

Using living-educational-theories to develop international professional learning.

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3.1.3 Living... one finds an element that has completely disappeared from our present-day pedagogy: the living geste. We have become so scribal that we are like butterflies dried out between the pages of a book: while the colours may yet be brilliant, the wings are long dead... the word was always merely the verbalization of the geste. Metaphors, comparisons and logic only found their true meaning when the underlying geste was replayed. (Jousse, 2000, p. 380). In memory of Joan Lucy Conolly.

Introduction

In the framing within contemporary current issues and debates I draw on the ideas of global education and being a global educator in my understandings of international professional learning. In particular I focus on ideas from the Magna Charta Universitatum (2020) with the global nature of what universities do and their wider range of local responsibilities (<https://site.unibo.it/magna-charta/en/magna-charta-universitatum>), together with the living-values of these responsibilities (<https://www.magna-charta.org/activities-and-projects/living-values>). I also focus on ‘The European Declaration on Global Education to 2050 - Dublin Declaration’ (2022) at <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5f6decace4ff425352eddb4a/t/64835ed41b579f3ca762f2ac/1686331105060/GE2050-declaration.pdf>.

As I focus my research into my developing international professional learning with the ideas of global education and being a global educator with values of human flourishing, I engage with Santos’ (2014) idea of ‘justice against epistemicide’, Foucault’s idea of a ‘regime of truth’ and Baumfield’s (2023) ideas on ‘reflection, inquiry and research’.

The overview of the research approach is that of a Living Educational Theory Research to international professional learning. In this approach professionals fulfil their responsibility as professionals by engaging in research into their continuing professional learning into improving the educational influences of their professional practice and in contributing their explanations of educational influences in learning to the global knowledgebase of education, with values of human flourishing.

The relationship of using living-educational-theories to developing international professional learning, to the conference theme of developing professional learning through collaboration and learning from other professions, is focused on the use of insights, from the knowledge generated by other professions, into the generation and sharing of living-educational-theories.

The research questions involve the 'I' of the professional exploring the implications of asking, researching and answering questions of the kind, 'How do I improve my professional and generate valid, evidence and values-laden explanations of my educational influences in learning with values of human flourishing?'

The original contributions have been made public and are freely available for public criticism from <https://www.actionresearch.net/living/living.shtml>. These include over 50 Living Educational Theory Doctorates that have been accredited as making original contributions to knowledge at a range of different universities throughout the world. I have also made freely available the publications, that document of own professional learning from my initial teacher education programme in 1966-67, to my present research into my educational influences as a global educator in 2023, from <https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/writing.shtml>.

The provocations include the challenging perspective that international professional learning programmes may be being structured from normalized perspectives that embody an unwitting support for epistemicide in masking, distorting or omitting the voices and knowledge-claims of practitioner-researchers. I am suggesting that the generation and sharing of living-educational-theories with values of human flourishing, can help to overcome a colonising influence of education researchers to dominate what counts as educational knowledge in international professional development programmes.

Framing within contemporary current issues and debates.

The framing within contemporary current issues and debates needs contextualising in the particular practices and responsibilities of global educators ,who are using a Living Educational Theory Research approach to international professional learning. This framing involves engaging with one's responsibilities to engage in the global problems identified by Brown (2021). These the problems of global health; climate change and environmental damage; nuclear proliferation; global financial instability; the humanitarian crisis and global poverty; the barriers to education and opportunity; and global inequality and its biggest manifestation, global tax havens. The responsibilities of a global educator involve the generation and sharing of explanations of their educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of social formations with values of human flourishing as they engage with these global issues.

The contemporary current issues and debates include those identified by de Santos (2014) as 'Justice against Epistemicide', Foucault (Rabinow, 1991) on 'Regimes of Truth' and Baumfield (2023) on 'Reflection, Inquiry and Research'.

My review of de Sousa Santos' ideas (Whitehead, 2016) is in two parts. In Part One I share my understandings of de Santos' concepts on the abyssal line; subaltern insurgent cosmopolitanism; epistemicide; ecology of knowledges and intercultural translation. In Part Two I explain how I am drawing insights from these ideas in the evolution and transformation of my own living-educational-theory, and in my exploration of the implications of Santos' ideas for Living Educational Theory Research as a social movement.

Foucault's ideas on 'Regimes of Truth' continue to inform debates on relationships between power and knowledge. I claim below that organisations such as the British and American Educational Research Associations can be understood as 'Regimes of Truth' that are serving to support the conceptual frameworks and methods of validation of disciplines of education whilst masking, distorting or omitting the educational epistemologies of practitioner-educational researchers.

Foucault claims that the intellectual can operate and struggle at the general level of that regime of truth which is so essential to the structure and functioning of our society. By 'Truth' Foucault does not mean "the ensemble of truths which are to be discovered and accepted," but rather "the ensemble of rules according to which the true and the false are separated and specific effects of power attached to the true". Foucault writes about a 'battle of truth'. He says that this is not a battle on behalf of the truth, but of a battle about the status of truth and the economic and political role it plays. Foucault claims that it is necessary to think of the political problems of intellectuals not in terms of "science" and "ideology," but in terms of "truth" and "power." (Rabinow, 1991, pp. 73-74).

Whilst I see my own educational research as contributing to debates about the nature of educational theory and educational knowledge I understand that issues around the academic legitimisation and dissemination of ideas that criticize the dominant power relations in the regimes of truth of BERA and AERA, need to be understood and transcended where they are masking, distorting or omitting the claims to educational knowledge being made by practitioner-educational researchers. Whilst relating my use of living-educational-theories, to developing international professional learning to epistemicide and regimes of truth, I want to acknowledge that my understandings are influenced by Hirst's (1983) historical acknowledgement of a mistake in the disciplines approach to educational theory. In acknowledging this mistake, Hirst rectified it by suggesting that rationally defensible practical principles, must of their nature stand up to practical tests and without that are necessarily inadequate. (p. 18).

In framing my use of living-educational-theories in the development of international professional learning, within contemporary current issues and debates, I shall now focus on a 2023 message on 'Reflection, Inquiry and Research' from Vivienne Baumfield, as President of the British Educational Research Association.

I am placing my critical engagement with Baumfield's ideas within both a 'regime of truth' and a battle on behalf of truth. I realise that my criticisms are likely to be contentious as they suggest that powerful influences within BERA and beyond are unwittingly contributing to a form of epistemicide that continues to eliminate an epistemology of practitioner-research from what counts as legitimate educational knowledge within the Academy. I am suggesting that the mistake, recognised by Hirst in 1983, continues to dominate the regime of truth in BERA (and AERA) through the influence of education researchers rather than educational researchers.

Drawing on work on Reflective Teaching (Pollard & Daly, 2023; Pollard & Wyse, 2023) Baumfield says that what impresses her is the underpinning of practical guidance with an evidence base drawn from a range of key thinkers in educational research. In particular,

Baumfield commends the connections to research undertaken within the Teaching and Learning Research Programme (2000–2011) (Pollard, 2007). Baumfield is encouraged to see the continuation of the principle of seeking a ‘warrant’ for action that challenges sterile theory versus practice debates. Baumfield says that what is most impressive is the continued optimism and enthusiasm for the recognition of the professionalism of teachers by Pollard and his co-authors in the face of considerable obstacles.

I do agree with Baumfield that arguments as to how to build knowledge in, of and for the practice of teaching persist and, despite the best efforts of educationalists from Dewey to the present day to reset the terms of the debate, progress has been at best intermittent. However, our responses are very different and have very different implications for educational research into professional development and learning.

Baumfield points out that Donald Schön, one of the foremost advocates of reflective teaching, highlights the great importance of accepting that the systematic knowledge from prestigious research universities is higher than the knowledge generated from researching practical problems:

In return for the favor of locating their schools in the prestigious research universities, the professions have accepted what I call the “Veblenian bargain”: from the “higher schools,” their systematic knowledge; from the “lower,” their practical problems. This bargain has had institutional consequences of great importance. It has engendered a normative professional curriculum... (Schön, 1992, p. 119)

I do agree with Baumfield that Reflective Teaching plays a key role in challenging a reductive view of teaching. I also agree that, to realise the full potential of reflection for the co-creation of knowledge in, of and for the practice of teaching, we need to continue to seek clarity in our understanding of the relationship between reflection, inquiry and research (Whitehead, 1999, 2000). However, I believe that the following offers an alternative to Baumfield’s ideas.

Like Baumfield I have been influenced by Schön’s work. In particular I have been influenced by his call to develop a new epistemology for the scholarship of teaching and learning. In particular I have taken to heart Donald Schon’s (1995) point that the problem of introducing and legitimizing in the university the kinds of action research associated with the new scholarship is one not only of the institution but of the scholars themselves (p.33). I agree that if integration, application, and teaching are to be taken as “forms of scholarship”, the new scholars must produce knowledge that is testably valid, according to criteria of appropriate rigor. Schön asks ‘what are these kinds of knowledge, claims to validity, and criteria of appropriate rigor?’ Schön argued that if the new scholarship is to mean anything, it must imply a kind of action research with norms of its own, which will conflict with the norms of technical rationality--the prevailing epistemology built into the research universities. Schön writes that, perhaps there is an epistemology of practice that takes fuller account of the competence practitioners sometimes display in situations of uncertainty, complexity, uniqueness, and conflict. Perhaps there is a way of looking at problem-setting and intuitive artistry that presents these activities as describable and as susceptible to a kind of rigor that falls outside the boundaries of technical rationality. (p.29)

Over the past 30 years I have worked on making explicit this epistemology of practice. Where I disagree with Schön is in his claim that the new epistemology of practice will emerge from action research. I am claiming that the new epistemology of practice has already emerged from Living Educational Theory Research in over 50 Living Educational Theory doctorates that are available at <https://www.actionresearch.net/living/living.shtml>.

Where this approach differs from action research is in the necessary condition that the educational researchers generate a valid, evidence and values-laden explanation of their educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations within which the practice is located, with values of human flourishing. This is not a necessary condition of action research. I do use action-reflection cycles of expressing values-laden concerns, imagining possible ways of improving practice and creating an action plan, acting and gather data to enable a judgement to be made on the effectiveness of actions in improving practice, evaluating the actions and modifying the actions in the light of the evaluations. I use these cycles in the process of generating valid, evidence and values-laden explanations of my educational influences in learning. In relation to validation I use a modification of Habermas' (1976, p.2-4) 4 criteria of social validity in validation groups of some 3-8 peers that are grounded in the mutual rational controls of critical discussion in enhancing the objectivity of a contribution to knowledge through intersubjective criticism (Popper, 1975, p. 44). Here are the questions I ask validation groups to use to enhance the validity of my explanations of my educational influences in learning:

How could I enhance the comprehensibility of my explanations?

How could I strengthen the evidence I use to justify the validity of my explanations?

How could I deepen and extend my sociohistorical and sociocultural understandings of their influence on my practice and explanations?

How could I enhance the authenticity of my explanations in the sense of providing the evidence that I am living my values as fully as possible?

Rather than place my faith in education researchers generating an epistemology of educational practice I am claiming that educational researchers have already generated a valid epistemology of educational practice. I am suggesting that because education researchers dominate the regime of truth in BERA and other 'educational research' associations, a process of epistemicide will continue to mask, distort or omit the epistemology of educational practice that has already emerged from Living Educational Theory Research.

Original knowledge-contributions and provocations to the wider community.

The original knowledge contribution to using living-educational-theories to develop international professional learning is focused on the epistemology of educational practice that has emerged from the living-educational-theories that practitioner-researchers have generated to explain their own professional development and learning. This epistemology has focused on the unit of appraisal, standards of judgement and living logics that define the rationalities of the explanation of educational influences in learning. The unit of appraisal is an explanation generated by an educational practitioner of their educational influence in

their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations within which the practice is located, with values of human flourishing. The standards of judgment include the unique constellation of values that the practitioner-researcher uses to give meaning and purpose to their lives in education and which they use as explanation principles in their explanations of educational influences in learning. Understanding logic as the mode of thought that is appropriate for comprehending the real as rational (Marcuse, 1964, p. 105), the living logic, that defines the rationality of a living-educational-theory, presents a form of rationality that transcends the rejections, by proponents of propositional and dialectical logicians of their different logics.

I ask you, when judging the validity of my arguments, to bear in mind MacIntyre's (1988) that:

The rival claims to truth of contending traditions of enquiry depend for their vindication upon the adequacy and the explanatory power of the histories which the resources of each of those traditions in conflict enable their adherents to write. (p. 403)

I think it bears repeating the point from Foucault about 'regimes of truth':

The intellectual can operate and struggle at the general level of that regime of truth which is so essential to the structure and functioning of our society. There is a battle "for truth," or at least "around truth" - it being understood once again that by truth I do not mean "the ensemble of truths which are to be discovered and accepted," but rather "the ensemble of rules according to which the true and the false are separated and specific effects of power attached to the true," it being understood also that it's a matter not of a battle "on behalf" of the truth, but of a battle about the status of truth and the economic and political role it plays. (Robinow, 1991, pp. 73-74)

Having agreed with Baumfield that arguments as to how to build knowledge in, of and for the practice of teaching persist and, despite the best efforts of educationalists from Dewey to the present day to reset the terms of the debate, progress has been at best intermittent, I am seeking to reset the terms of the debate with the contentious distinction between education research and educational research. I am claiming that the terms of the debate could be reset by accepting that educational researchers generate and share valid, evidence and values-laden explanations of their own educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations within which the practice is located. I am not advocating the replacement of education research by educational research. I am saying that the insights of education research are defined by their contributions to the conceptual frameworks, modes of inquiry and methods of validation of the forms and fields of education research such as the sociology, philosophy, psychology, history, economics, politics and management of education. Educational researchers use insights from education researchers in the generation of the explanations of educational influences in learning with values of human flourishing.

The evidence of the original contributions to knowledge of this approach to international professional learning has been presented and legitimated in over 50 Living Educational Theory doctorates at <https://www.actionresearch.net/living/living.shtml>. Each thesis has been judged by examiners as making an original contribution to knowledge.

The provocations of this presentation, to professional educators, include the advocacy of their acceptance of an educational responsibility to hold oneself accountable for living the values of being a global citizen as fully as possible in one's own professional, educational learning. This responsibility is based on the view that being a professional involves a continuous process of improving practice and the generation and sharing of explanations of educational influences in learning with values of human flourishing, that contributes to the global knowledgebase of education.

There are two provocations of this presentation to influential education researchers, who are serving the interests of the present regimes of truth in 'educational research' associations such as BERA and AERA. The first is to acknowledge themselves as education researchers with valuable insights to offer educational researchers. The second is to embrace a contribution they could make to educational research by offering valid, evidence and values-laden explanations of their educational influence in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations within which their practice is located, with values of human flourishing. As part of this second provocation, I am drawing attention to an implication of the above approach for global educators and educational researchers. I am thinking of participants in the global contexts of the International Professional Development Association (IPDA), the Academic Network of Global Education and Learning (<https://angel-network.net/>) and the Global Education in Europe (GEIE) Dublin Declaration (<https://www.gene.eu/ge2050-congress>).

The question I put in the CHAT facility of a recent webinar of GEIE was:

Can anyone share evidence that they have integrated insights from the Dublin Declaration in a valid, values-laden explanation of their educational influences in anyone's global education, including their own, others and in the social formations within which their practice is located?

In using living-educational-theories to develop international professional learning, I am suggesting that we relate this learning to 'The European Declaration on Global Education to 2050: The Dublin Declaration' (see <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5f6decace4ff425352eddb4a/t/64835ed41b579f3ca762f2ac/1686331105060/GE2050-declaration.pdf>), which states:

Global Education is education that enables people to reflect critically on the world and their place in it; to open their eyes, hearts and minds to the reality of the world at local and global level. It empowers people to understand, imagine, hope and act to bring about a world of social and climate justice, peace, solidarity, equity and equality, planetary sustainability, and international understanding. It involves respect for human rights and diversity, inclusion, and a decent life for all, now and into the future. Global Education encompasses a broad range of educational

provision: formal, non-formal and informal; life-long and life-wide. We consider it essential to the transformative power of, and the transformation of, education.

Core Values, Principles and Dimensions of Global Education

Global Education includes certain core elements. These include:

- Core values of global and local social justice, peace, solidarity, equity and equality, planetary sustainability, inclusion, human rights, the embracing of diversity, and international understanding.
- A focus on the interconnection between local and global dimensions of issues affecting people, other living beings and the planet; between generations; between cultures and between past, present and future.
- A common commitment to pedagogical practices that are inclusive, participatory, inspire hope, enable critical thinking, and do justice to the primacy of the learners; while building competences and skills for informed, self-reflective, meaningful action, individual and collective.

Rather than giving priority to the language of ‘implementing the Dublin Declaration’ I am suggesting that we give priority to the living, as fully as possible, the unique constellation of values we each hold as values of human flourishing, by asking, researching and answering the question:

Can we work together on generating and sharing valid, evidence and values-based explanations of our educational influences in our contributions to global education, including our own, others and in the social formations within which our practice is located, with insights from the Dublin Declaration and with values of human flourishing?

My concluding point is focused on the educational influence of the British Educational Research Association as a regime of truth that is promoting education research at the expense of educational research. In his Presidential Address to BERA, Whitty (2005) made the following distinction between education research and educational research:

One way of handling the distinction might be to use the terms ‘education research’ and ‘educational research’ more carefully. In this paper, I have so far used the broad term education research to characterise the whole field, but it may be that within that field we should reserve the term educational research for work that is consciously geared towards improving policy and practice..... One problem with this distinction between ‘education research’ as the broad term and ‘educational research’ as the narrower field of work specifically geared to the improvement of policy and practice is that it would mean that BERA, as the British Educational Research Association would have to change its name or be seen as only involved with the latter. So trying to make the distinction clearer would also involve BERA in a re-branding exercise which may not necessarily be the best way of spending our time and resources. But it is at least worth considering. (Whitty, 2005)

BERA have published a report on their State of the Discipline initiative:

The State of the Discipline initiative aims to provide a clear, comprehensive account of the state of education as an academic discipline in universities; as a field of practice; and as a significant and central element of social and political policy in the four nations of the UK.

Reports from each stage of the initiative will equip stakeholders in every part of the sector with the most objective and powerful information on which to base their advocacy for the importance of education and education research. It will also be key to informing decision-making processes within BERA. (BERA, 2023)

Two elements are central to the initiative: the definition of education as an academic discipline that shares characteristics with many other disciplines, including those that have been established for much longer in universities worldwide; the intersections between education research and practice including in teacher education and training, which in recent work has been articulated as 'close-to-practice-research'.

BERA, as a regime of truth, can be seen in the quotation above, to be focused on education research rather than educational research. This is consistent with a request made by Felice Levine, as Executive Director of AERA, to editors of AERA publications, to use education research rather than educational research. Both Whitty and Levine have a disciplinary background in the sociology of education. They do not have a history as educational researchers who have researched their educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations within which their practice is located.

If members of IPDA use living-educational-theories to develop their international professional learning, do please avoid the dangers of epistemicide in colluding with the colonisation of educational research by education researchers. I am suggesting that as international/global, professional educators we should embrace the values of the Dublin Declaration, in researching our educational influences as global educators with values of human flourishing. This is likely to include an engagement with the politics of educational knowledge, in overcoming the present colonisation of educational research by education research. Please do not take this criticism as a rejection of insights of education research. I think that we can all use such insights in the generation of our own living-educational-theories. What I think we will have to challenge is the dominance of regimes of truth that fail to recognise the academic validity of contributions to educational knowledge that are emerging from educational enquiries of the kind, 'How do improve my educational influences, as a global educator, with values of human flourishing?'

Overview of the research approach

The research approach is that of Living Educational Theory Research. In this approach, practitioners research their own continuing professional development as they ask, research

and answer questions of the kind, 'How do I improve my professional practice with values of human flourishing?'. The research requires the generation of valid, evidence and values-laden explanations of educational influences in the practitioner's own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations within which the practice is located. The values of human flourishing are clarified and communicated in the course of their emergence in practice and used as explanatory principles in the explanations of educational influences in learning. The research approach makes a clear distinction between the conceptual frameworks and methods of validation of education research and the explanations of educational influences in learning generated by educational researchers. Educational researchers include insights from collaboration and learning with other professional practitioners such as philosophers, psychologists, sociologists and historians of education.

30 years ago, a paper of mine, 'Creating a living-educational theory from questions of the kind, 'how do I improve my practice?' was published (Whitehead, 1989). This is most often referenced in relation to Living Educational Theory Research. The paper still offers an easy introduction to my ideas about living-educational-theory. I revisited the paper (Whitehead, 2019) in order to share my present understanding of Living Educational Theory Research and living-educational-theories. I use the hypertext facility enabled by EJOLTS, to update the six headings of the 1989 paper with my 2019 insights. I also use the latest technology to include digital visual data to communicate the meanings of educational practices and educational relationships. I use these data to show how I clarify and communicate the meanings of my embodied and ontological values. I use these as explanatory principles and standards of judgment in explanations of educational influences in my own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations that influence my practice and understandings. I provide evidence from universities around the world that living-educational-theory accounts (valid values-based explanations of educational influences in learning) have been recognised as contributing to global academic knowledge and discourse. I conclude the paper by focusing on its original knowledge-contribution and provocations to the wider community of enhancing the influence of Living Educational Theory Research approach to international professional development as a contribution to a global social movement with values of human flourishing.

Relationship to the conference theme.

A Living Educational Theory Research approach to professional learning is used to establish a collaborative and learning relationship with other professions. This approach requires professional practitioners to accept an educational responsibility to research their own professional learning in inquiries of the kind, 'How do I improve my educational influences?'. This research includes the generation, by the profession, of their explanation of their educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations within which the practice is located, with values of human flourishing. These explanations include insights from the conceptual frameworks of other professions and their knowledgebases.

The research questions.

The questions are focused on:

How do I/we improve my/our professional practice with values of human flourishing?
How do I/we generate and share a valid, evidence and values-laden explanation of my/our educational influences in my/our own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations within which my/our practice is located, with values of human flourishing.

Original contributions and provocations

The evidence of the original contributions to knowledge of this approach to international professional learning has been presented and legitimated in over 50 Living Educational Theory doctorates at <https://www.actionresearch.net/living/living.shtml>.

The provocations of this presentation, to professional educators in the International Professional Development Association, include the advocacy of their acceptance of an educational responsibility to hold oneself accountable for living the values of being a global educator as fully as possible in one's own professional, educational learning. This responsibility is based on the view that being a professional involves a continuous process of improving practice and the generation and sharing of explanations of educational influences in learning with values of human flourishing, that contributes to the global knowledgebase of education.

There are two provocations of this presentation to influential education researchers, who are serving the interests of the present regimes of truth in 'educational research' associations such as BERA and AERA. The first is to acknowledge themselves as education researchers with valuable insights to offer educational researchers. The second is to embrace a contribution they could make to educational research by offering valid, evidence and values-laden explanations of their educational influence in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations within which their practice is located, with values of human flourishing. As part of this second provocation I am drawing attention to an implication of the above approach for global educators and educational researchers. I am thinking of participants in the global contexts of the International Professional Development Association (IPDA), the Academic Network of Global Education and Learning (<https://angel-network.net/>) and the Global Education in Europe (GEIE) Dublin Declaration (<https://www.gene.eu/ge2050-congress>).

I repeat for emphasise the question I put in the CHAT facility of a recent webinar of GEIE was:

Can anyone share evidence that they have integrated insights from the Dublin Declaration in a valid, values-laden explanation of their educational influences in anyone's global education, including their own, others and in the social formations within which their practice is located?

I look forward to sharing my own evidence and explanations in future gatherings of the International Professional Development Association.

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