

How do I contribute to improving educational theory, practice and provision through developing my living-theory-praxis?

Paper presented at BERA 2013 annual conference at Sussex University 3rd -5th
Sept 2013

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Abstract

The paper contributes to educational research through its creative use of multi-media narrative to understand and communicate the meanings of values. These values, flowing with life-affirming and life-enhancing energy, explain why I do what I do and provide hope-full touchstones for me, as an educational practitioner and researcher, researching to enhance educational theory, practice and provision that contributes to a flourishing of humanity. The paper also offers a relationally dynamic approach to developing educational research.

Introduction

There has been a growing recognition by academics and practitioners of the importance of enabling educational practitioners to contribute to the development of educational theory, practice and provision which enable learners to enhance their own learning and life, that of others and contribute to a world where humanity flourishes. A challenge currently is how educational practitioners in universities and schools can continue to work to improve the abilities of each and all learners to contribute to the common good and enhance their own sense of happiness and wellbeing in contexts where the government is promoting didactic, outcome-led instruction and high-stakes testing.

After giving a brief introduction to provide the context of this research I address:

- What distinguishes educational research that contributes to the development of educational theory, practice and provision;
- The notion of living-boundaries between the worlds of academics and practitioners as a creative space for developing educational research;
- An approach to researching to evolve Living-Educational-Theory praxis in living boundaries which keeps a relationally dynamic connection between theory, practice and the values that are at the heart of education as an educational enterprise;
- The contribution offered to the development of generative and transformational responses to the concern of many educational practitioners about the professional development of educational theory, practice and provision, as indicated by articles in the latest issue of Research Intelligence (Issue 121, Summer 2013).

Context

My background is as an educational psychologist in England, working first for school psychology services in local authorities and then as a senior educational psychologist leading and developing an authority wide project, APEX (ALL are Able Pupils Extending Opportunities). I became increasingly aware as I developed APEX that there were few opportunities that supported children or young people as knowledge creators, yet the traditional literature on 'gifted and talented' highlighted that those who develop early beyond the expectations of their age behave as 'experts' and thrive where they are supported and encouraged to do so. Similarly there were few opportunities for adults to extend their abilities as knowledge creators through disciplined enquiry. In my experience teachers and other educational practitioners tend to employ a pedagogy that mirrors the support they experience for their learning. Put simply, trained teachers train children. It also seemed to me that the theories taken up from psychology were also reflected in practice. For instance, I was very much taken with instructional theories, such as that of Gagné (1975) and Haring et al (1978) and brought those into how I constructed the first course I 'delivered' to Head teachers in 1978. Edwards (2013) I think is coming to a similar conclusion when he reflects:

'Given the uptake of aspects such as reflective practice, communities of practice and activity theory, it could well be argued that educational researchers are contributing to the argument in favour of more craft and apprenticeship models of professional formation, as we are witnessing so strongly in England.' (p.26)

It seemed logical to me that I might contribute to the educational quality of the learning opportunities children and young people experience by enabling the adults providing such opportunities, in and beyond school, to understand and improve their own experience of educational learning opportunities. It was not until I became acquainted with Living-Theory research (Whitehead, 1989a, 2008) I became aware what, and how I might offer learners (of all ages and stages) educational opportunities to develop as experts in their own learning, valuing and developing their skills, expertise and talents to create and offer valuable knowledge as gifts that might improve what they were doing and contribute to the common good. Later I came to understand what Living-Theory research offered educational practitioners developing their professionalism. (Whitehead, 1989b, 1998, 2009)

In the autumn of 2005 at my request Jack Whitehead began tutoring, employing a living-theory pedagogy, a Masters group at the University of Bath. Examples of the generative and transformational nature of this form of educational research as CPD can be found on <http://www.actionresearch.net>

I began to develop my own understanding and practice of Living-Theory research from the inside, first by working on a Masters Module, with the group I had asked Jack to establish. I did so initially because I thought I should do what I exhorted others to do, hence the title, 'How can I improve my practice through 'walking the talk' and 'dealing with doorsteps' (Huxtable, 2006). It is a slippery slope! I then embarked on a living-theory doctoral research programme,

graduating just before I was made redundant in 2012. Living-theory research influenced my theories of education as well as my educational theories, my practice and the development and provision of other learning opportunities. For instance, I worked with Dr Gary Mathlin, an academic physicist and university lecturer, to provide a number of collaborative, creative science learning opportunities for children and their teachers. He took from the learning we co-created in the living-boundaries between us, and the worlds of our practice, into the university with unforeseen consequences:

'I had a really interesting conversation yesterday afternoon with the head of academic development who's aim in life seems to be to produce lecturers who can enable students to become creators of their own knowledge; she seemed a little shocked when I told her that we have been doing the same thing with primary school pupils.' (personal email from Dr Mathlin, 27th November 2008)

Drawing on my thesis (Huxtable, 2012) I now clarify further my meanings of what constitutes educational research, and my notions of living-boundaries and living-theory praxis, before turning to the possible significance of this work for educational professionals, in various worlds of practice, who want to improve the abilities of each and all learners to contribute to the common good and enhance their own sense of happiness and wellbeing.

What distinguishes educational research that contributes to the development of educational theory, practice and provision?

The 115th issue (Summer of 2011) of BERA Research Intelligence, demonstrates the common confusion between education research and educational research. Most articles variously use the terms without distinction, ignoring the debate that has been on-going in the Association and elsewhere for years. I believe this to be one source of misunderstandings that abound. In clarifying the distinction I make between education research and educational research, I am not intending to imply that one form of research is more important than another. Rather I am setting the scene for this paper as a contribution to educational research and epistemology and to contribute to the development of a language of educational learning as Biesta (2006) urges.

Whitehead's (1989a) notion of educational research is as research concerned with learning that enhances the ability of a person to live their ontological energy-flowing values as fully as they can. The embodied values Whitehead is concerned with are values that give meaning and purpose to an individual's life, and are clarified and evolved in the process of researching and theorising their educational practice.

I use capitals to distinguish Living-Theory research from an individual's living-theory. In doing so I am pointing to Living-Theory as an identifiable research methodology and method. In informal discussion concern has been expressed that by identifying Living-Theory research in those terms it may become reified and lose connection with the unique living-theories created by researchers. I

disagree. Living-Educational-Theory research is established as legitimate academic research with a coherent philosophical underpinning (Whitehead, 2013), and contributes to an educational epistemology, which practitioner-researchers can draw on and contribute to.

Living-Theory is a form of self-study practitioner research whereby the researcher researches questions that are important to them and in the process generates values-based explanations for their educational influence in learning, their own, other people's and of social formations (Whitehead, 1993). They do this by clarifying their values, as they emerge and evolve in the process of enquiry, which form their explanatory principles and living standards of judgement in valid accounts of their practice. The values are those that are ontological, energy-flowing, life-affirming and life-enhancing, and as Crompton (2010) describes, are a 'better source of motivation for engaging in bigger-than-self problems than other values' (p.9). In validating and making public, in their own contexts and within living-boundaries, their living-theories professionals contribute to the improvement of educational theory, practice and provision within their own and other fields of practice and enquiry. For instance, in the process of researching my educational practice to create a doctoral thesis my ontological values of a loving recognition, respectful connectedness and educational responsibility, and values of an inclusive, emancipating and egalitarian society, were clarified as they emerged and formed my explanatory principles and living standards of judgment (Laidlaw, 1996) of my professional practice. By making my thesis accessible on the web I hope that it may be of some use to others as they also work to improve educational, theory practice and provision.

The notion of living-boundaries between the worlds of academics and practitioners as a creative space for developing educational research

In my thesis (Huxtable, 2012) I developed a notion of living-boundaries within which something of mutuality and co-creation might be expressed without violating the 'worlds' forming the boundary.

The notion of boundaries in psychology is common and it is this notion I am using to describe the interface between, for instance, others and myself, different worlds such as those of practitioners and academics, and different disciplines or ways of thinking. 'Interface' however conjures up an image of a defined surface. 'Interface' implies a meeting place that allows a flow of communication but it does not suggest a space where tensions might have a catalytically, co-creative and productive influence. A line is not a place of clear separation when you go into the boundary rather than being at it. I have tried to make this clearer in Figure 1. The line, appears as a place of disconnection, a clear this side or that. Look into the line, and the boundary, as a co-creative space, is distinguishable by the co-creative possibilities of black and white expressed together.



Figure 1 Moving from being at a boundary to being within a living- boundary

Those who enter the boundary between them to respectfully co-create, transform the boundary in the process to that of a living-boundary. I use the term 'living-boundary' to communicate a respectful and trustworthy space for the pooling of energy, for learning journeys or adventures to be embarked on cooperatively, collaboratively or alongside (Pound, 2003). A living-boundary is formed between people entering with a hope of co-creating new knowledge, which may have a generative and transformational influence on the persons and worlds that form the living-boundary.

The term 'living-boundary' suggests to me a space flowing with energy and a space for choice, which may have life- transforming implications, as expressed by Covey (2004):

'Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space lies our freedom and power to choose our response. In those choices lies our growth and our happiness.' (p. 43)

I may not always be in a position to choose what I do. I, like everyone else, live and work with constraints and impositions I do not choose, but that is not to say I have to relinquish my responsibility for my response. I can choose to develop a story of blight or hope to explain what is happening to me. I can also choose to 'gently put aside' experiences, relationships or stories that carry blight. I take the phrase 'gently put aside' from Jack Whitehead in conversation. Problems and painful experiences are not ignored, denied or dismissed, but rather, 'gently putting them aside' to allow new possibilities to emerge. I liked the way Andrew Henon put it to me when we were talking. He explained it is not 'pain' that is the place of learning but where you go to as a consequence. I will return to 'pain' and stories that blight or offer hope and sources of tension and contradictions later, but first I want to explore more fully what the metaphor of living-boundaries can offer.

Sonia Hutchison is a member of the International Living Values Improving Practice Cooperatively group I support and facilitate with Jack Whitehead. Her representation (reproduced with her permission) of the pooling of energy, offers an image to represent some qualities of the space in a living-boundary.

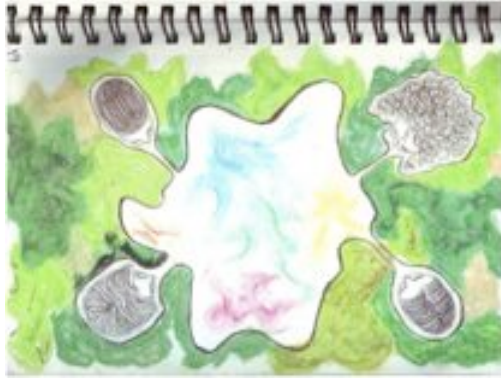


Figure 2 Sonia Hutchison's picture of pooling energy

Her image communicates a feeling to me of a vibrant flow and pooling of life-affirming and life-enhancing energy, without expectation or imposition. It feels similar to the notion of the \sim space described as an inclusional boundary in an $i\sim we$ relationship, in the first paper I created with Jack Whitehead:

In our use of $i\sim we$, we are doing more than representing a resistance to imposition. We are also acknowledging that something is created that is beyond the individual but is in the space between \sim it is what is formed at the inclusional boundaries between us, a place of meeting rather than separating, a space for co-creation rather than a void. (Whitehead and Huxtable, 2006)

The idea of an *inclusional* boundary draws on Alan Rayner's work illustrated by the 'paper dance' (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yVa7FUJA3W8>). However, the hinge or tape he refers to, that for him indicates a living-boundary, is not just the resolution of the problem caused by two poles, rather it is an active place of living learning. In the Whitehead and Huxtable 2006 paper, we began to explore the idea of meeting *in* the boundary rather than *at* the boundary. Eighteen months later Whitehead (2008b) presented a paper at the 'Cultures in Resistance' conference, and caught my imagination when he wrote:

'By the 'living boundaries of cultures in resistance' I am meaning that that there is something expressed in the boundary sustained by one culture that is a direct challenge to something in the other culture.'

Describing the boundaries as living emphasises that the space is flowing with hopeful, creative energy. Resistance *at* a boundary causes me to think of defending barriers, whereas resistance *in* a boundary gives me a sense of a space flowing with energy and creativity that carries hope and can be described as living. This brings to mind the metaphor of an elastic band, which when put under tension stores energy that can be released creatively. There is no tension and no energy without resistance. Whitehead's notion of experiencing self as a living contradiction and living a contradiction, acknowledges the tensions that a person experiences when their values are negated in practice. Living-Theory research focuses on acting to resolve a situation with energy that is life-affirming and life-enhancing. Energy that is creative rather than destructive. 'Boundaries'

as a metaphor can be understood in many different ways. Eddy Spicer and James (2010) point to the difficulty this can cause:

‘Describing social systems as bounded and social processes as bounding is to equate multidimensional social reality with two- or three-dimensional physical place. ... As Morgan (2007) highlights in the introduction to ‘Images of Organisation’, *“The use of metaphor implies a way of thinking and a way of seeing that pervades how we understand our world generally”* (p. 4)...

... Organisational boundaries are points of dissimilarity, distinction and interruption (Heracleous, 2004). They are variable, unclear and, to differing degrees, permeable (Weick, 1995) and are thus problematic and difficult to characterise (Paulsen & Hernes, 2003).’

Their use of two- or even three-dimensional physical boundaries, as a metaphor to denote an edge of an organisation, makes it difficult to use to develop generative and transformational understandings of a multidimensional and changing social reality. Connelly and Clandinin (1999), show how the metaphor of a physical boundary can be useful but can also become problematic:

‘A landscape metaphor helps us to see the possibilities of borders that divide aspects of professional knowledge. There are borders, dividers, spaces that demarcate one place from another...

In schools, these borders, these places on the landscape, are made institutionally, and respected by the individuals who live their stories out within the institutions. Indeed, for most individuals, they are so taken for granted, so embodied in one’s sense of living on the landscape, that they are not noticed. It is only when someone is new to the landscape or when something has changed about the landscape that we awaken to the borders. When new policies are enacted that somehow threaten the borders, threaten to change the nature of knowledge within each place on the landscape, or both, we become most awake to borders.

Borders mark the dividing places.’ (pp.103-104)

This shows how the metaphor can help us to communicate our understandings of what is happening and point to where problems and opportunities for change may occur. This quotation also illustrates how borders can be created, which inadvertently bring bounded worlds into existence with unintended consequences. Their description of ‘almost impenetrable boundaries’ (p.109) the introduction of a master timetable created in one school, is an example:

‘... what may appear on a curriculum planner’s desk as a linear temporal structure of schooling is experienced by teachers and others as a cyclic temporal order.’ (pp.104-105)

Connelly and Clandinin (ibid) then sum up the source of the unwitting collateral damage with long-term consequences for the emotional well-being of those involved:

‘Given that we know that teacher knowledge is embodied and carries with it moral, emotional, and aesthetic dimensions, the difficulty of crossing and modifying borders is not surprising. A very large part of a school’s moral and ethical life is constructed around adherence to temporal cycles and to the maintenance of their temporal boundaries. Teachers who do not start their classes on time, or students who come late, are judged to be not only in violation of school rules but morally wanting: lazy, inconsiderate of others, selfish, incompetent.’ (p.105)

Our gaze and imaginations are directed to borders contextualised by the concept of landscape, which is tangible and three-dimensional. These borders in a landscape transform easily to become barriers that when erected elicit action to defend them. Similarly, metaphors can also transform unnoticed from a means for sharing and creating generative and transformational understandings, to defining and confining thinking.

Lakoff (1993) sums up another reason why I am concerned to clarify the images and feelings that my metaphors evoke, and check that we share an understanding, when he writes, ‘The metaphor is not just a matter of language, but of thought and reason.’ (p.208). The images, feelings, thoughts and reasons not only form a vehicle for *communicating* concepts but can slip to *informing* them as they are brought into being as the quotations above from Connelly and Clandinin (1999) show.

When I began to create the metaphor of living-boundaries I was trying to communicate and understand a sense of recognisable yet indefinable, fluid, multidimensional, co-creative and cooperative places, where gifts of knowledge could be freely offered and respected. Although I had an image of a boundary contextualised by a landscape, I imagined one that was distinguishable but undefined. I had an image of the snow-touched landscape of the ‘no-man’s land’ at Christmas during the First World War, when troops left their trenches to share a few moments together as persons sharing a common humanity. The boundary, even though temporary, was distinguishable and offered a cooperative space for co-creation without expectation or imposition. Looking for an image that communicates the sense I had, I found [Christmas Truce 1914 – A History Major’s Holiday Gift](http://tinyurl.com/68m2u8j) (<http://tinyurl.com/68m2u8j>).

This seemed most apposite as someone who shares his story of ‘reaching life long goals as a non- traditional student’ offers it as a gift. Following one of the links I found a 7minute 40 seconds video uploaded in 2007:



‘A tribute to our troops at Christmas and a memorial of the Christmas Truce of 1914. A project for Mr. Cutler’s grade 6 class. ‘Christmas in the Trenches’ is sung by John McCutcheon’

I thought about the class of children as I watched the images, listened to the music, lyrics and the accent of the singer that accompanies the video and read some of the postings such as this one:

‘My Grandfather was there that night. Every Christmas he left our house at midnight and we could hear him singing in the cold remembering his war.

Christmas 1968 I sang that song in Vietnam and felt the pain of grandfather.’

I could feel the hair standing on the back of my neck with a physical experience of an empathetic resonance with the gift of humanity those soldiers had co-created and offered in 1914, flowing across time, space and cultures.

I do not want to create metaphors of conflict, for instance boundaries as barriers to be defended or transgressed. Rather, as I have said before, I would like to use generative and transformational metaphors such as creative tension in living-boundaries with room for cooperation. In tension there is energy, and in that energy there is the potential for movement. It is not necessarily possible to pre-determine the direction of movement that can be transformational and generative – but I can hope, and I must challenge myself not to replicate the past but rather evolve a future. So I want to leave behind a notion of boundaries contextualised by a three-dimensional landscape for a notion of boundaries contextualised by a multidimensional cosmos where boundaries are obviously diffuse and ‘traditional’ understandings are set aside.

One of the living-boundaries within which my praxis evolves is between the worlds of the academic and the practitioner. It is within that boundary that my understanding of the distinction between what is educational research and practice, and what is research and practice in education, is created and offered.

An approach to researching to evolve Living-Educational-Theory praxis in living boundaries which keeps a relationally dynamic connection between theory, practice and the values that are at the heart of education as an educational enterprise.

A second notion I developed in my thesis (Huxtable, 2012) is that of living-educational-theory praxis. I have understood praxis to be about doing what is right according to an impersonal criterion. Living-Theory praxis is about accepting my responsibility to offer valid, values-based, generative and transformational, explanations of the best life I can live for self and others. Values are what I believe to be important and give meaning and purpose to my

life, and beliefs are what I believe to be true. Values and beliefs are not always aligned. A person can express a value of inclusion – all people are equally of value - and a belief that ability is innate and therefore some people are born to lead and others to follow. I find such inconsistencies as challenging as finding that I am not living my values in practice.

Living-theory praxis is concerned with recognising and resolving generatively and transformationally such inconsistencies and contradictions. In evolving Living-Theory praxis beliefs and ontological and social values, are researched as they are expressed and evolved within the complex ecologies of living-boundaries and the worlds that form them, such as i~we and Academy~world-of-practice.

It might be argued that Living-Theory praxis is a tautology. However, while Living-Theory may express a particular form of understanding of praxis, not all praxis may be in the form of a living-educational-theory. So, in the same way I talk of 'a gift freely offered' to emphasise that what I offer is done so without expectation or obligation, I talk of Living-Educational-Theory praxis to emphasise that:

- My praxis as a living-theory is a form of self-study where 'i' is not an egotistical 'I' or a discrete entity. 'i' is a recognition of a person as real and they have an influence by being.
- An account of praxis communicates how the researcher hold themselves to account for their educational influence and for having an inclusive, emancipating and egalitarian influence that enhances well-being and well-becoming of each and all.
- It includes an explanation of how they give full expression to their educational responsibility for themselves and towards other people and communities.
- The embodied knowledge and values of the researcher are clarified and evolve as they emerge and are articulated through the process of rigorous and valid enquiry in living-boundaries.
- The life-affirming and life-enhancing ontological and social values of the researcher/s form the explanatory principles and living standards of judgment of educational influence in learning and life of self, other and social formations.
- Praxis is created in the living-boundary, the ~ space in, for instance, i~we and the Academy~the-world-of-the-practitioner.

The research method I have evolved comprises a synthesis of a Living-Theory approach to action research (Whitehead, 1989a, 2012) and TASC developed by Belle Wallace (Wallace and Adams, 1993, Wallace, 2008) and incorporates multimedia narratives as a means of recognising, understanding and communicating energy-flowing values.

This is the Living-Theory approach to action research from Whitehead on which I draw:

What is my concern?

Why am I concerned?

What am I going to do about it?

What data will I gather to help me to judge my effectiveness?

How does the data help me to clarify the meanings of my embodied values as these emerge in practice?

What values-based explanatory principles do I use to explain my educational influence?

How do I use my values-based standards of judgment in evaluating the validity of my claims to be improving my practice?

How will I strengthen the validity of my values-based explanations of my educational influences in learning?

The diagram below (Figure 3) shows the steps of enquiry of TASC



Figure 3 The steps of enquiry in the TASC approach (Wallace et al., 2004)

Through engaging with TASC and Living-Theory research, I have come to understand a disciplined process of enquiry that is comprehensible to children and adults, and is an expression of a pedagogy that resonates with me:

'Education for democracy can only be developed by education through democracy...' (Wallace and Adams, 1993, p.2)

Supporting others to develop their own living-theory methodology and research methods is consistent with, and an expression of, my ontological values of a loving recognition, respectful connectedness and educational responsibility and my values of an inclusive, emancipating and egalitarian society.

To communicate my living-theory praxis generatively and transformationally to others and myself, I produced forms of representation that contribute to a relationally-dynamic and multidimensional form of research and enhance the communication of energy-flowing values. I offered multimedia narratives in the living-boundaries between academy~practice in the form of my thesis.

Improving educational theory, practice and provision through developing Living-Theory praxis in living-boundaries between the worlds of the Academy~Practitioner

Educational practitioners also come from many different worlds of practice, fields of interests and theoretical frameworks. These worlds hold rich and varied knowledge but educational practitioners share a similar challenge – how to enhance educational, theory, practice and provision given the constraints and impositions that cause them to be and/or experience living contradictions when their values are negated in practice. Some of the worlds that come together to form living-boundary within which I worked were those of: individual children, their peers, parents, families, teachers and school staff, and local communities; the academic worlds of psychology and education; the organisation structures and institutions of schools, local authority, government departments – to name but a few. Here I will limit myself to illustrating how developing my living-theory praxis in the living-boundary between schools and the Academy may contribute to improving educational theory, practice and provision and the body of knowledge for teachers developing professionalism as educational practitioners.

I have for years seen high profile ‘packages’ come and go with hundreds of teachers involved yet two years later there is barely a trace. This is not a new thought. Thirty years or more ago when objectives based teaching was all the rage I wanted to undertake a traditional, matched group design research inquiry. In Birmingham, the second biggest city in Britain, where there had been extensive work done on direct instruction in its various guises, I struggled to find half a dozen teachers who evidenced any learning from related courses they had attended or packages they had delivered a couple of years previously in their classroom practice. By contrast, when I read the accounts educational practitioners who have worked on Masters and Doctoral programmes with tutors and supervisors through a living-theory pedagogy, I can see evidence in their living-theory accounts, legitimated through universities, of the transformations in their practice that is enduring, continuing to develop and feels worthwhile educationally. Many of these accounts can be accessed from

<http://www.actionresearch.net>, <http://www.ejolts> and in the latest edition of Gifted Education International.

Educational research as professional development is not easy and it is not a quick fix. It requires more than developing just research-informed practice. It is learning in the deepest and most meaningful way. Educational research is an expression of professionalism: the educational practitioner critically and creatively engages with the knowledge of others and their own embodied knowledge to continually challenge themselves to create and offer valid explanations of their practice as they seek to improve it, hold themselves to account by their values as living standards of judgment, and make the knowledge they create public as a contribution to the knowledge base of their profession. It takes resilience and an ontological security to engage in such a form of self-study. It takes courage, endurance, determination, integrity and an openness to recognise, value and work co-creatively with the different knowledge and language that others bring from their particular world of practice into a living-boundary created between the various worlds of practice, fields of interest, and academic research and to offer the knowledge created through such research as a gift to others as well as self.

Educational practitioners have many different roles as well as that of educational practitioner. For instance, teachers are also instructors, trainers, mentors, coaches, tutors and more. I am taking an educational practitioner to be concerned with developing educational theory, practice and provision as I have said above. Winch (2013) is pointing to something along these lines where he describes, 'the teacher as craftworker, as 'executive technician' and as professional.' (p.13)

I agree with him that, 'The ability to make sound professional judgments in educational contexts is central to good teaching.' (p.14)

And:

'Teachers with a more complete understanding of their practice will create better learning opportunities in the classroom more consistently than the pure craftworker or executive technician. Such teachers will require, among other forms of understanding: a good grasp of the conceptual field of education and debates concerning its interpretation; a good grasp of the philosophical underpinnings of and debates about the foundations of the subjects that they teach; a critical understanding of the scope and limits of empirical educational research; the way in which such research can and should warrant professional judgment and a good grasp of the ethical dimension of their work (Winch, 2004, 2012, 2013).' (p.14)

But, I go further than Winch and many others, by making a clear distinction between education and educational research and emphasising the professional responsibility of teachers as educational practitioners to contribute to their own knowledge of their practice by creating living-theory accounts and to make public their living-theory accounts as contributions to the growth of the knowledge-base of the teaching profession. They can also contribute to the common good by contributing to an educational knowledge base in the living

boundaries between worlds of practice and cultures as these people in the worlds of Irish Higher Education, international business, UK police, Australian community, Japanese health, and an Indian school have done:

Higher Education - *Yvonne Crotty's Ph.D. (2012) Thesis, How am I bringing an educationally entrepreneurial spirit into higher education? Dublin City University, 2012.* Access from <http://actionresearch.net/living/yvonnecrotty.shtml>

Business - *Graham Van Tuyl's Ph.D. (2009) Thesis, From Engineer To Co-Creative Catalyst: An Inclusional And Transformational Journey. University of Bath.* Access from <http://actionresearch.net/living/gvt.shtml>

Police - *Geoff Mead's Ph.D. (2001) Unlatching the Gate: Realising my Scholarship of Living Inquiry. University of Bath.* Access from <http://actionresearch.net/living/mead.shtml>

Community - *Phil Tattersall's Ph.D. (2011) Thesis, How am I generating a living theory of environmental activism with inclusionality? University of Western Sydney.* Access from <http://actionresearch.net/living/tattersallphd/philtphd.pdf>

Health - *JeKan Adler Collins' Ph.D. (2007) Thesis, Developing an inclusional pedagogy of the unique: How do I clarify, live and explain my educational influences in my learning as I pedagogise my healing nurse curriculum in a Japanese University? University of Bath.* Access from <http://actionresearch.net/living/jekan.shtml>

School - *Swaroop Rawal's Ph.D. (2006) Thesis, The role of drama in enhancing life skills in children with specific learning difficulties in a Mumbai school: My reflective account. Coventry University in Collaboration with the University of Worcester.* Access from <http://actionresearch.net/living/rawal.shtml>

And the following teachers in English schools have also contributed to the common good by making their accounts, accredited at Masters level, public in the latest issue of *Gifted Education International*. (Sage Online First has published the following papers before the print version is published later in 2013 in *Gifted Education International*. The copyright regulations mean that we can circulate the papers that were first submitted to *Gifted Education International*, before the editing.) With the exception of the Whitehead and Huxtable's contribution, all the papers were submitted successfully for Masters credit for the Gifts and Talents in Education Unit of the University of Bath. The Whitehead and Huxtable paper outlines our approach to tutoring on the unit with the creation of living-educational-theories as transformational continuing professional development:

Marie Huxtable and Jack Whitehead – Editors Introduction. Accessible from <http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/jack/mhjwGEI1212intro.pdf>

Jack Whitehead and Marie Huxtable - Living educational theory research as transformational continuing professional development Accessible from <http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/jack/jwmhGEIarticle141012.pdf>

Amy Skuse (Year 2 class teacher primary school)– ‘How have I developed my own personal views of gifts and talents in education and how does this influence what I do in the classroom?’ Accessible from <http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/module/amyskusegandtined010110.pdf>

Vicky M Tucker (Deputy-head, special school)– ‘How my involvement with an inclusive, educational, gifted and talented programme has influenced my work with students who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.’ Accessible from <http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/tuesdayma/vicktucker&t.pdf>

Louise Cripps (Head-teacher primary school) ‘How can I clarify my responsibility as a headteacher as I provide opportunities to enable all children in the school to create talents? Accessible from <http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/tuesdayma/crippsgandta0809.pdf>

Sally Cartwright (Secondary school and sixth form teacher) ‘How can I enable the gifts and talents of my students to be in the driving seat of their learning?’ Accessible from <http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/tuesdayma/scgandtnov08.pdf>

Joy Mounter (Deputy-head primary school) How can I work within the government’s perspective of ‘Gifted and Talented’ but still remain true to my own living values? Accessible from <http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/tuesdayma/jmgt2008opt.pdf>

Ros Hurford (KS2 class teacher) How does using philosophy and creative thinking enable me to recognise and develop inclusive gifts and talents in my pupils? Accessible from <http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/tuesdayma/roshurfordg&t.pdf>

These educational practitioners’ Masters level CPD contribute to the international development of educational theory, practice and provision.

Mattinson (2013) says, universities:

‘As strategic partners within the Alliances, HEIs have the opportunity to have a significant impact, not only in respect of the quality of research (recognising the small-scale nature of much of this) but also in encouraging the ongoing development of the culture of ‘teacher as researcher’.’ (p.15)

I am proposing that universities have a lot more to offer than ‘encouraging the ongoing development of the culture of ‘teacher as research’’, partnerships, and providing access to information and skills. This offering requires that the

Academy recognises the distinction between social science research, and educational research and develops the capacity to support teachers to not only develop knowledge of social science research but also to develop their ability to research, as educational researchers, their own educational practice. In the process universities could make a unique contribution to the development of generative and transformational forms of quality assurance and public accountability of teacher education and regulation of the teaching profession that Tato, 2013 (p.16), shows is lacking:

In response to Tato (2013):

‘The most important challenge for teacher education in the years to come is to design research to bridge practice and theory, to work collaboratively across organisations and disciplines, and to, in short, create a culture for attentive and responsible investigation within systems of teaching and teacher education.’ (p.17)

And Wilkins, C. and Ainley (2013):

‘There is a need to revisit the fundamental questions about what is distinctive about the roles and expertise of school-based and university-based teacher educators, and how theoretical knowledge impacts on professional practice.’ (p.19)

I am saying that there are not ‘gaps to be bridged’ but that academics concerned with contributing to enhancing educational theory, practice and provision need ask fundamental questions about what is educational about education and what is educational about the practice of educators in the worlds of school and university. I am claiming that academics should find ways of inviting teachers into a living-boundary between the worlds of school and the Academy to cooperatively enquire to enable each and all to create, offer, value and work with their own educational knowledge and that of others.

Edwards (2013) points out that:

‘... the professoriate and other senior staff lack the expertise to adequately support others in developing research expertise: apprenticeship in becoming an academic and the scaffolding of expertise is inadequate!

I am suggesting therefore that one challenge for Education is that of establishing ‘credibility’ built upon a more rigorous social scientific research identity’ (p.27)

I go further to say that academics also need to develop their expertise and experience not simply as social scientists but as educational researchers if they are to make a significant contribution to the development of educational theory, practice and provision in schools, universities, health, business and other worlds of practice.

The thoughts and discussions with the Masters group and others have all served to emphasise to me the importance of ‘knowledge of self’ in contributing not only

to emotional well-being but also to achievement and educational progress; what qualities of me do I value, how do I want to be valued by others, how do I want to express these as I earn a living, how do I want to contribute to my society...? Through my enquiry I not only learn skills of the discipline but also explore those questions that contribute to possibilities of living a loving, satisfying, productive and worthwhile life for others and myself. So, I have attached increasing importance to looking for and creating educational opportunities, which support children, young people and educational practitioners to engage as 'expert enquirers' through knowledge creation. I have increasingly exhorted teachers, and other adults, to engage in their own enquiries and similarly sought to create educational spaces and relationships to support them to create their living-theory accounts. Examples of this can be found in 'APEX Living Legacies: Stories creating futures', (Henon (Ed.), 2012) which can be freely accessed from <http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/apex/livinglegacies2012.pdf>. As my employment with a local authority has ended I am working with others to create new spaces, such as <http://www.spanglefish.com/livingvaluesimprovingpracticecooperatively>, as I continue to seek to live my ontological values of a loving recognition, respectful connectedness and educational responsibility, and values of an inclusive, emancipating and egalitarian society by enquiring into, 'How do I contribute to improving educational theory, practice and provision through developing my living-theory-praxis?'

The articles in the summer issue of RI, 2013, are focussed by the title, 'Challenge and Change in Education'. Through this paper I have shown how developing Living-Theory praxis in living-boundaries between the Academy and worlds of practice, offers a response to the challenge faced by educational professionals, such as the authors of many of those article, in universities and schools, to work to improve the abilities of each and all learners to contribute to the common good and enhance their own sense of happiness and wellbeing in contexts where the government is promoting didactic, outcome-led instruction and high-stakes testing.

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