

Jack Whitehead's graduation with a D.Litt. degree Honoris causa from the University of Worcester on the 12th September 2023.

A) The University Provost Ann Jordan's citation that justified the award of the degree.

B) Jack Whitehead's response to the citation.

A) The University of Worcester's provost, Ann Jordan's citation, for the award of D.Litt. Honoris Causa to Dr. Jack Whitehead at the University of Worcester on the 12th September 2023.



7:37 minute video https://youtu.be/PHxu_3vxx9Y

Jack has a long-standing professional relationship with the University, having worked largely within the School of Education, and having engaged in many aspects of educational research and post graduate work over time. I know he has also attended and actively participated in conferences here at the University, including more recently, delivering a session on 'A global perspective on leadership in educational research' at the 2021 International Conference. Jack is a prolific writer and author, with an impressive and extensive range of published outputs; and has co-published with a number of colleagues. He has also acted as an external examiner for our post graduate and doctoral students. I know that the students he has examined have always appreciated and recognised, not only his academic expertise, but also the vitally important qualities that he brings, questioning, challenging and extending thinking, whilst also nurturing and supporting those he has supervised along their research journey. I know from discussions with Jack that he has always been impressed with the quality of supervision given by staff at the University in PhD programmes and generous in his acknowledgement of this.

In 1967 Jack began his professional engagement in education, as a science teacher in a London Comprehensive Secondary School. In 1973 he went on to take up the post of Lecturer at the University of Bath where he remained until 2009. It was during the 1980s that Jack formulated the idea that individuals could generate their own living-educational-theories, as explanations for their educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and also in the learning of the wider social formations. Between 1995 and 2000 Jack studied for his own PhD, adopting an action research approach, further developing the understanding of Living Educational Theory. During his time at the University of Bath, Jack supervised to successful completion some 32 Living Educational Theory doctorates.

Jack is a visiting Honorary Professor at the University of Cumbria, supporting research in the Faculty of Education and has previously worked within the Centre for the Child and Family at Liverpool Hope University as an adjunct Professor. Of course, Jack's reach and reputation also extends internationally. He is a former president of the British Educational Research Association and Distinguished Scholar in Residence at Westminster College, Utah. He is a Visiting Professor at Ningxia (Ninsha) University in China and an Extraordinary Professor of Community Based Educational Research at North-West University, South Africa. Jack's home and international work is very much based on the genesis and development of a Living Educational Theory Research approach to the international development of a Discipline of Education and the continuing professional development of educators and educational practitioners.

Jack has pioneered the use of digital, multi-media narratives in order to clarify and evolve the understanding of the values we use to give purpose and meaning to our lives. His more recent research has focused on the use of digitalized video-data in explanations of educational influences in continuing professional development across a range of workplaces. When considering professional practice, a frequently asked question is often 'How do I improve what I am doing?' Jack's original contributions to knowledge and his research programme has focussed on such questions and the creation of the living educational theories that individuals use to improve their practice and explain their educational influences in the workplace. In 2008 he was a founder member of the Educational Journal of Living Theories. His website actionresearch.net is an international resource for practitioner researchers many resources can be accessed on this site. This resource also includes a number of successfully accredited doctorates from practitioner-researchers as they explore how to evaluate and effectively improve their own practice.

In the creation of a living theory an individual explains their present practice and influence in terms of an evaluation of the past and an intention to create something better in the future that has yet to be realised in practice. Jack challenges all of us to see the importance of seeing teacher-researchers as knowledge creators who are generating their own living educational theories. He passionately believes in the importance of researchers bringing their own personal values to educational research and also sees the value of methodological inventiveness as each individual generates their own methodology.

Deputy Pro Chancellor, on behalf of Academic Board, I present to you Dr Jack Whitehead for the award of an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Letters

B) Jack Whitehead's response to Ann Jordan's citation for the award of a D.Litt. degree *Homoris causa* at the University of Worcester on the 12th September 2023.



7.11 minute video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GX-M6kcwUQs>

Deputy Pro Chancellor, Pro Vice Chancellor, Distinguished Guests, Graduands and Graduands' Guests, I should like to begin by thanking the University for the award of a D.Litt. Degree and the University Provost, Ann Jordan, for the citation that justified the award.

My guests include my wife Joan, my daughter Rebecca and my grandson Luke. This is the first time my wife and daughter have seen 13 year old Luke in a shirt and tie with the shirt tucked into his trousers all done willingly to attend his grandfather's graduation. My congratulations to the University of Worcester. I am sure that many Graduand's guests, as they recall the history and gender of their graduands, will recognise the enormity of this influence.

I also owe my thanks to the University for accepting me as a Graduand. My thanks are due to my recognition of the company I am now keeping with the commitment to education shown by many staff to present and past graduands.

I examined and attended the graduation of Swaroop Rawal for the award of her doctorate in 2006 on 'The Role Of Drama In Enhancing Life Skills In Children With Specific Learning Difficulties In A Mumbai School: My Reflective Account.' In her doctorate Swaroop acknowledged the support and educational influence of Dr. Phillip Chambers, Dr. Tony

Ghaye and Dr. Stephen Bigger. Following her doctorate Swaroop engaged in Living Educational Theory to improve her contributions to enhancing educational policies and practice in India and beyond. In 2018 I attended the University's award of her D.Litt. to Swaroop. At present Swaroop is a member of a committee to help write India's new school curriculum and is member of the Editorial Board of the Educational Journal of Living Theories, a Journal I helped to establish in 2008.

I also had the pleasure of examining, in 2008, the doctoral thesis of Dr. Barnabe D' Souza. Stephen Bigger was also his supervisor. Barnabe researched the development over 25 years, starting in 1982, of a rehabilitation programme for chemically dependent male street adolescents in a major Indian City. Stephen has continued to support the development of knowledge and practice of Living Educational Theory Research for example as a reviewer of submissions to the Educational Journal of Living Theories.

In her citation Ann included my commitment to encouraging all of us to see the importance, whatever practice we are engaged in, of accepting our educational responsibilities as knowledge creators who are contributing to the growth of a global educational knowledgebase with values of human flourishing. I continue to believe in the importance of professional practitioners generating their living-educational-theories as they research to improve their educational influences in learning as active and global citizens. We can all express our originality and creativity as each one of us generates our own approaches to our inquiries of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing in the context of my professional practice?'

In receiving the award of a D.Litt. degree, I recognise that, whatever the achievements I have accomplished, they have been made with a grounding in a loving family and the sacrifices of the lives of the many millions who gave their lives during World War 2. I was born on the 29th August 1944, when Normandy was liberated some 85 days after the D Day landings on the 6th June 1944. During the battle of Normandy over 425,000 Allied and German troops were killed, wounded or went missing. Concentration camps were murdering millions of people. I owe so much to those who gave their lives to uphold the values of human flourishing in the face of these crimes against humanity. In benefitting from these sacrifices, I have been able to live in security, to live within democratic governance, benefitting from health, economic and educational opportunities and choices in decisions about leading a productive life. I continue to draw inspiration from Victor Frankl's (1946) and Edith Eger's (2017) responses to their experiences of being concentration camp survivors at the end of World War 2. They both focus on the choices we have in responding to conditions that sometimes negate our values of human flourishing. As Frankl concludes, 'Say Yes to Life in spite of everything'.

In concluding my response to Ann's citation, I am bearing in mind my experience of your presence here today, especially your presence as a new graduand, like myself. As you have much more time to live a productive life than I do, I hope that you can feel a flow of life-affirming energy with the values of human flourishing that will guide you in living a worthwhile, productive and happy life and helping others to do so too. Thankyou.