

**A presentation for the online programme of the scientific colloquium for PhD Students
with Branko Bognar on the 5th June 2021**

Enhancing your professionalism through Living Educational Theory research

Marie Huxtable and Jack Whitehead, University of Cumbria.

Abstract

The colloquium will focus on how professionalism can be enhanced by professionals exploring the implications of asking, researching and answering questions of the kind, 'How do I improve my educational practice?' The implications include generating a living-educational-theory as a validated, evidence-based explanation of educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of social formations. Participants will be introduced to the resources that support Living Educational Theory Research into professional development and are freely available from <http://www.actionresearch.net>. These resources include over 50 Living Educational Theory doctorates and master's degrees that have been accredited by Universities around the world. The resources include access to issues of the Educational Journal of Living Theories that have been published since 2008. The resources include the living-posters of a community of Living Educational Theory Researchers and the published papers that argue for enhancing professionalism through the generation of living-educational-theories by master and doctor educators.

Introduction

Our contribution to this colloquium is focused on how professionalism can be enhanced by professional educators exploring the implications of asking, researching and answering questions of the kind, 'How do I improve my educational practice?' The implications include generating a living-educational-theory as a validated, evidence-based explanation of educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of social formations and contributing to the growth of a global educational knowledgebase. We are hoping that you will use the CHAT facility in the webinar to respond to what we are saying and to raise any issues or questions that you would like us to respond to in the webinar or afterwards. If you include your email in your CHAT contributions this will enable us to continue a conversation with you after the colloquium. Our presentation draws on our continuing educational conversations, which form part of our continuing professional development programmes:

- A) Jack Whitehead's Keynote, 5th June 2021 at the Sardar Patel University webinar on 'Living Educational Theory Research and The Teacher as a Professional'. Access from <https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/jack/jwsardarpatel050621.pdf>
- B) Jack Whitehead's guest speaker paper, 'Generating living-educational-theories in enhancing evidence-based educational practitioner, pedagogic research', presented 2nd June 2021, at the Edge Hill University SOLSTICE and CLT virtual Conference 2021. Access from <https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/jack/jwsolstice020621.pdf>

- C) A University of Cumbria virtual 'Lightning Talk', 19th May 2021, by Jack Whitehead and Marie Huxtable on 'A Living Educational Theory research approach to the professional development of educators and educational practitioners.' Access from <https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/jack/lightningtalk190521.pdf>
- D) Marie Huxtable and Jack Whitehead's webinar, on Living Educational Theory Research for Sustainable Development, 11th May 2021, for members of the Rupantaran Project, 'Innovations in teaching and learning through contextualized approaches to increase the quality, relevance and sustainability of education in Nepal'. Access from <http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/jack/mhjwsigridupantaran110521.pptx>
- E) Jack Whitehead's introduction, 14th April 2021, to a Froebel Research Seminar at Maynooth University on the challenges university educators are facing in professional practitioner research. Access from <https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/jack/jwfroebel140421.pdf>
- F) Jack Whitehead's presentation, 26th March 2021, 'Making Connections with People, Purpose and Place through Living Educational Theory research' at the Educational Studies Association of Ireland, virtual conference with the theme, 'Possibilities in Education: Reimagining connections with People, Purpose and Place.' Access from <https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/jack/JWESAI250321.pdf>

The organisation of our presentation is as follows:

- i) Being a professional and being professional
- ii) A Living Educational Theory Research approach to professional development
- iii) An individual's living-educational-theory
- iv) An introduction to the resources that support Living Educational Theory Research into professional development and are freely available from <http://www.actionresearch.net>. These resources include:
 - a) over 50 Living Educational Theory doctorates and masters degrees on professional development that have been accredited by Universities around the world.
 - b) access to issues of the Educational Journal of Living Theories that have been published since 2008.
 - c) the living-posters of a community of Living Educational Theory Researchers
 - d) Published papers that argue for enhancing professionalism through the generation of living-educational-theories by master and doctor educators.
- v) Interim Conclusion

1) Being a professional and being professional

1.1 Being a professional

To be a professional is to be a member of a professional body/organisation. We understand that being accepted as a member of a profession involves meeting initial standards for entrance. From the initial entry standards, different professions have different requirements for continuing professional development. In the UK, some professions, such as education,

have no mandated requirements for continuing professional development once the entry requirement have been fulfilled.

1.2 *Being* professional

'Being' professional implies a way of being, an approach taken to practice. Our understanding of *being a professional educational* practitioner means a practitioner accepts their educational responsibility. This includes the professional educational practitioner:

- Continuing to study to extend their cognitive range and concern,
- Keeping up-to-date with field of practice knowledge,
- Conforming to ethical standards,
- Accepting personal responsibility for their practice
- Seeking to make a contribution to the growth of global educational knowledge by generating and testing the validity of their educational knowledge and making their values-laden practitioner research public

We believe that developing hallmarks by which developing expertise and knowledge of professional educational practitioners can be recognised can enhance professionalism in education globally. For example, expertise and knowledge, which identify master and doctor educators (Whitehead and Huxtable, 2016).

2) A Living Educational Theory Research approach to professional development

Traditional Theories are usually presented as general explanations for phenomena. Explanations for particular instances that fall under the theory are derived from the general conceptual framework in a process of deduction from the general to the particular. In Living Educational Theory Research there is no such process of deduction from the general to the particular. Living-educational-theories are generated by individuals to explain their educational influences in learning. These explanations can include insights from theories in the disciplines of education, but no theory, taken individually or in any combination, can generate a valid explanation of the educational influences of an individual in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of social formations that influence their practice and explanations. It is possible to conduct a meta-analysis of living-educational-theories to produce useful generalisations for distinguishing Living Educational Theory Research (Williamson & Whitehead, 2021).

3) An individual's living-educational-theory

A living-educational-theory is an individual's explanation of their educational influence in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of social formations (Whitehead...).

We believe that education and educational practice are values-laden practical activities. Because of this we cannot distinguish something as 'educational' without approving it through our humanitarian value-judgements. We believe that the meanings of educational-

practitioners' values are clarified as the practitioner researches their practice to understand, improve and generate valid accounts of their living-educational-theory research.

The path of educational practitioner research is informed not only by the researcher's answers to practical questions such as, 'How can I improve what I am doing?' but importantly, to ask 'why am I motivated to do what I am doing?', 'why am I motivated to engage in continuing professional development to improve what I am doing as professional educator?'. The values, clarified as they emerge, form the explanatory principles in the educational-practitioner's explanations of their educational practice and educational influence in learning. Values require lexical and ostensive definition to communicate their meanings.

The stress on educational influences in learning is because not all learning is educational. History shows many examples of individuals and cultural influences in social formations that have led to learning that supported crimes against humanity and negated values of human flourishing. Stressing the importance of educational influences in learning with values of human flourishing, is intended to reduce the likelihood of such negations.

You can access more detail on the distinction between a living-educational-theory and Living Educational Theory Research (EJOLTs, 2021).

4) **An introduced to the resources that support Living Educational Theory Research into professional development and are freely available from <http://www.actionresearch.net> . These resources include:**

- a) over 50 Living Educational Theory doctorates and masters degrees on professional development that have been accredited by Universities around the world.

These can be accessed from <https://www.actionresearch.net/living/living.shtml>

You can see the global spread of the Universities that have awarded doctorates for Living Educational Theory Research. For example, the first 6 doctorates in the list show the Universities that have awarded such doctorates from the UK, Canada, the Netherlands and South Africa:

Ph.D.

[John Branch's Doctorate of Professional Studies by Public Works on 'Teaching Is Like Engineering: My Living Educational Theory' submitted for examination to Middlesex University in April 2020.](#)

Ph.D.

[Arianna Briganti's Doctoral Thesis on 'My living-theory of International Development' submitted for examination to the University of Lancaster in March 2020.](#)

Ph.D.

Christine Jones' doctorate on -
My living-theory of living
inclusive and inclusional
empowerment: a Living Theory
research approach. Liverpool
Hope University, UK, 2019.

Ph.D.

Elizabeth Campbell's doctorate
on - How has love influenced me
as a teacher researcher, and
learner? A narrative inquiry into
a teacher's abrupt awakenings.
Nipissing University, Canada,
2018

Ph.D.

Anne Keizer-Remmer's doctorate
on - Underneath The Surface Of
Cosmopolitanism: In Search of
Cosmopolitanism In Higher
Education. University of
Humanistic Studies, Utrecht, the
Netherlands, 2017.

Ph.D.

Bruce Damon's doctorate on - A
Collaboratively Constructed
Process Model For
Understanding And Supporting
The Work Of The Community
Volunteer In A Community
School. 2017 Nelson Mandela
Metropolitan University, South
Africa.

- b) access to issues of the Educational Journal of Living Theories that have been published since 2008.

These can be accessed from <https://ejolts.net/>

The Educational Journal of Living Theories (EJOLTS) is committed to publishing [living-educational-theory](#) (often shortened to living-theory) accounts of practitioner-researchers from a wide range of global, social, cultural and professional contexts. We welcome submissions from all engaged in Living Educational Theory research (often shortened to Living Theory) who wish to contribute rigorous and valid accounts of their [living-educational-theories](#) to improving educational knowledge. EJOLTS offers distinctive, stimulating opportunities for creativity, learning and spreading knowledge of educational influences in learning; learning which carries hope for the flourishing of our individual and collective humanity.

The journal focuses on the [living-educational-theories](#) of practitioner-researchers. Researchers generate their living-educational-theories as their values-based 'explanations for their educational influences in their own learning, the learning of others and the learning of social formations' (Whitehead, 1989) in the process of researching questions such as, 'How do I improve what I am doing'. The values at the heart of [Living Educational Theory research](#) (often shortened to Living Theory research) are the life-enhancing values that are relational and ontological, in the sense that they give meaning and purpose to the lives of

individuals and groups. They are values that carry hope for the future of humanity, such as love, freedom, justice, compassion, courage, care and democracy.

To [learn more about Living Educational Theory research watch this video](#), and visit and join the conversations in the [EJOLTS community space](#), and on EJOLTS Facebook and Living Theory Facebook group and EJOLTS on LinkedIn.

- c) the living-posters of a community of values-laden educational practitioners

These can be accessed from

<https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/posters/homepage2021.pdf> , together with the guidance on creating and sharing your living-poster:

- d) Published papers that argue for enhancing professionalism through the generation of living-educational-theories by master and doctor educators.

These can be accessed from <https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/writing.shtml>

and include:

Huxtable, M. & Whitehead, J. (2021) 'Enhancing educational influences in learning with a Living Theory approach to Pedagogical Action Research in Higher Education.' *Educational Action Research* 29(2); 310-327. Accessed from

<https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/jack/mhjewEAR0620.pdf>

Huxtable, M. & Whitehead, J. (2022) Enhancing research literacy in continual professional development programme for educators: A Living Educational Theory research approach, in Agnieszka, S. & Boyd, P. (2022) *Developing Teachers' Research Literacy* (in press).

Whitehead, J. & Huxtable, M. (2016) Creating a Profession of Educators with the living-theories of Master and Doctor Educators, *Gifted Education International*, 32(1) 6-25. Accessed from <https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/gei2015/geicontents2016.pdf>

5) Interim Conclusion

The colloquium has focused on how professionalism can be enhanced by professionals exploring the implications of asking, researching and answering questions of the kind, 'How do I improve my educational practice?' We have focused on our educational responsibilities as professional educators to enhance our own professionalism through Living Educational Theory research. This educational responsibility has focused on the generation and sharing of our validated, evidence-based explanations of our educational influences in our own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations within which we live and work.

Participants have been introduced to the resources that support Living Educational Theory Research into professional development. These are freely available from <http://www.actionresearch.net> . They include:

- i) Over 50 Living Educational Theory doctorates and master's degrees that have been accredited by Universities around the world.
- ii) Access to the archive of issues of the Educational Journal of Living Theories that have been published between 2008-2020.
- iii) The living-posters of a community of Living Educational Theory Researchers with guidelines on how you can generate and share your own.
- iv) The published papers that have argued for enhancing professionalism through the generation of living-educational-theories by master and doctor educators.

We hope that our presentation has captivated your imagination and stimulated your desire and interest in generation and sharing your own living-posters and living-educational-theories as you contribute to enhancing professionalism in education with values of human flourishing.