

# **Creating An Educational Epistemology In The Narratives Of Living Educational Theories And Living Theory Methodologies.**

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## **Background of the research and relevance to BERA members**

Recent issues of Research Intelligence (102, 103, 104, 105, 107 & 109) have raised questions about limitations of printed, text base media such as BERJ for communicating the meanings of a relationally dynamic educational epistemology. There has also been much discussion in the AERA publication Educational Researcher (2009) about discourses on narrative research and about what constitutes educational research as distinct from education research. Schön (1995) called for the development of a new epistemology for the scholarship of teaching and Snow (2001) called for the development of methodologies for making public the professional knowledge of teachers. In a BERA 09 keynote symposium on an educational epistemology for educational knowledge, practitioner-researchers provided evidence-based narratives to justify their claims that the educational knowledge they generated, as distinct from researchers from the disciplines of education, had created and legitimated, within their doctoral enquiries, a relationally dynamic epistemology for educational knowledge.

This paper continues these conversations with evidence-based contributions on the use of multi-media narratives for communicating the nature of living educational theories and living theory methodologies. The idea of a living educational theory is that it is an explanation produced by an individual to explain their educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations in which they live and work. The originality of the paper lies in the process of clarifying the meanings of energy-flowing values as explanatory principles in explanations of educational influence in learning. A key concern is to show how these narratives are able to resist becoming unwitting tools of advanced capitalism by focusing the research on both improving practice and generating knowledge with educational values that carry hope for the future of humanity.

## **Foci of the enquiries**

There are three research questions addressed in this presentation on a relationally dynamic educational epistemology:

- 1) How can energy-flowing values in educational relationships be represented and communicated as explanatory principles in publically validated and legitimated explanations of educational influences in learning?
- 2) How are the inclusional logics of the explanations, that individuals produce for their educational influences in their own learning, related to the propositional and dialectical logics of traditional scholarship?
- 3) How are self-studies of educators in higher education in the UK, Republic of Ireland, Canada, Croatia, India, China, Japan and South Africa contributing to an epistemological transformation in educational knowledge?

## **Research methods**

- i) The use of empathetic resonance (Whitehead, 2009) and empathetic validity (Dadds, 2008) to communicate the meanings of energy-flowing ontological values in the explanations of educational influence of educators with their students.
- ii) The use of visual narratives to communicate the meanings of energy-flowing values as explanatory principles in explanations of educational influences in learning.

iii) The use of action reflection cycles to transform the embodied expressions of ontological values, in explanations of educational influences in learning, into publically communicable and living, epistemological standards of judgment.

iv) The methods for enhancing the robustness of the validity and rigour of the explanations include the use of Habermas' (1976) four criteria of social validity and Winter's (1989) six criteria for enhancing rigour.

v) Lather's (1991) catalytic validity is used to justify claims to understand the spread of the educational influence of the living educational theories and living theory methodologies generated in one context, to individuals working and researching in different cultural contexts in the UK, Ireland, Canada, Croatia, India, China, Japan and South Africa.

## **Theoretical frameworks**

The coherence of the theoretical frameworks is grounded in the idea that each individual can produce a valid explanation of their educational influence as their living educational theory in enquiries of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing?'

Answers to the research questions include insights from the following analytic frames.

Adler-Collins' (2000) safe space; Bernstein's (2000) mythological discourse; Biesta's (2006) language of education; Bourdieu's (2000) ideas of habitus and social formation; Charles' (2007) guiltless recognition and societal reidentification; Dadd's (2008) ideas on empathetic resonance; DeLong's (2002) culture of inquiry; Farren's (2005) pedagogy of the unique and web of betweenness; Habermas' (1976, 1987, 2002) notions of social validity, learning and the inclusion of the other; Hymer's (2007) idea of giftedness; Ilyenkov's (1977) dialectical logic; Jousse's anthropology of gesture and theory of oral style (Sienaert and Conolly Ed. 2000 & 2009); Lohr's (2006) love at work; McNiff's (2006) my story is my living educational theory; Merleau-Ponty's (1972) notion of embodiment; Rayner's (2006, 2009) idea of inclusionality; Vasilyuk's (1996) psychology of experiencing; Whitehead's (1989, 2008a, 2009a) ideas of living educational theories, living theory methodologies and empathetic resonance (Whitehead and Rayner, 2009); Laidlaw's (1996) idea of living standards of judgment; Winter's (1989) criteria of rigour.

## **|Contribution to new educational knowledge**

- i) The generation of a relationally dynamic epistemology for educational knowledge (Whitehead, 2008 a & b; BERA keynote symposium 2009).
- ii) The explication of a living theory methodology for making public the embodied knowledge of professional practitioners (Whitehead, 2009 a & b).
- iii) A relationally dynamic understanding of educational theory in the explanations that individuals produce for their educational influences in learning as distinct from the propositional and dialectical education theories produced by researchers in the disciplines of education.
- iv) Establishing the academic legitimacy of energy-flowing ontological values as explanatory principles in explanations of educational influences in learning.

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