

Jack Whitehead's Discussant's responses to the contributions to the Symposium: "Starting With Ourselves": Perspectives From the Transformative Education/al Studies Project, presented at the American Educational Research Association 2012 Annual Meeting on Saturday April 14, Vancouver. British Columbia, Canada "Non Satis Scire: To Know Is Not Enough"

Contributions from Kathleen Pithouse-Morgan, Wendy Anne-Rawlinson, Gurusvagi (Daisy) Pillay, Theresa Chisanga, Delysia Timm.



55:52 minutes of the Symposium at

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V48I2BB7Bj4>

Initial Discussant Responses

The session Abstract includes the statements;

The overarching research question --"How do I transform my education/al practice as?" – is adapted for each participant's educational context, giving rise to a range of responses and insights. This symposium will provide an opportunity to engage with a variety of participant perspectives from the TES project. The objectives of the session are to make public education/al knowledge engendered by the TES project and to illustrate how participation in the process of this self-study of practice research project actually changes its practitioners and their education/al practice and contexts.

You can access the successful proposal for funding made to the National Research Foundation of South Africa at:

<http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/southafrica/TESproposalopt.pdf>

I shall focus my responses on the importance of fulfilling the AERA mission with research that is world leading in terms of its originality, significance and rigour and the importance of the overarching research question, 'How do I transform my educational practice as...? I shall also respond to each contribution below with a suggestion that might be useful in enhancing the originality, significance and rigour of the research outcomes of the Transformative Education/al Studies Project.

The AERA mission is to advance knowledge about education to encourage scholarly inquiry related to education, to promote the use of research to improve education and serve the public good (Ball and Tyson, 2011). The TES project is well suited to fulfilling both halves of the AERA mission because of its explicit commitment to transform educational practice with a social intent of enhancing the social development of South Africa.

In the UK the research output of Universities will be judged in the 2014 Research Excellence Framework with generic criteria of originality, significance and rigour.

• **Originality** will be understood in terms of the innovative character of the research output. Research outputs that demonstrate originality may: engage with new and/or complex problems; develop innovative research methods, methodologies and analytical techniques; provide new empirical material; and/or advance theory or the analysis of doctrine, policy or practice.

• **Significance** will be understood in terms of the development of the intellectual agenda of the field and may be theoretical, methodological and/or substantive. Due weight will be given to potential as well as actual significance, especially where the output is very recent.

• **Rigour** will be understood in terms of the intellectual precision, robustness and appropriateness of the concepts, analyses, theories and methodologies deployed within a research output. Account will be taken of such qualities as the integrity, coherence and consistency of arguments and analysis, such as the due consideration of ethical issues. (HEFC, 2012, pp. 66-67)

The evidence of originality, significance and rigour for World Leading Research will be judged in terms of the following types of characteristics:

- *outstandingly novel in developing concepts, techniques or outcomes*
 - *a primary or essential point of reference in its field or sub-field*
 - *major influence on the intellectual agenda of a research theme or field*
 - *application of exceptionally rigorous research design and techniques of investigation and analysis, and the highest standards of intellectual precision*
 - *instantiating an exceptionally significant, multi-user data set or research resource.*
- (p.67)

Here are some suggestions that might be useful in establishing the originality, significance and rigour of the research outcomes of the TES project.

My main suggestion is that each participant could explore the implications of asking, researching and answering a question of the kind, --*“How do I transform my education/al practice as?”* with the intent of producing valid explanations of their educational influences in learning. This would mean transforming the titles and questions below:

i) “Starting With Ourselves”: An Overview of the Transformative Education/al Studies (TES) Project

Kathleen Pithouse-Morgan (University of KwaZulu-Natal)

As a co-investigator of TES Kathleen might ask, ‘How am I transforming my educational practice as a co-investigator of the TES project?’ with the intention of producing a validated explanation of my educational influences in the learning of the participants in the TES project.

How Is the Process of Self-Study Transforming Me as a Lecturer and Novice Education/al Researcher in a South African University of Technology?

Wendy Anne Rawlinson (Durban University of Technology)

As a communications lecturer at Durban University of Technology Wendy could ask, 'How am I transforming my practice as a communication lecturer to enhance the educational experiences of my students as knowers?' with the intention of produced a validated explanation of my educational influences in my own learning and in the learning of my students.

How Is the Process of Self-Study Transforming Me as a Graduate Research Supervisor in a "Research-Intensive" South African University?

Guruvsagie (Daisy) Pillay (University of KwaZulu-Natal)

As a graduate research supervisor at the University of KwaZulu-Natal Daisy could ask, 'How am I transforming my practice as a graduate research supervisor to enhance co-learning and the co-production of knowledge with those I supervise?' with the intention of explaining the educational influences of these co-operative relationships.

How Is the Process of Self-Study Transforming Me as a Professor and University Chaplain in a South African University in a Poor Rural Community?

Theresa Chisanga (Walter Sisulu University)

As a university professor and Roman Catholic Chaplain at Walter Sisulu University Theresa could ask, 'How am I transforming my practices and influencing the lives of others?' with the intention of producing a validated explanation of my educational influences in learning.

How Is the Process of Self-Study Transforming Me as a Doctoral Researcher and as an Academic at a University of Technology in South Africa?

Delysia Timm (Durban University of Technology)

As an Academic Developer at Durban University of Technology, Delysia could ask, 'How am I transforming educational environments to support living and self-creating thoughts with those I teach and work with?' with the intention of producing a validated explanation of my educational influences in learning.

The uniqueness and the originality of the potential of the TES project to improve practice and generate knowledge are intimately related to the sociohistorical and sociocultural influences within the South African context and it is crucial that these are adequately acknowledged and understood in each contribution. The participants in the TES project could also draw insights from the validated explanations of others who have engaged in self-studies of the form, 'How do I improve what I am doing?' in improving practice and creating original contributions to knowledge in the explanations of educational influence I call living educational theories. Participants could, for example, draw insights from Leda van der Post's (2012) doctoral thesis on 'Creating a Space for Integrative Education within the Sciences from Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University with Leda's promoters Dr Neil Lester Orr Cowley and Dr Lynette Barnard. Participants could draw insights from Marian Lothian's Ph.D. (2010) Thesis, 'How can I improve my practice to enhance the teaching of literacy' from McGill University with her main guide and supervisor Dr. Kate Le Maistre. Finally, participants could draw insights from the other living theory theses at <http://www.actionresearch.net/living/living.shtml> in fulfilling the transformative potential of the Transformative Education/al Studies Project to contribute to our global endeavours to advance knowledge about education, to encourage scholarly

inquiry related to education, to promote the use of research to improve practice in education and serve the public good.

References

Ball, F. B. & Tyson, C. A. (2011) American Educational Research Association 2012 Annual Meeting Call for Submissions Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. Retrieved 8 July 2011 from http://www.aera.net/uploadedFiles/Publications/Journals/Educational_Researcher/4004/198-220_05EDR11.pdf

HEFC (2012) Panel Criteria and Working Methods- REF 01./2012 – January 2012. Bristol; Higher Education and Funding Council.

Marian Lothian's Ph.D. (2010) Thesis, How can I improve my practice to enhance the teaching of literacy. Graduated from McGill University. Retrieved 10 April 2012 from <http://www.actionresearch.net/living/lothian.shtml>

Van der Post, L. (2012) Creating a Space for Integrative Education within the Sciences. Ph.D. Thesis, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.