

**Successful individual, workshop and symposium proposals for the CARN/ALARA Conference 17-19 October 2019 in Split, Croatia with the theme: 'Imagine Tomorrow: Practitioner Learning for the Future' from Máirín Glenn; Swaroop Rawal; Sonia Hutchison; Marie Huxtable; Swaroop Rawal, Marie Huxtable, Jacqueline Delong and Jack Whitehead; Jack Whitehead; Giulia Carozzi; Jacqueline Delong.**

## **1) Máirín Glenn**

**Educational Action Research: a landscape of disparity and disagreement or of potential transformation?**

As a living theorist who embraces self-study action research, I examine the seemingly contradictory and conflicting elements that constitute the action research process. The apparent disparity between theory and practice; professional development and academic research; the 'I' and 'we'; values and action, as well as the disparity between locating oneself as the implementer of an intervention or as an activist for democratic change, are among some of the areas I examine in this paper.

Despite these tensions and the outward lack of congruity between the various elements of the research, I argue how these disparities do not weaken the research process. Conversely, I posit that it is precisely *because* these tensions exist, when contested truths lie alongside one another, the research process is strengthened and becomes more robust. This strengthening process occurs through the respectful and critical dialogue and educational conversations that occur within the action research community as action researchers work towards enhancing their practice and acting towards the good of humankind (Kemmis 2012). The power of utilising contradictions and tensions to engage in dialogue so as to forge a way forward for educational research cannot be underestimated. It may also inform our thinking in the socially unsettling times in which we now live as we work towards engaging in learning for the flourishing of humanity (Whitehead 2018).

I conclude this paper by drawing on examples from my own action research community, the Network of Educational Action Research in Ireland (NEARI), to show the transformational potential of using dialogue and educational conversations to generate powerfully robust research as we clarify our own truth, alongside the truths of others, and their lived realities.

References:

Kemmis, S. (2012) 'Researching educational praxis: spectator and participant perspectives', *British Educational Research Journal*. 38(6): 885-905.

Whitehead, J. (2018a) *Living Theory Research as a Way of Life*. Bath, UK: Brown Dog Books.

## **2) Máirín Glenn**

**Questions you always wanted to ask about Action Research...**

This paper is in the form of an educational conversation as we, presenters, challenge each other to explain our understanding of, and engagement with, self-study action research and Living Theory. We acknowledge that we are cognizant of some of the criticisms that are pitched at action research and we will address them and refute them in our presentation. Using dramatic licence, and a 'mantle of the expert' dramatic strategy in the form of actors or false participants, we use the voice of the critical 'other' as we engage in our exploration.

Undertaking action research and developing living theory is more than a mere intervention in practice: it is a rigorous approach to research and is, potentially, a life-changing process. It involves learning with a life-affirming energy and values that carry hope for the flourishing of humanity (Whitehead 2018). However, critiques of this approach often display a lack of understanding of its key principles.

Using real comments from previous conversations in the area of action research and living theory, we will draw on the voice of the critical 'other' as we address the following questions in the process of the presentation:

- What do you mean by 'action research'? Is it a real research methodology?
- Surely doing action research is just about undertaking an intervention in the classroom and getting a higher score in the test afterwards?
- What have values to do with real research?
- Self-study action research and Living Theory – a navel gazing exercise?

As we address and refute these questions, we utilise the lenses of the critical 'other' to inform our thinking. We scrutinise our values and explain how we articulate and clarify them throughout the research process. We explain how generating our living theory is our explanation of our educational influences in our own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of social formations (Whitehead 2018). The theory we generate from the story of our learning is a living theory because it is drawn from the aliveness of real practice.

References:

Whitehead, J. (2018a) *Living Theory Research as a Way of Life*. Bath, UK: Brown Dog Books.

### **3) Swaroop Rawal - Sardar Patel University**

#### **Workshop**

#### **Because the Sun Shines Equally on Both Boys and Girls: Drama in Education as a tool to explore Gender Equality**

The workshop will address the problem of 'gender equality' and child rights. United Nations Secretary General António Guterres put forward that 'Gender parity at the United Nations is an urgent need – and a personal priority. It is a moral duty and an operational necessity.' Yet, in many countries, discrimination against women and disregard for children's rights remain built in the national psyche. Deep-rooted social norms often ignore, disregard and defend many discriminatory practices. Gender equality will not only empower women to overcome poverty and live full and productive lives, but will better the lives of children,

families and countries as well, and thus bring about transformative changes in the world we live.

This workshop is focused on the belief that Drama enables the inclusion of the gaining of knowledge of the issues of gender equality, the development of democratic skills, the promotion of values such as tolerance, and the building of social assets in the form of trust among the learners. Thus drama is a natural pedagogical methodology for emancipatory education.

The workshop is designed to enable the Training of Teachers (TOT) to teach drama in an emancipatory way that can be used in schools from Grade 3-10. It is an innovative way to teach and negotiate 'gender equality'; besides using drama in education it also encompasses the use of reflection. Deepening the children's work and moving away from stereotyping is dealt with during reflection time. A creative ways of assessing skills has been incorporated using drama and reflections. The creative ways are related to a set of predetermined criteria as well as including a range of collaborative methods, such as dairies, story-telling, drawings, observations during reflection time, observation dramatic activities, peer feedback on a performance.

#### **4) Swaroop Rawal - Sardar Patel University**

##### **Interactive paper**

##### **Creating a living-educational-theory keeping my social vision in focus as I facilitate social work practitioners of the future**

This article argues that despite clear similarity between many of the features of life skills education and the nature and aims of social work, this theoretical perspective has yet to be incorporated into the education of future social work practitioners. Life skills have been applied in a diverse range of educational settings, where they have been used to supports positive social change and sustainable development, by promoting democracy and social equality. By augmenting self-growth, life skills education fosters resilience, an ability to manage emotions, maintain authentic relationships, creating well-rounded citizens who cause healthy communities.

The beginning of my quest started in 2014 when I worked with in-service social workers. While training them I reflected on the question: How do I improve this process of education here? I realised I had to move from in-service social workers to students of social work if I wanted to improve the process of learning. This article contributes to a discourse on my living educational theory as I answer questions such as 'How do I improve what I am doing?' How do I improve my practice? How do I improve this process of education for social work students? Based on these concerns, I delve on the impacts of a short-term study programme created for MSW students' and explore the possibility of dialogue, experiential learning and life skills education in opening up emancipatory possibilities while engaging the learning context in a classroom. I suggest that if, as social workers practitioners of future, we wish to contribute to building a caring, empathetic society for the flourishing of humanity tomorrow, we need to reoriented education today.

## 5) **Sonia Hutchison**

On 15 Jul 2019, at 18:24, Sonia Hutchison <soniahutchison@hotmail.com> wrote:

Here is my abstract for presenting an interactive paper:

This paper will explore whether a layered approach to writing up Living Theory Action Research paper can provide a way to create new knowledge and resist hegemony. Each layer will present a different depth of learning through the use of three voices.

- My storyteller voice will allow the story to stand for itself to enable practitioners to learn from the story with no analysis, opening up knowledge to those practitioners who are alienated by academic theorising.
- My narrator voice will provide the explanation of my living-theory that is emerging from my research. In this role I will provide analysis of the story through a new method I have created of understanding my actions through the process of developing an Adlerian syllogism from my early recollections. I will also act as a guide to the reader to areas of learning that may influence practice, theory and knowledge.
- My meta-narrator voice will ask questions causing my thinking to move to a deeper level as my narrator voice will attempt to answer the questions posed. I will take an approach that is consistent with a Deleuzian ontology to attempt to create a different way of thinking and original knowledge.

This paper will weave my storyteller, narrator and meta-narrator voices to see if a new approach to representing Living Theory Action Research can provide a challenge to dominant discourses.

## 6) **Marie Huxtable**

### **Researching to improve learning and enhancing life**

Many Action Researchers committed to values-based practice face ethical dilemmas in their sites of practice. In this paper I will show the implications for them of adopting a research methodology that focuses the researcher on creating and making public valid values-based explanations of their educational influence in their own learning, the learning of others and the learning of social formations within which they live and work. Generating such explanations of educational influences in learning is what distinguishes Living Theory research. This is a form of self-study, educational practitioner-research whereby the researcher clarifies their embodied life-affirming ontological and social values as they emerge in the course of researching aspects of their practice to understand, improve and explain it. These values form the principles and standards by which the researcher explains and evaluates their educational influences in learning in the course of contributing to their 'field' related practice such as health and social care, community, education, management, etc. I will draw on accredited Masters and Doctoral work and published papers to show how

this form of research has been used by educational-practitioners as part of their professional development and enabled them to contribute their tacit knowledge to the growth of a global educational knowledgebase.

In this interactive presentation I wish to test with the audience whether this research methodology is of relevance and practical use to them and other educational-practitioners who want to realise, as fully as possible, their life-enhancing values in their practice where they feel their values are in conflict with the demands made of them.

**Strand** - ethical dilemmas in action research and action learning

**Prospective Publication** in Education Action Research

7) **Swaroop Rawal, Marie Huxtable, Jacqueline Delong and Jack Whitehead.**

**An interactive symposium proposal for the CARN/ALARA Conference 17-19 October 2019 in Split, Croatia with the theme: 'Imagine Tomorrow: Practitioner Learning for the Future'.**

**Imagining tomorrow in the generation of living-educational-theories with learning for the future.**

#### **Overall aims of the session**

This session documents our research into sustaining local and global educational conversations about extending the influence of knowledge and education in practitioner learning for the future.

We understand that it is hard to remain hopeful about the future of humanity and essential to resist the pull towards apathy and inaction. In this proposed contribution to 'Imagine Tomorrow: Practitioner Learning for the Future' we provide explanations of our educational influences in learning from within our local and global sites of practice. We use digital technologies to generate explanations of educational influence that include our ontological and relational values of love, creativity, justice, hope and life-affirming energy as explanatory principles. Whilst we use the same value-words the meanings of our constellation of values are unique to each individual.

In our post-doctoral enquiries we are using these values as explanatory principles in our explanations of educational influences in our own learning, the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations that influence practice and explanations. In legitimating and extending our contributions to knowledge within Universities and other global contexts we include our understandings of the power relations that influence what counts as knowledge. These understandings take account of the differences in power relations associated with legitimating the epistemologies of the South in Global Academies.

We understand the demoralisation and devaluation that can accompany the globalising influences of neo-liberal economic policies and agree with Zuber-Skerritt:

... I have argued that we need to shift away from the mindset of neoliberalism and reductionism dominating our present society and driving its obsession with consumerism, power and control. Instead we need a collaborative, participative and

inclusive paradigm built on love and working through local and global action to connect us with each other as human beings and with nature. Society needs to be renewed by making a shift from the negative energy of fear, competition, control and war to the positive energy of faith, love, hope and creativity. Clearly, we need to conceptualize and practice not just learning conferences but Loving Learning Conferences. (Zuber-Skerritt, 2017, p. 224).

We show how educational conversations, grounded in values that carry hope for the flourishing of humanity, can contribute to overcoming such demoralisation and devaluation in hopeful and loving processes of social transformation with these values. We show how we are using digital visual data from multi-screen Skype conversations, conferences - as sites of learning and development, and digital technologies in living-posters and a Living Theory Wiki. We demonstrate how we are using these technologies to sustain and evolve our global educational conversations as we deepen and extend the educational influences of our practitioner learning for the future in contributing to Living Theory research as a social movement.

#### **Dr. Jacqueline Delong – International Consultant**

This research analyses the ontological importance of educational conversations in my educational relationships and dialogue as a research method. The conversations are embodied in my dialogic way of being. I highlight the importance of digital visual data in developing appropriate forms of representation in dialogic educational research. The analysis includes educational influences in building respectful, democratic and caring relationships within a living culture of inquiry as I encourage and support practitioner-researchers to create their own living-theories. The contexts of this encouragement include workshops and presentations at previous CARN, ALARA and ARNA conferences as sites of learning and development. The nature of my educational influence, (upon myself, upon others and upon social formations), resides in the creation of living theories in living cultures of inquiry. My ongoing encouragement and support of practitioner-researchers, as I love them into learning, contributes to practitioner learning for the future.

#### **Dr. Swaroop Rawal, Sardar Patel University, Anand, Gujarat, India.**

In this paper, I discuss the long struggle I experienced while contributing to drafting the life-skills educational policy for the Ministry of Human Resource and Development, India. This includes my participation in the life-skills education *Chintan Shivir* (workshop), after which the Government involved the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT). The paper analyses my responses to conflict situations as I persisted in maintaining my goal and vision, whilst adjusting and adapting my action plan. This article deals with how I confronted the 'system' in my practitioner learning in contributing to the future of education in India as I became a more socially responsible thinker. I produce a counter-narrative as I have a dialogue with Gandhiji's educational values, Living Theory and me. I believe in this increasingly multicultural world, counter-narratives are an essential and necessary element of today's narratives as we need to hear the points of view of communities typically ignored or marginalized.

**Dr. Marie Huxtable, University of Cumbria, UK.**

This paper is grounded in Living Educational Theory research as a form of self-study practitioner-research concerned with researching to understand, improve and explain educational practice and generating explanations of educational influences in learning. It identifies ways in which Living Theory research accounts are contributing to the growth of a professional educational knowledge-base for the flourishing of humanity. It outlines the practical activities that enable practitioner-researchers to begin their inquiries into their professional practice that help them: improve it; tap into their embodied values (the values that give their life and work meaning and purpose); develop their individual sense of how their research contributes to a professional global knowledge-base and in the process contribute to transforming academia and other fields of practice. It demonstrates how digital, visual data of practice are being used to clarify and communicate, life-affirming ontological and relational values that give professional practice meaning and purpose and are being used in Living Theory research as explanatory principles of educational influence.

**Dr. Jack Whitehead, University of Cumbria, UK.**

Previous contributions to ARNA, CARN, ALARA, BERA and AERA Conferences are analysed as sites of learning and development to explain how imagining tomorrow continues to be included in the educational learning of practitioner-researchers. A justification is offered for claiming that this learning in Living Theory research as a global social movement is contributing to the creation of the future, today with values that carry hope for the flourishing of humanity. The analysis includes a clarification of meanings of i~we~us relationships (Mounter, 2019) and the use of these relationships as explanatory principles in explanations of educational influence in learning. The educational influences of these explanations as living-educational-theories are shown to be contributing to a global social movement of practitioner-researchers who are creating a future with hope. Meanings of educational and good conversations (House, 2018) are clarified and used as explanatory principles in explanations of educational influence that are contributing to a global social movement of practitioner-researchers who are contributing to creating a future with this hope.

**References**

House, W. (2018) The Conversation Solution in Keynsham. Retrieved 7 May 2019 from <http://www.keynshamactionnetwork.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/The-Conversation-Solution-in-Keynsham-April-2018-1.pdf>

Mounter, J. (2019) i~we~us relationships. Retrieved 7 May 2019 from <http://www.spanglefish.com/allicanbe/index.asp?pageid=698540>

Zuber-Skerritt, O. (Ed.) (2017) Conferences as Sites of Learning and Development: Using Participatory Action Learning and Action Research Approaches. Abingdon; Routledge.

**8) Jack Whitehead**

## **Imagine Tomorrow: Practitioner Learning for the Future in Living Theory research.**

This paper is grounded in the idea that individual practitioner-researchers can generate their own living-educational-theories as explanations of their influence in enquiries of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing?' and 'How do we improve what we are doing?'. The explanations include an evaluation of previous learning in making sense of the present together with an imagined possibility of a future that it not yet realized. The explanations of Living Theory researchers emerge from educational conversations that accept the point that:

Society needs to be renewed by making a shift from the negative energy of fear, competition, control and war to the positive energy of faith, love, hope and creativity. Clearly, we need to conceptualize and practice not just learning conferences but Loving Learning Conferences. (Zuber-Skerritt, 2017, p. 224).

Meanings of good and educational conversations are clarified and used to demonstrate how authentic 'we' questions can be generated in relation to living as fully as possible values that carry hope for the flourishing of humanity (Mellett & Gumede, 2019). Meanings of i~we~us relationships (Mounter, 2019) are clarified and used as explanatory principles in explanations of educational influence that are contributing to a global social movement of practitioner-researchers who are contributing to creating a future with this hope. Previous contributions to previous conferences, that include ARNA, CARN and ALARA (DeLong, Rawal, Huxtable and Whitehead), are analysed to explain how imagining tomorrow is included in the educational learning of practitioner-researchers who are contributing to the creation of the future, today.

### **9) Giulia Carozzi**

#### **Hope and responsibility: embracing different types of knowledge.**

For Foucault (1972) discourses shape people's knowledge and inform how people act in a society. Power-over others is legitimated by dominant discourses, a means through which hegemony discloses itself: a given group is entitled to oppress another (Pistoe&Lataska, 2012). In Italy, such discourses are manifesting themselves in actions and speeches (Padovani, 2018). The "other" is seen as a threat to an ideal unity exemplified by the slogan "Italians first" (Padovani, 2018): this entitles people to exert their power-over others. Using personally-orientated action research (Whitehead, 1985), in my Living Theory enquiry I'm developing my educational knowledge: to make a more aware contribution in the socio-historical and socio-cultural context I live in, I clarify which values inform my way of being and acting. I also analyse how much I've been influenced by the discourses in which I was brought up. Hope and responsibility give meaning to my life, although I don't always act in accordance to these values: I often experience a sense of living contradiction between thoughts and deeds (Whitehead, 2018). I contextually perceive a feeling of negation (Whitehead, 2018) witnessing the institutionalisation of anti-immigrant discourses (Padovani, 2018); those go against the values of freedom, justice and democracy shared by the Living Theory community (Carozzi, in press). My responsibility, as an "authentic learner"



(Magrini, 2011), is to resolve my inner contradictions, and act to address the above negation.

It is my responsibility to respect and absorb different types of knowledge, recognising the "other" as significant. In this, I'm led by a sense of hope: while acting against dominant discourses, others and I are making use of our social imagination (Karlberg, 2005). In my hometown a community of authentic learners is forming: in it, we embrace different types of knowledge (Wood et al., 2019), seeking to convert "power-over" to "power-with" (Eyben et al., 2016).

**Jackie** - Could you please send me your successful proposals?

10) "**Changing and Creating Ourselves by Living our Values More Fully:  
Changing and Creating the World**"

*Author(s): Jacqueline Dorothy DeLong, Jack Whitehead, Marie Huxtable*

11) "**Living Theory Research Contributes to Improving Ourselves and the  
World**"

*Author(s): Jacqueline Dorothy DeLong*