Living-educational-theories of holistic approaches to poverty, globalisation and schooling: A Living Theory approach

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The powerpoint slides with video-clip to support this virtual presentation can be accessed at:

http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/jack/jwufc0215.pptx

Abstract

The unique, living-theory methodologies of practitioner-researchers, have established the academic legitimacy of living-educational-theories as original contributions to knowledge in Universities around the world. These living-theories are analysed in terms of, and responses to, abstract concepts of holistic approaches to poverty, globalisation and schooling. These abstract concepts are transformed by Living Theory research with multi-media narratives into embodied expressions of humanistic values, in living-theories that are created in enquiries of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing?

The unit of appraisal, standards of judgement and living logics of living-theories are distinguished in an epistemology of educational knowledge. The living-theories are generated and embodied within an evolving, living-culture-of-inquiry that is enhancing the flow of values, including living-global-citizenship, that carry hope for the flourishing of humanity.

Contexts and introduction to the Study

Wherever we are in the world we cannot help being influenced by issues of poverty, globalization and schooling. These influences will be different and related to our sociohistorical and sociocultural contexts as well as our experiences of schooling and education. I want to take care to communicate clearly and carefully my meanings, through the words and images I use, as many arguments can be avoided when it becomes clear that the same words are being used to communicate different meanings by different people.

I want to be as clear as I can about my meanings of poverty, globalization, schooling and a holistic approach, using both lexical and ostensive expressions of meaning. By a lexical expression of meaning I am referring to the ways the meanings of words are defined and shared solely in terms of other words. By an ostensive expression of meaning I am referring to the ways embodied expressions of meaning are clarified and communicated with both visual data from practice, and words, in a process of 'show and tell'.

In addressing issues of poverty I am developing ideas presented at the 2013 Annual Conference of the American Educational Research Association:

> The presentation accepts and responds to the purpose of the theme of AERA 2013 to signal that 'we must engage and examine the complexities of poverty, as well as challenge oversimplifications (eg) in how we study and address poverty and its consequences.' (Tierney & Renn, 2012, p.2). It also demonstrates how both halves of the AERA mission can be fulfilled through educational research:
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> "to advance knowledge about education, to encourage scholarly inquiry related to education, and to promote the use of research to improve education and serve the public good." (Ball and Tyson, 2011). The presentation attempts to address the question, How can living educational theory in a culture of inquiry address the negative effect of impoverished educational environments to improve educational practice, educational research and the social/public good? (Delong, et.al, 2013)

In addressing issues of globalization I accept Stigliz's economic analysis of the dangers of inequalities:

Some of the causes of inequality may be largely beyond our control, others we can affect only gradually, in the long run, but there are still others that we address immediately, some of the key elements of which I lay out below.

Curbing the excesses at the top.

Chapter 2 showed how so much of the wealth at the top is derived, in one way or another, from rent seeking and rules of the game that are tilted to advantage those at the top. The distortions and perversions of our economic system are pervasive, but the following seven reforms would make a big difference.

Curbing the financial sector.

… Here are six further reforms that are urgent:

(a) Curb excessive risk taking and the too-big-to-fail and too-interconnected-to-fail financial institutions; they're a lethal combination that has led to the repeated bailouts that have marked the last thirty years….

(b) Make banks more transparent, especially in their treatment of over-the-counter derivatives…

(c) Make the banks and credit card companies more competitivie and ensure that they *act* competitively…

(d) Make it more difficult for banks to engage in predatory lending and abusive credit card practices, including by putting stricter limits on usury (excessively high interest rates).

(e) Curb the bonuses that encourage excessive risk taking and shortsighted behavior.

(f) Close down the offshore banking centers (and their onshore counterparts) that have been so successful both at circumventing regulations and at promoting tax evasion and avoidance.

I also use the way McTaggart, draws on Broudy's ideas of the effects of economic rationality in globalisation on de-valuation and de-moralisation.

Nevertheless, the new 'economic rationalism' is a worldwide phenomena which 'guides' not only the conduct of transnational corporations, but governments and their agencies as well. It does so with increasing efficacy and pervasiveness. I use the term 'guides' here in quotes to make a particular point. Economic rationalism is not merely a term which suggests the primacy of economic values. It expresses commitment to those values in order to serve particular sets of interests ahead of others. Furthermore, it disguises that commitment in a discourse of 'economic necessity' defined by its economic models. We have moved beyond the reductionism which leads all questions to be discussed as if they were economic ones (de-valuation) to a situation where

moral questions are denied completely (de-moralisation) in a cult of economic inevitability (as if greed had nothing to do with it). Broudy (1981) has described 'de-valuation' and de-moralization' in the following way:

> De-valuation refers to diminishing or denying the relevance of all but one type of value to an issue; de-moralization denies the relevance of moral questions. The reduction of all values – intellectual, civic, health, among others – to a money value would be an example of de-valuation; the slogan 'business' is business' is an example of de-moralization (Broudy, 1981: 99)   (McTaggart, 1992, p. 50).

I draw a clear distinction between schooling and education in relation to poverty and globalisation. I associate schooling with the learning in schools that serves the interests of the economic rationality of globalisation. My early introduction to this idea of schooling was from Bowles' and Gintis' (1976) text on Schooling in Capitalist America. I think of education, as distinct from schooling, as involving learning that carries hope for the flourishing of humanity. This notion of education, seeks to transcend the constraints of de-valuation and de-moralisation implicit in the economic rationality of schooling.

In developing a holistic approach to poverty, globalization and school, through Living Theory research I shall focus on the ways in which individuals are generating and sharing their own living-educational-theories with values that carry hope for the flourishing of humanity.

I shall first distinguish Living Theory research and living-educational-theories, before outlining my self-study into improving my own practice and generating a living-educational theory. This includes aims and questions, issues of methodology and methods and outcomes that I believe will resonate with your own interests and may be useful to you in the creation of your own living-educational-theories and contributions to Living Theory research.

Distinguishing Living Theory research from a living-educational-theory.

I have spent most of my working life in education (1967- present) bringing the embodied knowledges of educators into a publically communicable form that can be accredited for higher degrees and shared with others as a contribution to the educational knowledge-base. In the 1980s I coined the idea of a living-educational-theory as an individual's 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 could be located in enquiries of

the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing?' (Whitehead, 1989) I believe that it is now beyond reasonable doubt, given the numbers of living-theory doctorates that have been legitimated in different universities around the world as original contributions to knowledge, that it is possible to make public the embodied knowledges of educators and other practitioner-researchers, in their living-educational-theories, as publically communicable contributions to the professional knowledge-base of education.

Having contributed to this accomplishment my research programme has moved on to clarifying and communicating the idea of Living Theory research as a paradigm for educational enquiry. By this I mean that Living Theory research can be understood in terms of concepts, or general principles, that can identity Living Theory research as a paradigm. In saying this I do not want to imply that an individual's living-theory can be defined within the general concepts. An individual's living-theory is always beyond a definition with general concepts because it is a unique and original contribution to educational knowledge. I hope that this is clear. Where it can be useful to define a Living Theory research paradigm is in encouraging individuals to understand what might be involved in the creation of their own living-educational-theory and for them to see that there contributions to knowledge can be understood in relation to the living-educational-theories of others.

At the heart of Living Theory research is a relationally dynamic understanding of self that draws on the African notion of Ubuntu as 'I am because we are' and includes 'we are because I am'. I use the shorthand 'i~we' to represent this relationally dynamic awareness of self. It is grounded in the creation of unique, living-educational-theories of practitioner-researchers in enquiries of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing?' in which the values of 'improvement' carry hope for the flourishing of humanity. The living-theories draw insight from a wide range of theoretical frameworks from different forms and fields of knowledge. The global significance is that the living-theories are being created and academically legitimated in international contexts including, Europe, North and South America, Australia, India, the Republic of Ireland, China, Japan and New Zealand.

There is still much to do in generating social movements of living-theory researchers to transform social contexts and organisations. This can be related to the following aim and questions.

Aim and Questions

The main aim is to provide evidence-based and academically legitimated, explanations of the living-theories of individuals in which they engage with conceptual issues of poverty, globalisation and schooling through living as fully as they can, the values that carry hope for the flourishing of humanity, in enquiries of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing?' A related aim is to explain how the use of digital, multi-screen SKYPE conversations can transform perceptions and understandings of the meanings of embodied expressions of relationally dynamic and ontological values. These meanings include contributing to a pooling, by individuals, of their life-affirming and enhancing energies, values and understandings that are enhancing the flow of values that carry hope for the flourishing of humanity.

I'll see if I can communicate what I am meaning by the embodied expressions of energy-flowing, relationally dynamic ontological values, by pointing to their expression in the following visual data from a conversation on the 18th January 2015 in which I ask members of a research support group, that have multi-screen SKYPE conversations on Sunday evenings, to introduce themselves to Jacqueline Delong:

2:01 minute video extract https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QQ0-pMaISJc

This two minute clip is an extract from a longer conversation. You can download this clip to your desktop using download helper in the Firefox Browser, drag and drop it into quicktime and move the cursor backwards and forward to get a sense of embodied expressions of meaning. The image above

shows Teri Young on the left, Jacqueline Delong on the right and myself in the middle. Teri introduces herself and mentions a project on poverty. Then Arianna Briganti introduces herself. Arianna, a developmental economist, has just started a two year project in Albania that is focused on economic development and improving the quality of life. What I experience as I view the clip includes the relational dynamic of mutual influence as individual's introduce themselves to each other within living boundaries (Huxtable, Abstract, 2012) and reveal something of their activities which are related to their ontological values. By ontological values I am meaning the values they use to give meaning and purpose to their lives.

What I want to focus on in my experience of this 2 minute clip are the reasons why I am doing what I am doing in spreading the influence of Living Theory research. As I move the cursor backwards and forwards I feel the expression of the life-affirming and life-enhancing energy of Teri, Arianna and Jackie as they meet each other for the first time and introduce themselves to each other. I am experiencing this pooling of energy, together with their introductions as expressing values and understandings that both express their ontological values and carry hope for the flourishing of humanity.

In fulfilling my main aim I shall draw attention to the relationships represented in the still images from video of weekly research support group meetings and planning meetings from the Bluewater Action Research Network (BARN) in Canada for presentations at the Action Research Network of the Americas (ARNA) conference 7-9 May 2015 at the University of Toronto:

Research Support Group

Planning meetings of BARN for ARNA

From the ground of these i~we relationships I am raising the following questions:

i) How can i~we contribute to overcoming the poverty of traditional academic texts that omit embodied expressions of energy and values in explanations of educational influence that draw on East Asian Epistemologies (Inoue, 2012; 2015)?

ii) How can i~we include a recognition of the significance of emotion in explanations of educational influence.

iii) How can i~we engage with issues of objectivity, generalisability and the logics of rationality in the explanations of educational influence?

iv) How can i~we contribute to transforming schooling into education (Whitehead, 2014)?

v) How can i~we engage with embodied expressions of living-global-citizenship in explanations of educational with other values that carry hope for the flourishing of humanity?

vi) How can i~we demonstrate the educational influence of digital multi-screen and multi-media narratives in contributing to a globally influential movement of living-theory practitioners and researchers?

vii) How can i~we engage with the power relations that both support and constrain the use of multi-media narratives in academic texts?

Here are some ideas about Living Theory methodology and methods that might be useful in addressing these questions and in creating your own living-educational-theory. I should like you to bear in mind that each individual generates their unique living-theory methodology in the creation of their living-theory.

A Living Theory methodology, Method(s) and Data Sources

Each unique, living-theory methodology emerges from the expression of the methodological inventiveness (Dadds and Hart, 2001, p.166) of the practitioner-researcher. In establishing the academic legitimacy of a living-theory it is important to address issues of trausworthiness/vality.

These issues are responded to with the use of validation groups of between 3-8 peers who respond to the researchers' explanations and questions:

a) How could I improve the comprehensibility of my explanation?

b) How could I strengthen the evidence I use to justify the assertions I make?

c) How could I deepen and extend my sociohistorical and sociocultural understandings of influences in my practice and explanations?

d) How could I enhance the authenticity of my explanation in showing that I am truly committed to living as fully as I can the values I claim to hold.

The data sources include some 40 living-theory doctoral theses, most of which can be accessed from http://www.actionresearch.net/living/living.shtml

The data analyses includes the unique explanations produced by practitioner-researchers in explaining their educational influences as they explore the implications of asking, researching and answering their questions, 'How do I improve what I am doing?'

The methods include the use of 'empathetic resonance' with digital video of practice to clarify the meanings of the embodied expressions of energy-flowing values in explanations of educational influence that engage with issues of poverty, globalisation and schooling.

Outcomes

The outcomes include an understanding of a Living Theory research paradigm that has emerged from over 40 living-theory doctorates that have legitimated in different universities around the world. Each of these doctorates has been legitimated by the Academy as having made an original contribution to

knowledge. They include a living-theory of undergraduate medical education in South Africa; a life-skills programme in India; a curriculum for the healing nurse in Japan; passion for compassion in the health service in the UK; a new epistemology of educational knowledge; a living culture of inquiry in Canada; the living-theories of practitioner-researchers from around the world published in the Educational Journal of Living Theories (2008-present), accessible from http://ejolts.net; a living theory of caring; a living theory of counselling.

Each living-theory makes an original contribution to Living Theory research and contributes to an engagement with issues of poverty, globalization and schooling through enhancing the flow of values and understandings that carry hope for the flourishing of humanity.

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