

Conference Strand: Thinking otherwise**Type of paper:** Workshop – 1 Hour**No 23****Title:** Living Theory research: enhancing the quality and effectiveness of Professional Development and learning of Educational-Practitioners working across ages, stages and contexts.**Author(s):** Dr Marie Huxtable Prof. Jack Whitehead**Abstract**

"Education is more than just schooling or training. Education is a life-long values-laden process of learning", as Reiss and White (2003) succinctly put it:

- to lead a life that is personally flourishing, [and]
- to help others to do so, too.

Professional educational-practitioners, wherever they work, are more than 'craftworkers or executive technicians' (Winch, 2013) acquiring and applying knowledge; they are knowledge creators. As professionals they have a responsibility to research their practice to understand and improve it and contribute valid accounts of their values-based explanations of their educational influence in learning to a global educational knowledgebase, for us all to benefit from. Educational practitioners working in diverse fields of practice and cultural contexts do just that using Living Theory (Whitehead, 2018) as, it is a values-based, near-to-practice, educational research methodology.

Living Theory researchers research questions such as:

- 'How do I improve this process of education here and now?'
- 'What educational influence am I having in my own learning, the learning of other people, and the learning of the organisation or community that I am part of?'
- 'How do I fulfil my professional responsibility to create and contribute to a global educational knowledgebase for the benefit of all?'

They create valid, values-based explanations of their educational influence in learning. As they research they clarify their embodied life-enhancing values - give meaning and purpose to their and work, find ways to live those values more fully in practice and test the effectiveness of the changes they make. The valid accounts of their educational influence in learning that they create and make public, will be shown to further enhance their own learning and contribute to the learning of us all.

During the workshop participants will:

- Develop their understanding of Living Educational Theory research as a professional educational-practitioner.
- Begin to create their individual values-based explanations of their educational influence in learning, which can lead to producing accounts of their living-theories (Whitehead, 1989).
- Identify ways of getting and giving support for their research after the workshop.

- Identify ways that their Living Theory research accounts can contribute to the growth of a professional educational knowledgebase for the flourishing of humanity.
- Be introduced to Living Theory researchers working in diverse, and often challenging, global contexts. They will be drawn in through SKYPE where possible. Others will be presented through their living-posters (currently accessible from <http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/posters/homepage020617.pdf>).

Participants will be expected to actively participate through a dialogical approach with the flow of activities being influenced by the needs and contributions of participants. We anticipate that participants will want:

- An introduction to Living Theory research and what constitutes an individual's living-educational-theory.
- A brief over-view of how Living Theory researchers have critically and creatively engaged with other forms of research, such as Action Research, Narrative Enquiry and Autoethnography and used their methodological inventiveness (Dadds & Hart, 2001) to create their own living-theory methodology in the course of their research.
- Practical activities that will enable them to begin their inquiries into their professional practice.
- To learn about some of the creative research methods that are being used. For instance, how to gather and analyse digital, visual data of practice to clarify and communicate their life-affirming ontological and relational values that give their professional practice meaning and purpose and they use as explanatory principles of educational influence and standards of judgment.
- To learn how to produce and make public multi-media valid explanations of educational influences in learning as contributions to professional knowledge.
- To know ways of sharing explanations of educational influence, which enables us all to learn from and with each other and contribute to a social movement for the flourishing of humanity.
- To make connections with support for their research beyond the workshop.

References

Dadds, M. & Hart, S., 2001. *Doing Practitioner Research Differently*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Reiss, M.J. & White, J., 2013. *An Aims-based Curriculum: The Significance of Human Flourishing for Schools*. London: IOE Press.

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Winch, C., 2013. What Kind of Occupation is Teaching? *Research Intelligence*. 121, 13-14.