to be created, the practitioners and students’ voices must be raised, listened to and acted on.

Gaining academic recognition for the embodied knowledge and making it public strengthens the voice of the practitioner. In generating a valid, evidence-based explanation of educational influences in learning, practitioners respond to their students’ responses and include these in their explanations of educational influences in learning.

9. Recognizes different cultural experiences

In contributing to enhancing the global educational influence of a Living Educational Theory Research approach to continuing professional development, it is essential to recognise, respect and, where necessary, to challenge or question cultural differences. Without this recognition, respect or questioning, it is likely that an individual practitioner from one culture might be in danger of behaving in a colonizing way in another. This is a particular danger where practitioner-researchers such as ourselves have been culturally influenced by Western Academic Traditions. We have found it necessary to question these traditions as we have engaged with Eastern epistemologies and insights from Africa on Ubuntu and Hawaii on Aloha and insights from indigenous knowledges.

The Living Educational Theory approach focuses on values-based research. Because we share so many common values and understandings, it opens the door to sharing different cultural experiences and inter-cultural education. The access to internet has meant that we can meet our fellow practitioner-researchers creating their own living-educational-theories to share our concerns, provide encouragement, support and resources any time, given time differences. We learn about other ways of seeing the world and how we can help each other improve it.

10. Contributes to professional dialogue and arts-based approaches

By its nature, a Living Educational Theory Research approach to continuing professional development contributes to professional dialogue and professional development. Professional

dialogues are necessary in cultures of inquiry and validation groups to help to strengthen the validity and objectivity of an evidence-based explanation of educational influences in learning. The approach is focused on an understanding of professional development that includes both improving professional practice and generating and sharing a contribution to the professional knowledgebase of education.

A significant source of data in creating one's own living-educational-theory is through dialogue as research method. Educational conversations collected and stored in video recordings and stored on YouTube provide data to support or challenge one's claims to know. With journals like EJOLTs where visual data stored in various media is valued, educational conversations bring clear evidence of life-affirming energy and energy-flowing values that are difficult to explain through text alone. Alternate forms of data representation are essential to the explication of values such as "loved into learning" as they often defy lexical definitions.

A valid living-educational-theory provides clear evidence of educational improvement in one's capacities to teach better, learn better, be better.

11. Transforms lives and contributes to human flourishing

A Living Educational Theory Research approach to continuing professional development transforms lives with its focus on living, as fully as possible, values of human flourishing. This focus on the values of human flourishing is not only expressed in improving practice but also included in the values-based explanations of educational influence in learning with human flourishing. It becomes 'a way of living/life' (Griffin & Delong, 2021, p. 1).

Within Living Educational Theory research, it is common for the practitioner-researcher to share that creating her own living-educational-theory was transformative. Knowing that one is living according to one's own values or a living contradiction is a life-affirming process that builds your own confidence in your place in the world and in improving it.

Part of this transformation is in extending one's global understanding of what it means to be a professional educator who is engaged with learning to contribute as a global citizen to overcoming the world crises. Brown (2021), working with teams of researchers, states that as global citizens we are faced with seven major global problems we must address: 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 and its biggest manifestation, global tax havens. Living Educational Theory researchers acknowledge that these problems influence what we are doing and that:

Each one presents an immense challenge that requires an urgent global response and solution. All should be on the world's agenda today. None can be solved by one nation acting on its own, but all can be addressed if we work together as a global community.

Maxwell (2021) lists the world crises in a way similar to Brown while distinguishing between knowledge-inquiry and wisdom-inquiry in two great problems in learning. He believes that knowledge-inquiry has been successful in learning about the universe, and about ourselves, and others forms of life as a part of the universe but that knowledge-inquiry has failed in learning how to create a genuinely civilized, enlightened, wise world. He offers wisdom-inquiry as a way of solving the second great problem of learning.

The question to ask, research and answer as part of our continuing professional development and wisdom inquiry as global citizens is ‘How are we providing mutual support to ourselves and others in living our co-operative values as fully as possible in contributing to systemic educational changes?’. In this inquiry, with its cultural grounding insights can be drawn from Santos (2014) in doing what we can to both avoid ‘epistemicide’ and to ensure that the voices of those who are being denied a voice, are heard.

In this paper, I argue that each living-educational-theory contributes to improvement of the self, of others and of the social formations in which we live and work and to human flourishing. It is my argument that not only is this Living Educational Theory research process the most professional form of professional development, but also, it is a means to move from knowledge-inquiry to wisdom-inquiry (Maxwell, 2021) and to mitigate the negative inequities and influences in the world. The current context concerns global changes in the recognition of the importance of continuing professional development and can be understood through the numerous presentations on Living Educational Theory Research in professional development that are accessible from the What’s New page of <https://www.actionresearch.net/>.

In my intercultural, global cultures of inquiry, I am inspired by Fulbright:

"The essence of intercultural education is the acquisition of empathy — the ability to see the world as others see it, and to allow for the possibility that others may see something we have failed to see..." J. William Fulbright (Fulbright 2022-23)

In this section, I provide an evidence-based explanation of how a community of practitioner-researchers with an international mentor is creating educational knowledge within and between the different cultural contexts of Nepal, India, USA, Canada and the UK to create their contributions to a Living Educational Theory Culture of Inquiry (Whitehead, 2019; Delong, 2020). As professional teachers, we explain the meanings of the relational values used by practitioner-researchers as explanatory principles in explanations of educational influences in learning with values of human flourishing. Our living-educational-theories are contributing to a global social movement for the creation of a future with life-affirming, energy-flowing values of human flourishing that mitigate and overcome the alienating power of inequities and oppression. One of our community's most recent sessions was our Symposium presentations at the 2021 Conference of the American Educational Research Association on Accepting Responsibility with Jack Whitehead (UK), Shivani Mishra (India), Michelle Vaughan (USA), Parbati Dhungana (Nepal) and myself (Canada), accessible from <https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/aera21/2021aerasymposiumfull.pdf>



Clockwise from top left: Delong, Whitehead, Mishra, Vaughan, Dhungana

Some of the results shared in the AERA presentation included:

Mishra: "The results include evidence of learning from a 72-hour programme of training in life skills education to understand and to teach it. The results include an evidence-based explanation of how I link my practice with theory and theory with practice. They include an explanation of my learning how to take risk and realising how risk-taking as an important aspect of creative thinking in the generation of a living-educational-theory." (p. 6)

Vaughan: “Evidence is provided from a longitudinal analysis of student evaluation comments and critical conversations with students and mentors, to clarify and validate core values of connection, vulnerability and caring as well as discovering living contradictions. Materials from action research cycles are provided to create safe places where others can embark on this journey and experience the sense of wholeness and peace that comes with aligning practice to values in a living-educational theory.” (p. 8)

Dhungana: “A joyful environment is advocated as a contextual need in university classes, a support for mutuality and an antidote to measureability. Aesthetics, a synergetic process, and aesthetic-based inquiry is shown to be useful in educational inquiries into complex contexts. Taking educational responsibility is joyful when we continuously live our values influencing self, other and the social formation (Whitehead, 1989) with the aim of fulfilling the common good of citizen-scholars.” (p. 10)

Whitehead: The results include the generation of a new epistemology for educational knowledge, fulfilling Schon’s (1995) call for a new epistemology. They include the explication of a Living Theory research approach for making public the embodied knowledge of professional practitioners and developing educational forms of evaluation and accountability in complex ecologies. This is consistent with Snow’s (2001) call to make public the practical knowledge of educators.

Methods and Data Sources

In all of these papers and presentations, the methods we use include: empathetic resonance with digital visual data (Whitehead & Huxtable, 2010; Delong, 2010) to clarify the meanings of the energy-flowing values of democracy, vulnerability and loved into learning (DeLong, et al, 2021; Campbell, 2011); dialogue as method (DeLong, 2020); validation groups to enhance the comprehensibility, evidence, normative understandings and authenticity (Habermas, 1976) of the claims to educational knowledge. The inquiry process includes action-reflection cycles to improve our practice and the co-creation of educational knowledge.

Insights are drawn from ‘Living Educational Theory Research’ (Whitehead, 2019) and ‘Building Living Theory Cultures of Educational Inquiry’ (DeLong, 2002; 2021) to explain how our community of practice fulfils our educational responsibility to improve our educational practices and to contribute to the global knowledgebase of education. I draw insights also from Whitehead and Huxtable (2016) “grounded in the idea of enhancing professionalism in education through recognizing and accrediting accounts of living-

educational-theories as knowledge generated by professional practitioners as Master and Doctor Educators” (abstract).

The data sources include over 50 Living Educational Theory masters and doctoral degrees that have been awarded at Universities around the world and eleven years of publications in the Educational Journal of Living Theories (ejolts.net). I refer you to the freely available issues of EJOLTS, where you will find the living-educational-theories from around the globe. Our community members (Dhungana, 2020; Vaughan, 2019; Mishra, 2021; Whitehead, 2019) contribute their data from their sites of practice, from digital visual data and from field-based PAR projects to provide evidence of educational knowledge creation and teacher professionalism associated with a community of Living Educational Theory researchers. My international mentoring (DeLong, 2019, 2020, 2021) contributes to the Living Educational Theory social movement and focuses on informal research as professional development, on masters and doctoral degrees as well as on fulfilling my educational responsibilities as a global citizen (Potts, Coombs & Whitehead, 2013), and citizen scholar (Vaughan & DeLong, 2019; DeLong, 2020; Harper et al., 2021) working with others in intercultural education.

Results

The results include evidence that the community of mentor and mentees’ co-learning (Nyanjom, 2020) in Living Educational Theory cultures of inquiry has influenced knowledge creation and the spreading educational influence of these global cultures of inquiry with practitioner-researchers. The results have emerged from the educational inquiries of researchers who have used technology such as video-conferencing platforms such as Skype and Zoom to their advantage to live values of human flourishing for a better future. Engaging in Living Theory research provides the process for better knowing yourself, your values, and for knowing if you are living according to those values or if you are a living contradiction (Whitehead, 1989). This approach to professional development guides you to live that sense of joy/satisfaction as a life-long process of commitment to improving yourself and the world around you. Here is what Michelle Vaughan says about creating her own living-educational-theory:

“I found I could not do this work alone, and through the mentorship I received from those within this field, I was encouraged to talk about my work, share my thinking and expose my core. While initially uncomfortable, once I started, I found that I could not stop. Like a good book, I would share my story with anyone who would listen, making new pathways for this energy to travel.” (Vaughan, 2019, p. 76)

It is an expectation of Living Theory research to make public the practical “embodied” (Hocking et al., 2001, xviii) knowledge that is being expressed in inquiries of the kind, ‘How do I improve what I am doing?’ (Whitehead, 1989). Through the use of action-reflection cycles we engage in a systematic inquiry into improving our practice and into making public an explanation of our educational influences in our own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of social formations. Using values as standards of judgment and explanatory principles, we deepen and extend our explanations of educational influence in our own learning and in the learning of others. This involves a growing understanding of the nature of the educational knowledge that is created in justifying claims to know one’s own educational influences in learning.

We emphasise the importance of working within a culture of inquiry, in a community of other practitioner-researchers, that supports Living Educational Theory research. A culture of inquiry is a safe, supportive space wherein practitioner-researchers are enabled to share their vulnerabilities, to make explicit their values, and to hold themselves accountable for living according to those values (DeLong, 2020). They learn to recognize when they are not living according to their espoused values and are what Whitehead (1989) calls “living contradictions.”

We are focusing our educational responsibilities in generating, sustaining and developing Cultures of Inquiry for Living Educational Theory Research with values of human flourishing. In making this contribution, we accept what Maxwell (2021) refers to as the two great problems in learning: the first problem, learning about the universe, about ourselves and other forms of life as a part of the universe. Maxwell refers to this as knowledge-inquiry. We can see the successes of science and technology in knowledge-inquiry. However, we agree with Maxwell that knowledge-inquiry has failed in contributing to the second great problem of learning, focused on how to create a genuinely civilized, enlightened, wise world.

A wise world would encourage and support teachers’ professionalism through Living Educational Theory research and contribute to resolving this second problem with what Maxwell refers to as wisdom-inquiry. Included within our explanation are our values of being citizen scholars and exercising our educational responsibilities is the recognition that our unique constellation of values is relationally dynamic. Hence our use of these values as explanatory principles, means that our explanatory principles are relationally dynamic. Based on the results of this research, I advocate for the creation of living-educational-theories in cultures of inquiry using dialogue as research method with visual data and for intercultural education for improving teacher professionalism for the future and for human flourishing.

Significance

The significance of this research is in the values-based explanation of how the Living Educational Theory cultures of inquiry are spreading the educational influences in learning of practitioner-researchers through their professional teaching roles. It is significant as well that the research explains our educational influence as our living-educational-theories are contributing to a global social movement for the creation of a future with life-affirming, energy flowing values of human flourishing that mitigate and overcome the alienating power of inequities, violence and negative forces.

The most power and significance in learning to create their own living-educational-theory resides in the practitioner-researchers finding confidence in their own “I” and recognizing their embodied knowledge. ‘When I use ‘I’, I am not referring to an egotistical ‘I’. I am referring to the relational ‘I’ of infinite conversation, described by Buber (1970)’ (Whitehead, in Bradbury, 2015, 246). The risk for a school system is that once the teachers find their own voices, have control over their own learning, exert “creative compliance” (MacDonald, 1987) and take responsibility for their own professionalism, challenging the inequitable power structures that exist in our places of practice (Wood et al., 2019), they will not willingly give that power back and accede to ‘power over’.

If you, like me have questioned the meaning and purpose of your existence, I think you will experience hope and fulfillment in creating and sharing your living-educational-theories as we all seek to improve what we are doing in contributing to a flow of values and understandings of human flourishing. I hope, dear reader, that you will engage with my research and provide input on how I might strengthen it so that we can all experience a “Living, Loving Conference” (Zuber-Skerritt, 2017).

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