

Cultivating Equitable Education Systems for the 21st Century in global contexts through Living Educational Theory Cultures of Educational Inquiry.

Successful proposal for a session presentation at the April 2022 Conference of the American Educational Research Association on Cultivating Equitable Education Systems for the 21st Century, in San Diego, California.

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Session abstract.

The contributors are all exploring the implications for improving their educational practices and contributing to educational knowledge on Cultivating Equitable Education Systems for the 21st Century through Living Theory Cultures of Educational Inquiry. They are participating in a global social movement of educational researchers engaged in asking, researching and answering, 'How do I, in our Living Theory Cultures of Educational Inquiry, enhance the influence of Living Educational Theory research on cultivating equitable education systems for the 21st Century?' Each researcher is moved by unique constellations of values that are used to explain their educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations that influence their practices and understandings.

1. Objectives

The objectives are focused on explicating the implications of Cultivating Equitable Education Systems, as activist researchers and global citizens building Living Theory cultures of educational inquiry in local and global contexts. The implications include explicating the unique constellation of values each researcher uses as explanatory principles in explanations of educational influences in learning. The objectives include “understanding the characteristics of systems with equitable outcomes; and documenting successful efforts, bright spots, and existence proofs. We must also think about education globally, embracing global perspectives, looking to other nations for effective models and shared challenges, and considering how global forces structure educational opportunity”. We also ask, “What kinds of teaching and learning processes foster equity, disrupt systemic inequality, and deepen learning?”

2. Overview

The presentation brings together action researchers, Living Educational Theory researchers, from India, Nepal, Canada, the UK and the USA, who are engaged in exploring the implications of asking, researching and answering the question, 'How do I, in our Living Educational Theory Cultures of Educational Inquiry, enhance the impact of Living Educational Theory research on cultivating equitable education systems for the 21st Century?' Each presenter demonstrates how they are accepting educational responsibility, as activist scholars and global citizens, for living values of human flourishing. By “imagining new ways of conducting educational inquiry,

they address the “coordinating parallel studies across geographies and developmental stages to inform the design of classrooms, schools, and systems in the service of equity.”

3. Significance

The scholarly significance is focused on a distinction between education research and educational research. Using de Santos’ (2014) idea of ‘epistemicide’, the influence of education researchers on educational researchers is analysed in terms of the replacement by education researchers of the practical principles used by educational researchers to explain their educational influences in learning. Evidence of this replacement is provided from social pressures in the American and British Educational Research Associations where much evidence resides of inequalities in opportunities, research and participation.

The scientific significance is focused on “utilizing new forms of data and data analytics” in the use of dialogue as research method, digital visual data and the method of empathetic resonance to clarify and communicate the meanings of the embodied expressions of the values that constitute human flourishing and that are used as explanatory principles in explanations of educational influences in learning.

4. Structure

The structure of the session is designed to be interactive with equal time given to the contributors to present and the participants to interact, question and comment.

1) Jacqueline DeLong. Cultivating Equitable Education Systems for the 21st Century through Living Educational Theory Cultures of Educational Inquiry in a Canadian/global context.

1. Objectives or purposes

The objectives include addressing the research question ‘What kinds of teaching and learning processes foster equity, disrupt systemic inequality, and deepen learning?’ They include action research, evidence-based explanations of the educational influences of practitioner-researcher mentees. These show how environments of impoverishment and inequity can be transformed through offering global mentoring in safe, democratic cultures of inquiry (Author,2013).

2. Perspective(s) or theoretical framework

The main perspective in this presentation is provided by the theme of “Cultivating Equitable Education Systems for the 21st Century” in which educational researchers are activist scholars and global citizens in their contexts.

At the heart of the Living Educational Theory (Whitehead, 1989) is the perspective that the development of a culture of inquiry rests upon supporting the knowledge-creating capacity in each individual in the system.

3. Methods, techniques, or modes of inquiry

The living truths of action research educational researchers draw on the perspectives outlined by Tidwell, Heston and Fitzgerald (2009) on research methods and Rowell (2017) on knowledge democracy and by Riel (2021) in Action Research Tutorials.

Digital visual technology is used to 'bridge divides of economic capital through digitally-mediated education that connects rural and urban students to rich educational resources outside the classroom walls' (Tierney & Renn, 2012, p.2). A method of 'empathetic resonance' using digital technology is introduced to clarify the meanings of the expression of embodied values and energy that contribute to the explanatory principles of educational influences in learning.

4. Data sources, evidence, objects, or materials

Data sources include the action research narratives of practitioner-researchers that have been mentored and who have created their own living-educational-theories. Evidence is also drawn from publications in Educational Action Research (2020), The Action Learning, Action Research Journal (2020) and the Educational Journal of Living Theories (2020). Dialogue as research (Author, 2020) are seminal to the evidence.

5. Results and/or substantiated conclusions or warrants for arguments/point of view

The author has encouraged and supported the generation of educational knowledge that is addressing inequities in education. The dialogic nature of the research shows how loving educational conversations, grounded in values that carry hope for human flourishing, can contribute to overcoming the demoralisation and devaluation of economic rationalism in hopeful and loving processes of social transformation.

6. Significance

Scholarly significance is in offering evidence-based explanations of the educational influences of practitioner-researchers to show how environments of impoverishment and inequity can be transformed.

The scientific significance is focused on "utilizing new forms of data and data analytics" in the methods of dialogue as research method, digital visual data and empathetic resonance to clarify and communicate the meanings of the embodied expressions of the values are used as explanatory principles in explanations of educational influences in learning.

The co-learning among the author, her mentees and the session group as they create new ways of 'understanding and redressing educational inequalities and building systems that embrace equity and justice that realize the full potential of people and communities' is significant.

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2) Jack Whitehead. Cultivating Equitable Education Systems for the 21st Century through Living Educational Theory, Action Research, Cultures of Educational Inquiry in a UK/global context.

1. Objectives or purposes

The purpose of this contribution is to explain how Living Educational Theory and Action Research can contribute to cultivating equitable education systems for the 21st century in cultures of educational inquiry in a uk/global context.

2. Perspective(s) or theoretical framework

The primary perspectives are that of Living Educational Theory, Action Research and Cultures of Inquiry. The theoretical framework draws on: Maxwell's (2021) analysis of the World Crisis in Universities in relation to three blunders in the Traditional Enlightenment; Brown's (2021) analysis of seven ways to change the world in relation to Global Health; Climate Change and environmental damage; Nuclear proliferation; International Financial Instability; The humanitarian crisis and Global instability; Barriers to education and opportunity; Financial

inequality and its biggest manifestations, tax havens; Santos' (2014) analysis of epistemicide in relation to establishing equity in the face of the abyssal line; subaltern insurgent cosmopolitanism; epistemicide; ecology of knowledges; intercultural translation.

3. Methods, techniques, or modes of inquiry

The methods used include action-reflection cycles, the use of Habermas' (1976) four criteria of social validity and Winter's (1989) six criteria for enhancing rigor. They include a method of empathetic resonance for analysing digital visual data with visual narratives, to develop a shared understanding of relational values, including equity, in valid explanations of educational influences in learning. The modes of inquiry draw insights from the methodologies of auto-ethnography, critical social constructivism, action research, narrative and self-study.

4. Data sources, evidence, objects, or materials

The data sources include over 50 Living Educational Theory Research doctoral and masters theses and dissertations that examine the educational influences in learning of action researchers who have an educational responsibility for building living theory cultures of educational inquiry in global contexts with values of human flourishing, including equity.

5. Results and/or substantiated conclusions or warrants for arguments/point of view

The results include the generation of a new epistemology for educational knowledge (Schon, 1995) that is grounded in accepting educational responsibility, active citizenship and living cultures of inquiry. They include the explication of a Living Educational Theory and Action Research approach for making public the embodied knowledge of professional practitioners that is consistent with Snow's (2001) call to make public the practical knowledge of educators.

6. Significance

The scientific significance is in the evidence-based explanation of a co-operative contribution to a living culture of educational inquiry into the question, 'How can we unite with practitioners, with scholars across other academic fields and disciplines, and with other citizens beyond academia to live the value of equity as fully as possible?' The scholarly significance is in the contribution, not only to a new epistemology of educational practice (Whitehead, 2013). It also demonstrates how individuals can exercise their educational responsibilities in exploring the implications of asking, researching and answering questions of the kind, 'How do I, individually or in cooperation with others, enhance the difference Living Educational Theory research can make in a culture of inquiry concerned with extending equity in human flourishing?' (DeLong, et al 2021)

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3. Parbati Dhungana Living educational values for enhancing self-educating strategies for equitable education

1. Objectives or purposes

The study explores strategies to enhance self-learning for the purpose of being better prepared to influence the learning of others and social formations delving into the research question, “How can I develop self-educating strategies to provide equitable education?”-using the body-mind tools of self-education such as body senses, mind, heart, and consciousness, the author improves her attitudes, biases and self-knowledge around equity issues. It explores how one nurtures inequality by marginalizing one’s own embodied experiences and questions the inequitable habit of mind which values only the inherent tools of logic and overlooks intuition.

Nepal, rich in tantric practices and images and the tantric gesture of Ardhanarishworis shown to unravel folk theories and engage readers critically (Timalsina, 2021) to seek alternative socio-cultural possibilities to question, dismantle, and co-construct equitable strategies.

2. Perspective(s) or theoretical framework

Based on the notion of Kahneman's (2011) 'thinking fast' and 'thinking slow' and integrated with the Vedic and/or Yogic perspective of consciousness from the Eastern Wisdom Tradition (EWT), the author (2020) creates her own living-educational-theory methodology and the Bhagavad Gita (2013). Engagement with Living Educational Theory research (Whitehead, 1989) and a culture of inquiry (DeLong, 2013, 2021) creates a safe space for making this internal journey and the unspoken embodied knowledge into discussion and realization. Realizing implicit values such as harmony and equality while developing an all-inclusive metaphor within a living-educational-methodology, Ardhanarishor, this study continues expanding the horizon of the value 'living love' (author, 2020, 2021).

3. Methods, techniques, or modes of inquiry

Inspired by self-study as a research methodology (Whitehead, 1989; Willink & Jacobs, 2011) and dialogue as a research method (DeLong, 2020), embodied experiences focusing on self are employed. Data was collected by participating in dialogues (dialogue with inner worlds and outer worlds), interacting with sense, mind, and energy and Socratic-like dialogues (e.g. interaction with the Living Educational Theory community of practice).

4. Data sources, evidence, objects, or materials

Visual data is analyzed in video recordings of interactions through Zoom and Skype; text-based data in published journal articles and reflective journals hold the evidence of equitable and inequitable strategies.

5. Results and/or substantiated conclusions or warrants for arguments/point of view

The author experienced disharmony in the levels of body, mind, and intellect. Clearing them through expanding consciousness (Vedic ways: awakening, dream, deep sleep and witness consciousness), the author regained her harmonious self. These approaches easily accessible to all individuals irrespective of diversity in gender, class, caste, race and religions contribute to more equitable education.

6. Scientific or scholarly significance of the study

Scientific and scholarly significance is evident in knowing self with reference to embodied experiences which prepares one's self for engaging with others to ensure equitable educational practices. This research is also significant for teachers, teacher educators and policy developers

in diverse local, national, and international contexts with an interest in giving new life to almost forgotten ideas and dead metaphors and addressing inequities.

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4. Michelle Vaughan. Cultivating Equitable Education Systems for the 21st Century through Living Educational Theory Cultures of Educational Inquiry in a USA/global context.

1. Objectives or purposes

The objectives include addressing the question 'How can we strengthen connections between learning and engagement in community spaces, families, and schools?' The purpose is to explore the nature of collaborative relationships that can exist between higher education faculty and PK12 educators in a graduate education setting.

2. Perspective(s) or theoretical framework

The main perspective is provided by the theme of "Cultivating Equitable Education Systems for the 21st Century". This perspective is focused on creating change within an inequitable schooling system. 'it is necessary to empower the educators and students within classrooms by taking ownership of the action research process and producing the data that supports the individual, innovative practices of educators.

3. Methods, techniques, or modes of inquiry

The method of living-theory research calls for validation of your experiences and perspective to ensure the researcher is not a “living contradiction” of their own values. This validation process is a key component of measuring the influence of the individual within their context and the degree to which their own values are able to flow freely through their pedagogical choices. This validation process can occur through digital recordings and written narratives of experiences. The mode of inquiry is that of Living Educational Theory Research. (Whitehead, 2008, p. 104)

4. Data sources, evidence, objects, or materials

Data sources include reflections of teacher researchers that the author has taught and collaborated with in coursework and other research projects. These reflections are written within their own action research reports and manuscripts and captured through online, synchronous course meetings. Lastly, student evaluations at the university level are used to triangulate experiences of growth and empowerment within our work together.

5. Results and/or substantiated conclusions or warrants for arguments/point of view

The results of the relationships created through a pedagogy of care (Author, 2019) paired with individual action research has consistently resulted in personal empowerment of the educators involved. This personal empowerment has a “ripple effect” within a school system, creating change within students and school structures. By empowering the educator, change travels in multiple directions...to the students, to administration, and to the community.

6. Significance

Conducting action research within the pandemic has made it clear that caring and understanding relationships are needed now more than ever. The focus on humanizing the educational experience is taking center stage. In higher education, this means more online teacher presence, more flexibility and demonstrations of care, and more vulnerable conversations to ensure that our students were healthy, both physically and mentally.

Creating safe communities where teacher researchers can learn and grow was key to their own empowerment. Teacher researchers were asked to stretch in their own pedagogical practices, but also in their research practices. This was daunting, but ultimately a powerful exercise in what “counts” as educational data. There is a lot to be learned from the experiences of teacher researchers in the last year and we must listen with a caring heart in order to grow together into the next phase of education.

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5. Swaroop Rawal. Cultivating Equitable Education Systems for the 21st Century through Living Educational Theory Cultures of Educational Inquiry in an Indian /global context.

1. Objectives or purposes

The pandemic changed the way we teach. In this contribution, I explain how my living-educational-theory enabled me to answer the fundamental question; how do I re-evaluate my teaching practice in a world that is rapidly changing and uncertain?

2. Perspective(s) or theoretical framework

The perspectives include those of Action Research and Living Educational Theory Research and of accepting educational responsibility for living the value of equity as fully as possible. The key questions this presentation asks are: 'What new questions should we ask? How should we ask old questions in new ways?' Teachers, world over, are facing challenges, educating students virtually. 'Emergency remote teaching' reduces the students to the status of passive objects to be acted upon by the teacher (Freire, 1996). This presentation is focused on how a teacher grounds the creation of her living-educational-theory in overcoming obstacle due to inadequate access to the right technologies or the skills to use them. Reassessing her assumptions and challenging them enables her to transform her understanding to become a more socially responsible thinker and educator.

3. Methods, techniques, or modes of inquiry

This self-study research includes continuous self-learning. Narrative methods are used to explain improvements in practice. Different pedagogical techniques are used to facilitate student learning. Methods of action research (McNiff, 2021) and Living Educational Theory Research (Whitehead, 1989, p.4) are used to clarify and communicate the meanings of values.

4. Data sources, evidence, objects, or materials

The data sources include videos of the online lesson, webinars, reflective journals of myself and my students.

5. Results and/or substantiated conclusions or warrants for arguments/point of view

The results include the explanation of an individual's living-educational-theory to demonstrate how a teacher has lived her values in practice in bringing about radical change in education. This change includes living the value of equity, more fully in practice. Findings from this study shed light on how online learning, teaching, and data collection can shape effective action research and how collaboration and effective participation can help build students' sense of engagement and learning.

6. Significance

The pandemic has changed the way we teach. It will be a long time before we can use the term post-pandemic. Online learning will continue to be the major method of learning even after schools and colleges reopen. This blended pedagogy mechanism, called the phygital, is going to be the way of the future. Thus, if we are committed to strengthening education, then it is critical to empower teachers. We will have to invest in the necessary capacity building to take advantage of the potential of remote and blended learning. There are no ready-made solutions, technological or otherwise. We will have to take collective actions to strengthen public education and expand global solidarity in generating equitable educational systems. If educators re-invent their pedagogy, then students will benefit from educational experiences that not only educate holistically but also prepare them as citizens to engage with a swiftly changing, diverse world.

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