A Round Table at the Inaugural Conference of the Action Research Network of the Americas
Fort Mason, San Francisco 2 May 2013

On
Creativity And Criticism In The Growth Of Educational Knowledge From Researching One’s Own Practice.

with
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Elizabeth Campbell, Nipissing University, Canada.
Jacqueline Delong, Brock University, Canada.
Cathy Griffin, Brock University, Canada.
Sonia Hutchison, Executive Director, Care-Givers Network, UK.
Maria Rochelle, Institute for Living Leadership, California, USA.
Joan Walton, Centre for the Child, Family and Society, Liverpool Hope University, UK.
Jack Whitehead, Liverpool Hope University & the University of Cumbria, UK.

Background and Assumptions

All the above participants are researching their own practice in action research programmes with the intention of both improving it and generating knowledge that enhances the flow of values that carry hope for the future of humanity. We believe that how each individual behaves, and the explanation given for that behaviour, will be influenced by a unique constellation of life experiences, values and beliefs and the social and cultural contexts in which we live. We also recognise the following dangers of economic globalisation leading to de-valuation and demoralisation:

Nevertheless, the new ‘economic rationalism’ is a worldwide phenomena which ‘guides’ not only the conduct of transnational corporations, but governments and their agencies as well. It does so with increasing efficacy and pervasiveness. I use the term ‘guides’ here in quotes to make a particular point. Economic rationalism is not merely a term which suggests the primacy of economic values. It expresses commitment to those values in order to serve particular sets of interests ahead of others. Furthermore, it disguises that commitment in a discourse of ‘economic necessity’ defined by its economic models. We have moved beyond the reductionism which leads all questions to be discussed as if they were economic ones (de-valuation) to a situation where moral questions are denied completely (de-moralisation) in a cult of economic inevitability (as if greed had nothing to do with it). Broudy (1981) has described ‘de-valuation’ and de-moralization in the following way:

De-valuation refers to diminishing or denying the relevance of all but one type of value to an issue; de-moralization denies the relevance of moral questions. The reduction of all values – intellectual, civic, health, among others – to a money value would be an example of de-valuation; the slogan ‘business’ is business’ is an example of de-moralization (Broudy, 1981: 99)  (McTaggart, 1992, p. 50).
Purpose

The purpose of the Round Table discussion is to bring people together who are interested in sharing ideas about this approach to research, and who, through their masters and doctoral degrees, have contributed to the academic credibility of this approach. We shall be exploring how the sharing of individual stories and experiences, whilst working with collaborative/cooperative values in contexts influenced by economic rationalism, can create knowledge that enables us to improve practice in contributing to human flourishing.

Data

Our data are the explanations already produced by participants. These will inform the conversation in the Round Table on our intentions to create a future which is not yet realised in practice and which we are committed to exploring.

Here are some of the data we shall be drawing on:


The contents of the current issue of the Educational Journal of Living Theories (EJOLTS) can be accessed from http://ejolts.net . The archives can be accessed from http://ejolts.net/archive

**Contribution to knowledge**

The stimulus for this round-table is to produce an edited text of a similar significance for the Growth of Educational Knowledge to the 1970 edited text on Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge from a 1965 Symposium on the work of Thomas Kuhn. It will be shown how both Creativity and Criticism are included in the Growth of Educational Knowledge from researching one’s own practice that is intended to enhance the flow of values that carry hope for the future of humanity. The above data, brought to the Panel, will be analysed to show how researching one’s own practice can advance knowledge of education, promote scholarly enquiry related to education, encourage the use of research to improve practice and to serve the public good. In particular the analysis of the data will draw a clear distinction between education and educational research. The analysis will include some educational implications of recent pressures in both the American and Educational Research Associations to strengthen the presence of education researchers.
The conversation on implications of Researching Our Own Practice will continue at the colloquium at Liverpool Hope University 25-27 July.

Researching Our Own Practice
A Colloquium at Liverpool Hope University
25th - 27th July 2013

Aim
To explore what standards of judgment enable an inquiry into one’s own personal and professional practice to constitute scholarly research which is of social, cultural, academic and personal value.

Objectives
1. To investigate what differentiates scholarly research from personal development when generating new knowledge through researching own practice.
2. To address the challenge that inquiring into one’s own practice constitutes purely personal development and learning, rather than valid scholarly research.
3. To present and evaluate a range of liberating methods to researching own practice, recognising the diversity of approaches that are emerging.
4. To discuss means by which researching own practice might achieve equal academic status and credibility to third person forms of research.
5. To develop an epistemology from the knowledge that has already been created by researching one’s own practice through rigorous forms of action research.
6. To produce an edited book about transformative academic practice and research based on contributions to the colloquium.

Additional Reference