

How am I creating a living-educational-theory from questions of the kind, ‘how do I improve my practice?’ 30 years on with Living Educational Theory research.

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A contribution to a symposium on Post-professional Identities, ethics and response-ability beyond professional standards at the International Professional Development Association Virtual Conference on Imagining the post-professional: Identity, ethics and response-ability beyond professional standards. 27th-28th November 2020 with: Jayne Colman – Glasgow Caledonian University; Joy Mounter – The Learning Institute, UK; Marie Huxtable – University of Cumbria; Jack Whitehead – University of Cumbria.

Abstract

This contribution offers an introduction to a Living Educational Theory research approach to enhancing professionalism in education through accepting educational responsibility. Education research is distinguished from educational research in enhancing professionalism in education. Digital visual data is included to communicate the meanings of educational practices and educational relationships. These data are included to show how to clarify and communicate the meanings of the embodied and ontological values of professionals. These values are used as explanatory principles and standards of judgment in explanations of educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations that influence practice and understandings. Evidence is provided, from universities around the world, that living-educational-theory accounts, understood as valid, values-based explanations of educational influences in learning, have been recognised as contributing to global, professional knowledgebases. Integrating ideas from others in generating a living-educational-theory. The paper offers an interim conclusion with projections into a future influenced by a global movement of Living Educational Theory researchers for International Professional Development.

Introduction to a Living Educational Theory research approach to enhancing professionalism in education through accepting educational responsibility

In 2019 the Educational Journal of Living Theories published my paper “Creating a living-educational-theory from questions of the kind, ‘how do I improve my practice?’ 30 years on with Living Theory research.” (Whitehead 2019). To avoid the confusions that can arise by shortening Living Educational Theory research to Living Theory research I shall stop using the shortened term. This 2020 paper explains how I am integrating the following ideas into the generation of my living-educational-theory for the future of International Professional Development. My interest in professionalism in education dates back to 1967 with my special study on ‘The way to professionalism in education?’ for my initial teacher education course in the Department of Education of the University of Newcastle in the UK (Whitehead, 1967). It developed on the Academic Diploma Course in the philosophy and psychology of education at the London Institute of Education between 1968-70 and the Masters in Education in the psychology of education between 1970-72 (Whitehead, 1972). It has continued through a working life-time’s commitment to professional development with a contribution to the 2019 conference of IPDA (Whitehead, 2019) with a focus on how a

global profession of education can be seen to be emerging from Living Theory research through living as fully as possible the values of global citizenship and human flourishing.

I initially accepted the disciplines approach to Educational Theory in my professional development between 1968-1971 in the sense that I believed that Educational Theory was constituted by the philosophy, psychology, sociology and history of education. Whilst conducting research in 1971-1972 for a masters dissertation on ‘A preliminary investigation into the process through which adolescents acquire scientific understanding’ I began to question the validity of the disciplines approach to Educational Theory in relation to my professional development. Whilst using a controlled experimental design with Piagetian Cognitive Stage Theory and Bloom’s taxonomy of educational objects, I understood that I was testing the validity of these psychological theories and not answering my research question into improving my educational influences in my own and my pupils’ learning. This changed my vocation from being a science teacher to becoming an educational researcher contributing to the generation of an Educational Theory that could explain my educational influences in learning. I moved to the University of Bath in 1973 to fulfil this vocation.

By 1985 I coined the idea of a living-educational-theory (Whitehead, 1985). This idea was further developed in two 1989 papers, including my Presidential address to the British Educational Research Association, on creating living-educational-theory with a focus on a Living Educational Theory research approach to enhancing professionalism in education (Whitehead 1989a & b). In this present paper I shall focus on the continuing generation of my living-educational-theory as I answer the questions on professional development being asked by the organisers of the 2020 Conference of the International Professional Development Association (Whitehead 2020a).

In the development of a Living Educational Theory research approach, to professional development in education, I have found it necessary to make a clear distinction between Education Research and Educational Research. The distinction rests on the idea that education researchers are working within the disciplines of educations whilst educational researchers are generating valid explanations for their educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations that influence their practice and understandings. A focus for this paper is on enhancing International Professional Development through accepting educational responsibility for living as fully as possible the value of global citizenship in the generation of living-educational-theories.

Accepting educational responsibility

The importance of accepting educational responsibility has been highlighted in the theme of the 2021 American Educational Research Association of ‘Accepting Educational Responsibility’. The President of AERA and the Presidential Program Co-Chairs have made the following point about accepting educational responsibility (Harper, et al (2020):

Accepting educational responsibility requires honest acknowledgments among citizen-scholars. One such acknowledgment is that all legislators and elected officials attended school; most are college graduates. Yet far too many learned far too little in those places about how to respectfully engage across partisan lines and avert polarization. Listening, understanding, and reasonably considering the viewpoints of persons beyond one’s own political party are skills educators failed to teach those who go on to make consequential policy decisions that affect entire nations. Doctors

who unknowingly reproduce health inequities graduated from medical schools. Judges who reach biased legal outcomes that disparately impact minoritized communities are law school graduates. Many sexual harassers in corporate contexts are business school graduates. Citizen-scholars must do more with evidence to responsibly inform the educational preparation of future workers across these and all other professions. We also must do more to educate the public and raise consciousness about beliefs, behaviors, cultures, structures, and systems that harm people and sustain inequities.

My Living Educational Theory research into my professional development includes my acceptance of educational responsibility as described by Biesta:

One of the central ideas of the book is that we come into the world as unique individuals through the ways in which we respond responsibly to what and who is other. I argue that the responsibility of the educator not only lies in the cultivation of “worldly spaces” in which the encounter with otherness and difference is a real possibility, but that it extends to asking “difficult questions”: questions that summon us to respond responsibly and responsibly to otherness and difference in our own, unique ways.(p. ix). (Biesta, 2006)

I also agree with Bakhtin about overcoming the flaw of rationalist philosophy in understanding action that is radically singular and responsible:

...these problems derive from the fundamental error of “rationalist” philosophy... The fatal flaw is the denial of responsibility - which is to say, the crisis is at base an ethical one. It can be overcome only by an understanding of the act as a category into which cognition enters but which is radically singular and “responsible”. (Morson & Emerson, 1989, p. 13.)

From the ground of my educational responsibility for my continuing professional development and to contribute to International Professional Development my enquiry continues on:

How am I creating a living-educational-theory from questions of the kind, ‘How do I improve my practice?’ 30 years on with Living Educational Theory research.

My enquiry continues in the preparation and presentation of this symposium on ‘Post-professional Identities, ethics and response-ability beyond professional standards’. This preparation and presentation is accompanied by my individual presentation to the conference on ‘The identity, ethics and response-ability of an educator with and beyond professional standards and with values of living-global-citizenship, human flourishing and Living Theory research.’ (Whitehead, 2020a). My individual presentation is focused on answering the following questions posed by the organisers of the 2020 IPDA Conference in relation to my Living Educational Theory research into improving my educational practice:

Working with people in contexts patterned by contemporary global challenges that create economic and social inequalities, framed by austerity, forced migration, climate emergency, conflicting values in multicultural societies, and discourses of

'post truth' that mistrust 'expertise', means that meeting standards is often an inadequate preparation for practitioners to work effectively in front line contexts.

What does it mean to be professional in the 21st century, and how do we define professionalism? What is the role, purpose and limitations of professional standards? Do we need them, and what could we do without them? Whose interests do they serve? What happens differently in contexts where practitioner education is not standards led? What might 'post-standards' professionalism look like? How do we practise in contexts of uncertainty? What is professional knowledge-making like in the post-professional age? Who makes it? Where is it made? Who is it for? What does it do? Where are the tensions? What are the implications of all these questions for professional identity making? And being and doing in practice spaces? Why must we continue to talk about race, class, gender and sexualities in the context of professional identity making? What does it mean to practise ethically? To be responsible and response-able in our practice? What does all this mean for: students, educators, leaders, policy-makers and communities

IPDA (2020) Key Questions for 2020 IPDA Virtual Conference. Retrieved 4 September 2020 from <https://ipda.org.uk/ipda-international-conference/conference2020/>

My contribution to this symposium on, 'Post-professional Identities, ethics and response-ability beyond professional standards' is focused more narrowly on my Living Educational Theory research into improving my educational practice as I collaborate with my co-presenters on showing how we are enhancing our professional development as we move beyond the professional standards that we meet for our initial entrance into our professions. I am focusing on the educational process of collaboration with the unique and relationally dynamic values of my co-presenters, as I am seeking to improve my educational practice in contributing to International Professional Development with the value of living global citizenship. My focus on citizenship is consistent with my initiation into the Philosophy of Education in 1967 when Peters (1966) emphasised that the job of a teacher is:

To initiate children into the skills, attributes and knowledge which are necessary for them to participate intelligently as citizens in the life of a democratic state. (p. 125)

My preparation and presentation for this symposium is focused on the successful proposal below. I am seeking to improve my professional educational practice and contribution to International Professional Development through engaging with and enhancing the communication of each individual's living-educational-theory as we use our unique constellation of values in moving beyond the professional standards that defined our acceptance into our professions.

Symposium on Post-professional Identities, ethics and response-ability beyond professional standards

Abstract

The clarity of focus and originality are defined by the Living Educational Theory research approach to professionalism adopted by all the contributors. The relevance is

established by its close relationship to the theme of the conference. The coherence is provided by each contributor's analysis of their post-professional identity related to their ethics and response-ability beyond professional standards. The four contributors all accept the professional standards appropriate to their professional practice whilst going beyond these in a view of professionalism that includes their knowledge-creating contributions to their professional knowledgebases. The significance of this research is particularly relevant to the theme of researching creatively across disciplines and settings.

1) Jayne Colman - How am I Supporting Professional Development in Physiotherapy Educational Practice through Living Educational Theory research?

Within Physiotherapy the value of professionalism is established against governing body standards (CSP 2019) and individuals establish their professional identity through successful registration with the Health and Care Professions Council [HCPC] (HCPC 2016). I am also holding myself to account for living as fully as I can the responsibilities of my role profile as a Lecturer in Physiotherapy. I will analyse how I am responding to these responsibilities:

To inspire learning and contribute to the enhancement of the student experience. To contribute support to the programme leaders and module teams in the development, delivery, assessment and administration of high quality learning and teaching for students on the MSc pre-registration, Doctorate in Physiotherapy pre-registration, BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy and Postgraduate Programmes. The role holder will also be encouraged to engage in scholarly activity and/or research and to help develop the profile of the subject area in Scotland, UK and internationally.

2) Joy Mounter - How do I contribute to enhancing professionalism in education through the creation and enhancement of the educational influences of a community of learners, supporting each other and their own development?

The originality of my contribution to this symposium can be understood in relation to a contribution to the knowledge-base of education. It is grounded in the view of professionalism that includes the responsibility of the professional educator to make a contribution to this knowledge-base through their practitioner-research. The context of my enquiry is my practitioner-research into explaining my contribution to the creation and enhancement of the educational influences of the communities of learners I belong to. These influences are focused on my professional practice as a teacher researcher, a Head teacher researcher, a higher education lecturer, MA course leader and educational researcher. The practice includes my leadership in designing a Living Theory Masters programme in values-led leadership, for successful University accreditation (Mounter, 2019). The explanatory principles in my explanations of my educational influences in communities of learners can be understood in terms of a relational epistemology that includes my ontological values as explanatory principles and standards of judgment. The constellation of relationally dynamic values includes nurturing responsiveness, making a difference, hope, equality, educational emancipation and democracy.

3) Marie Huxtable - How can I contribute to improving opportunities for practitioner-researchers to contribute to and benefit from a global educational

knowledgebase whatever their location, discipline or field of practice from a Living Educational Theory research perspective?

In this contribution I explore the question, 'how can I contribute to improving opportunities for practitioner-researchers to contribute to and benefit from a global educational knowledgebase whatever their location, discipline or field of practice from a Living Educational Theory research perspective?' (Huxtable & Whitehead 2020)

I consider 'what' distinguishes educational knowledge, 'why' it is created, 'who' should contribute to and benefit from a global educational knowledgebase and 'how' it has been created and communicated to:

- (i) Contribute to and benefit from a global educational knowledge base.
- (ii) Participate in intellectual and scholarly educational discourses;
- (iii) Connect with others of a like mind who are also developing educational knowledge, theory, practice and opportunities that contribute to the flourishing of humanity.

4) Jack Whitehead - How am I creating a living-educational-theory from questions of the kind, 'how do I improve my practice?' 30 years on with Living Educational Theory research.

This contribution offers an introduction to a Living Educational Theory research approach to enhancing professionalism in education through accepting educational responsibility. Education research is distinguished from educational research in enhancing professionalism in education. Digital visual data is included to communicate the meanings of educational practices and educational relationships. These data are included to show how to clarify and communicate the meanings of the embodied and ontological values of professionals. These values are used as explanatory principles and standards of judgment in explanations of educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations that influence practice and understandings. Evidence is provided, from universities around the world, that living-educational-theory accounts, understood as valid, values-based explanations of educational influences in learning, have been recognised as contributing to global, professional knowledgebases. Integrating ideas from others in generating a living-educational-theory. The paper offers an interim conclusion with projections into a future influenced by a global movement of Living Educational Theory researchers for International Professional Development.

In expressing my professional educational responsibility to contribute to my professional knowledgebase, I include the following:

- 1) The use of digital visual data from my educational practices to communicate meanings of educational practice, relationships and values.
- 2) Using values as explanatory principles in explanations of educational influences in learning.
- 3) Integrating ideas from others in generating a living-educational-theory.

- 4) Evidence of the global legitimization of living-educational-theories in enhancing the professional knowledgebase of education.
- 5) An interim conclusion with projections into a future influenced by a global movement of Living Educational Theory researchers with the value of living global citizenship.

1) Using digital visual data to communicate meanings of educational practice, relationships and values.

The clearest communication of the need for digital visual data to supplement text-based communications in clarifying meanings of educational practice, relationships and values can be seen in the differences between a multi-media text presented at the World Congress of the Action Learning, Action Research and Process Management and the printed text based paper for publication in the Conference proceedings that conformed to the requirements for the Conference proceedings for a text-based publication:

Whitehead, J. & Huxtable, M. (2006) How are we co-creating living standards of judgement in action-researching our professional practices? Multi-media text presented at the World Congress of ALARPM and PAR 21-24 August 2006 in Groningen.

<https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/jack/jwmh06ALARPMmulti.pdf>

Whitehead, J. & Huxtable, M. (2006) How are we co-creating living standards of judgement in action-researching our professional practices? Printed text in the Conference Proceedings of the World Congress of ALARPM and PAR 21-24 August 2006 in Groningen.

<https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/jack/jwmhalarpmttext06.pdf>

2) Using values as explanatory principles in explanations of educational influences in learning.

The following papers focus on the clarification and use of values as explanatory principles in Living Educational Theory research:

Whitehead, J. (2006) How do I express and communicate embodied values of Ubuntu in an explanation of their educational influence in my own learning and in the learning of others? Draft paper, 12 March 2006.

Whitehead, J. (2005) Living inclusional values in educational standards of practice and judgement. Keynote for the Act, Reflect, Revise III Conference, Brantford Ontario. 11th November 2005. Ontario Action Researcher, 8(2).

<http://oar.nipissingu.ca/PDFS/V821E.pdf>

In a paper in Action Research I focus on meanings of energy-flowing values as explanatory principles in living-educational-theories:

The paper explains how individuals can generate their living theories from action research as explanations for their educational influences in learning. The epistemological significance of these explanations is explored in terms of the energy and values that are expressed in explanatory principles of learning in enquiries of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing?'. Limitations in the expression of the meanings of these explanatory principles through words on pages of printed text are

overcome from a perspective of inclusionality and in multi-media explanations that focus on the embodied knowledges of action researchers. These explanations can be accessed through the live URLs provided in the article. Evidence that the explanations of educational influences in learning from Whitehead's educational research programme have been used by others is provided from the masters and doctoral degrees of other living theory action researchers.

Whitehead, J. (2006) Generating living theory and understanding in action research studies. *Action Research* 7(1): 85-99.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/249747675_Generating_living_theory_and_understanding_in_action_research_studies

3) Integrating ideas from others in generating a living-educational-theory.

In my most quoted paper on Living Educational Theory research I emphasised the importance of integrating ideas from others in generating one's own living-educational theory:

Whitehead, J. (1989) Creating a living educational theory from questions of the kind, "How do I improve my practice?". Published in the *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 19(1); 41-52

<https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/livtheory.html>

4) Evidence of the global legitimization of living-educational-theories in enhancing the professional knowledgebase of education.

The most convincing evidence of the global legitimization of living-educational-theories in enhancing the professional knowledgebase of education can be accessed in:

<https://www.actionresearch.net/living/living.shtml> . These Living Educational Theses have been legitimated in Universities around the world.

See also, Percivale Mondli Mdunge's MA (Higher Education Studies), 'Improving my professional practice by infusing values of social justice as a teacher educator'. University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa. Retrieved 24 November 2020 from

<https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/livingtheories/mdunge.pdf>

5) An interim conclusion with projections into a future influenced by a global movement of Living Educational Theory researchers with the value of living-global-citizenship.

My interim conclusion provided by the 1st International Living Educational Theory Research Conference hold on the 27th June 2020 with the details at:

<http://www.spanglefish.com/livingtheoryresearchgathering/index.asp>

These details include the living-posters of participants at:

<https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/posters/participants2020conference.pdf>

This global movement of Living Educational Theory researchers includes the commitment of individual practitioners to project themselves into the creation of a future that has not been realised yet, but which is informed by the value of living-global-citizenship. This value has been clarified and communicated in the following:

Coombs, S. & Potts, M. (2012) Bringing Living Citizenship As A Living Standard Of Judgment Into The Academy. A presentation to the BERA conference, University of Manchester, 4-6 September 2012. Retrieved 17 November 2020 from <http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/jack/coombspottsBERAPaper2012.pdf>

Potts, M. (2012) How can I Reconceptualise International Educational Partnerships as a Form of 'Living Citizenship'? PhD Thesis, Bath Spa University, UK. Retrieved 17 November 2020 from <https://www.actionresearch.net/living/markpotts.shtml>

Potts, M., Coombs, S. & Whitehead, J. (2013) Developing Cultural Empathy And The Living Global Citizenship Agenda: The Social Role And Impact Of Technology In Supporting Global Partnerships. A presentation at the 2013 Annual Conference of the British Educational Research Association, University of Sussex, 5th September. Retrieved 28 October 2020 from <https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/bera13/markstevejackbera010913.pdf>

Coombs, S., Potts, M. & Whitehead, J. (2014) 'International Educational Development and Learning through Sustainable Partnerships: Living Global Citizenship' London; Palgrave Macmillan. Retrieved 28 October 2020 from <https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/jack/coombspottswhitehead.pdf>

In improving my practice in living-global-citizenship I include my preparation and presentation for this symposium. The preparation and presentation has included the educational influences of my co-presentations in my own learning with values of human flourishing. For example, Jayne Colman is a young academic who is focused on establishing her professional identity in a way that includes an intimate relationship between her professional practices as a physiotherapist and academic researcher. I am hoping to continue to support Jayne in the development of a successful doctoral proposal, a successful transfer successful submission and successful publications in national and international Journals. Joy Mounter's ideas on living professionalism are informing my own Living Educational Theory research as are Joy's ideas on ~i~we~I~us~ relationships and the Living Educational Theory masters degrees that Joy designed and have been given University accreditation. I am hoping to continue to support the communication and spreading influence of ~i~we~I~us~ relationships as part of the unique constellation of the values of individuals that are used as explanatory principles in explanations of educational influences in learning. Marie Huxtable has focused my attention on the importance of clarifying and communicating meanings of educational practice in Living Educational Theory research and of enhancing professionalism in International Professional Development with values of human flourishing that include living-global-citizenship.

You could participate in the creation of a future that is influenced by a global movement of Living Educational Theory researchers with the value of living-global-citizenship. You could do this by contributing your own living-poster to those from the 1st International Living Educational Theory conference and to contributing to the 2nd International Living Educational Theory conference. You could access the forthcoming details in the 'What's New' section of <http://www.actionresearch.net> .

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