

A Special Issue of Gifted Education International

Edited by Marie Huxtable and Jack Whitehead

Editors Introduction.

The contents of this special issue emerged from the writings of educators on a masters unit tutored by Marie Huxtable and Jack Whitehead on Gifts and Talents in Education, accredited by the University of Bath between 2008-2010.

The contributing authors below have all successfully completed this unit, described below.

In our tutoring from an inclusional perspective we use Hymer's (2007) understanding of giftedness that he developed in his doctoral enquiry, *'How do I understand and communicate my values and beliefs in my work as an educator in the field of giftedness?'* Hymer's originality is in the value-laden concept of generative-transformational giftedness in which he presents an inclusional, non-dualistic alternative to the identification or discovery of an individual's gifts and talents, by showing how an understanding of generative-transformational giftedness leads to their creation. We also use Huxtable's (2012) understanding of inclusive gifted and talented education. This understanding was developed from an educational perspective in her doctoral research programme. It shows how inclusive gifted and talented education can enable each learner to develop and offer talents, expertise and knowledge as life-affirming and life-enhancing gifts. The knowledge is that created of the world, of self, and self in and of the world.

Here are the details of the Gifted and Talented Education, Masters Module we tutored and from which the accounts emerged for this Special Issue.

Gifted and Talented Education Module

Through this module you will critically explore the field of gifted and talented education to inform your own understanding and development of gifts and talents as educationally influential and inclusive concepts to improve your professional practice. You will expect to develop and offer your own educational talents and knowledge as gifts to the benefit of your students/colleagues and your institution/organisation. In the process of researching your values-based practice to improve it you will create multimedia accounts that help you understand, enhance and communicate your educational influences in learning. In the spirit of an inclusive approach to gifted and talented education you will expect to offer, as a gift to the professional knowledge-base, the 5,000 word account you create, on the web <http://www.actionresearch.net>

Aims

As you research to improve your practice you will be supported to:

- . •Critically analyze and evaluate different perspectives on the concepts of gifts and talents in educational contexts
- . •Critically analyze and evaluate local and national policies
- . •Critically examine the validity of developing inclusive provision, practice and theory to enhance talents, knowledge and gifts educationally
- . •Critically analyze and evaluate the basis on which valid judgments of educational influence on learners learning to develop and offer talents as gifts can be made
- . •Enquire into the educational influences of educators in their own learning, the learning of their colleagues and pupils, and the learning of their organisation and/or communities
- . •Contribute to the knowledge base of effective practice in the field through values- based research.

Learning outcomes

You will be supported to learn how to:

- . •Analyze and draw on different theoretical perspectives and practical understandings of talents and gifts to enhance their educational theory and practice
- . •Analyze the educational implications of local and national policies on the education of learners in relation to the concepts of equality of educational opportunity and the development of gifts and talents that contribute to the flourishing of humanity
- . •Critically evaluate research on gifted and talented education in terms of educational influences in the learning of pupils and/or students
- . •Collect, analyze and interpret data with colleagues and pupils/students in order to make valid judgments on the educational influence on learners' talents, knowledge and gifts
- . •Produce a validated account of their educational influence in the development of learners' talents, knowledge and gifts

The unit will address the following issues:

- . •Theoretical perspectives and practical understandings of gifted and talented education
- . •School, local authority and government policies on gifted and talented education
- . •The value judgments implicit in different perspectives on the education of gifted and talented children particularly in relation to inclusional approaches to education
- . •Systemic influences on the learning of pupils developing gifts and talents
- . •The use of action research methodologies in the improvement of educational practice and the development of educational knowledge

In the unit, participants will be required to undertake a small-scale action research project in which they will research an attempt to improve the education of pupils developing gifts and talents with the overall aim of producing validated explanations of the educational influences on the learning of pupils developing gifts and talents. (see - http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/huxtable/LLCCPD/G%26T_ed_module.html)

We believe that the significance of this special issue is in its gift of a living educational theory approach to the continuing professional development of educators. This living theory approach focuses on the ontological values (ie the values used by individuals to give meaning and purpose to their lives) used by educators to account for their lives in education and that carry hope for the future of humanity. By a living educational theory we are meaning an explanation produced by an individual for their educational influence in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations in which we live and work (Whitehead, 2011, 2012).

The originality in this approach is in the clarification and communication of the values used by the educators to give meaning and purpose to their lives and to form the living standards of judgment they use in evaluating the validity of their accounts of living their values as fully as they can.

References

Huxtable, M. (2012) How do I Evolve Living-Educational-Theory Praxis in Living-boundaries? Ph.D. Thesis, University of Bath. Retrieved 28 May 2012 from <http://www.actionresearch.net/living/mariehuxtable.shtml>

Hymer, B. (2007) How do I understand and communicate my values and beliefs in my work as an educator in the field of giftedness? E.Ed.Psy. Thesis, University of Newcastle. Retrieved 28 May 2008 from <http://www.actionresearch.net/living/hymer.shtml>

Whitehead, J. (2008) Using a living theory methodology in improving practice and generating educational knowledge in living theories. *Educational Journal of Living Theories*, 1(1); 103-126. Retrieved 11 June 2012 from <http://ejolts.net/node/80>

Whitehead, J. (2012) Educational Research for Social Change with Living Educational Theories, *Educational Research for Social Change*, 1(1); 5-21. Retrieved 11 June 2012 from http://ersc.nmmu.ac.za/view_edition.php?v=1&n=1

