

'Using Living-Theory research to investigate and improve practice: a self-study of an educational psychologist accounting for her influence in leading a local authority project'

Dedicated to the educational gifts of Sally Cartwright. Sally died on the 20th January 2013.

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Abstract

Working as a senior educational psychologist responsible for implementing policy on high ability learning, I experienced the following concerns:

- Practice, theory and research often appeared to lose connection with the purpose of the enterprise;
- Theory and practice appeared to be developed independently, and without explanation or evaluation related to values;
- Practitioners appeared to be in discrete worlds, each vying to exert their hegemony over the totalising development of theory, practice and provision.

In this seminar we will discuss how introducing Living-Theory research may provide a way of engaging teachers and professionals from different fields of work in a generative and transformational process of professional development that enables them to recognise, value and work with their own embodied knowledge and that of others. It highlights the importance of accounting for our lives in learning to live our ontological values as fully as possible.

Introduction

I worked as an educational psychologist for more than 35 years in various local authorities in England. In the latter years I had the role as a senior educational psychologist, developing and coordinating a project, which I had initiated, that became known as APEX (ALL are Able Pupils Extending Opportunities). My work rested on my belief that each person is unique and capable of developing and offering talents, expertise and knowledge as gifts, which can make valuable contributions to improving their own well-being and well-becoming, and that of others, and responded to my employer's inclusive vision statement. I was responsible for the development, coordination, management, administration and delivery of activities such as:

- Saturday workshops and Summer Opportunities for children and young people

- School based support for teachers and their pupils/students developing their talents, expertise and knowledge as educational gifts
- INSET/ CPD for teachers and other educational professionals
- Learning opportunities for adults, children and young people, e.g., collaborative, creative enquiries
- Web-based access to information, resources and opportunities to develop co-operative learning
- Access to and involvement in local, national and international research communities and networks

As in common parlance, 'gifts' and 'talents' have many different connotations in the literature. However, writers often use the words without reference to the frame they evoke and give power to. When the government introduced a 'gifted and talented' strategy I took the opportunity to encourage and support schools, teachers and educational professionals to contribute further to the creation of inclusive, educational understandings and knowledge of gifted and talented education. *Inclusive* gifted and talented education developed from an *educational* perspective is concerned with researching to improve educational relationships, space and opportunities which enhance each and all learners abilities to develop and offer freely talents, expertise and knowledge, as life-affirming and life-enhancing gifts. I want to stress the notion of gifts freely offered. A child observed this is not necessarily a common understanding in our culture when she asked:

'Why do we expect someone to say "thank you" when we give them something? Shouldn't we give it to them for free? (Towan, 2004, aged 10, comment during a philosophical enquiry)' (Hymer, Whitehead and Huxtable, 2009, p. 1)

What the words do not communicate is the warm inter- and intra- personal, energy-flowing, qualities of love, humanity and humour, which were at the core of APEX and I hope this collage might evoke in you.



I hope you might also access 'Living Legacies: Stories creating futures' (Henon, 2012) from

<http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/apex/livinglegacies2012.pdf>, which

gives a fuller picture of APEX as it has been experienced by children, parents, teachers, and others in the educational community.

Text alone often does not suffice to communicate life-affirming and life-enhancing ontological and social values that are integral to understanding knowledge and research concerned with improving the quality of educational practice. Nor do traditional social science approaches enable practitioners to research into their educational practice, to improve it. Living-Theory research enables practitioners to investigate and improve educational practice, practice that is explained and judged by expressions of living values clarified as they emerge in the course of practitioners researching their practice. This provides CPD attuned to that promoted by the University of Cumbria on their website:

‘... the opportunity to further develop the skills, experience and understanding you need to make a positive contribution to the lives of children and to make a real and lasting impact on your school or institution.’

<http://www.cumbria.ac.uk/Courses/SubjectAreas/Education/ContinuingProfessionalDevelopment/Home.aspx>

In addition to this form of CPD, which develops skills, experience and understanding, CPD, taking a Living-Theory approach enables practitioner-researchers to recognise themselves as knowledge-creators. The knowledge they create, offered as their living-theories, through the web, publications and as accredited Masters and Doctoral work, is transforming what counts as educational theory in international contexts (see- <http://www.actionresearch.net/living/living.shtml>)

In this seminar I wish to explore with you three key points of learning in my self-study as an educational psychologist accounting for my influence in leading a local authority project:

- Distinguishing what is educational practice, theory, knowledge and research
- Living-Educational-Theory research as an opportunity for transformational, generative, continuing professional development
- Evidence based explanations of the implications for improving educational practice and generating knowledge

I hope this will contribute to the realisation of your own aspirations to improve your educational practice and hold yourselves to account to live your life-affirming and life-enhancing values as fully as possible.

Distinguishing what is educational practice and educational research

Educational practice

Since I began working as a psychologist I conceived of my practice as that of an educational psychologist. This may seem straightforward but there is no

unequivocal understanding of what the practice of an educational psychologist is or what distinguishes it from, for instance, the practice of a school, clinical or child psychologist. I believed it to be more than a reflection of the employing establishment or organisation but I was unclear about what distinguished my practice as educational until I became acquainted with Living-Theory research.

When I began working for the Birmingham Child Guidance and School Psychology Service as an educational psychologist I tried to contribute to improving the learning of children and young people referred by a concerned adult, commonly a teacher. The child or young person did not refer to me; an adult referred them and often without their knowledge. This raises issues as to who has the problems; to whom have educational psychologist responsibility; and what should be the nature of support and why. These important problems I believe the profession still has not resolved but are at the heart of understanding what distinguishes the educational practice of an educational psychologist.

I tried to devise approaches that teachers could use to help children acquire and apply, quickly and painlessly various skills, usually literacy, numeracy or social skills. Teachers, parents and I, understood success in terms of the rate of skill acquisition that could be measured. For instance, an increase in a score on a reading test would be taken as indicative of a child progressing in learning to read. It began to dawn on me that effective instruction and teaching to objectives could increase a test score but often skills were not generalised or adapted to deal with other challenges as described by Haring et al.'s learning hierarchy (1978). Further, it did not necessarily enable the child to become a more confident, happy and independent learner or person.

I also became increasingly concerned that children and young people sometimes appeared to be less confident and took less responsibility for their learning and life as a result of intervention. They learned specific skills but did not seem able to learn in a classroom without an adult by their side. I have heard a similar concern increasingly expressed in recent years by teachers and tutors alike in primary, secondary and higher education settings. Irrespective of the setting they complain that an increasing number of learners take no responsibility for their learning, and show no initiative when faced with even a slightly novel problem or task. I have also heard pupils and students complaining when they have not been told exactly what and how to learn, or when they do not find the lessons 'fun'. From my own experience of providing workshops I have found a disturbing number of teachers behaving similarly.

I recognise it is important to help develop effective and efficient instruction and enable learners to enjoy learning in school. However, for me to understand my practice as educational I need to keep in sharp focus my primary responsibility to contribute towards the development of learners as educated persons. I understand an educated person to be someone who knows themselves and what it is for them to live a loving, satisfying, productive, and worthwhile life for themselves and others.

Education concerns the whole person not just a bit of them. There is often an implied separation of head, heart and body in schooling as Robinson (2006) points out in his 'schools kill creativity' TED talk.

We all have bodies, don't we? Did I miss a meeting? (Laughter) Truthfully, what happens is, as children grow up, we start to educate them progressively from the waist up. And then we focus on their heads. And slightly to one side.

The laughter from his audience suggests that they recognise that 'a true word is often said in jest'. Academics in education seem to often face a contradiction when expected to generate great thoughts cleansed of the messiness of human functioning. Practitioners also often appear to disconnect the head but, rather than venerate it as an academic does, would rather discard it, declaring, "I don't have time for all that theory stuff" or "Just tell me what to do I don't have time to think". This seems to me somewhat perverse, when they say they want their students to think and take responsibility for their learning, and to be open to creating and exploring the validity of new, challenging knowledge of the world, them selves and themselves in and of the world.

As I progressed my enquiry into 'high ability' learning in B&NES during the '90's, there was increasing pressure on schools by the Government to comply with the standards agenda, which served to make the issue more obvious to me. I knew that I could not understand the efficacy of what I was doing in terms of grades. I heard of students who had A*s grades, went to prestigious universities, and subsequently were so stressed their mental health suffered to the extent they had breakdowns. I was becoming clear about what was *not* educational but that still left me puzzling over what *was* educational. I began to clarify my thinking when I wrote on 4 October 2005 (personal notes):

'Why do I do what I do? I want children to grow as people who are comfortable in their own skin, knowing themselves, liking themselves, at peace with themselves, knowing what they want to work on, to improve, and to have the courage to change and accept their own stumbling and that of other people as part of the journey.

I believe that an individual learns what they see themselves capable of learning and what is of value to them. The striving for excellence seems to carry with it a hope of personal fulfilment and when that personal ambition coincides with the needs of others, carries with it a hope for the progression of all of us and 'twice affirmation' for the individual.

I believe people (young and old) grow their understandings and create valued knowledge through dialogue with themselves and others.'

How does this insight help me to improve my practice as an educational psychologist? That came with understanding how to research my educational practice to improve it.

Educational research

When I first launched forth on an MPhil/PhD some 30 years ago I began by trying to employ the 'scientific methods' I was familiar with as a psychologist. I developed a research question to explore and started with a will to create 'matched groups', 'probes' to measure change in competence of the learners, and forced-choice questionnaires to assess the thinking of the teachers. However, the further I progressed, the more I realised that I could not research what I was interested in, in any meaningful way. I eventually abandoned this when I moved jobs. (It was not until I became acquainted with Living-Theory that I could see a purpose to committing time, energy and resources to engaging in a doctoral programme again.)

I had learned about some of the flaws in traditional social science approaches to research often used by educational psychologists. For instance, I struggled to find subjects for my groups, not because of a limited pool to draw on, but because the notion of a matched group design in educational research is inappropriate. By the time I had begun to apply some simple criteria to selecting teachers for my 'matched' groups, such as teaching experience, the demographics of their school and pupils, their competence and experience with objectives-based teaching, I was down to a group size of one.

I know that each person is unique and the inter-relationship between each person's ecology of being, and that of others, is dynamic, continually evolving and highly complex. However, 'matched groups' research design is based on the assumption that there are common factors with simple relationships. What is more, the assumption is that the discrete and specific relationships crucial to every person's learning, have been identified, and those not under examination can, and have been, controlled for. This does not equate with what I know of human's learning. I see each person as insatiably curious, and I hear their curiosity expressed through the questions they ask, such as, "What is over the hill?", "What is it to love?" and "Who am I?", and their struggle, initially to construct answers they can believe in, and later to construct answers that are well reasoned as well as reasonable.

As the question is influenced by the answer, the answer is strongly influenced, if not determined, by the question that is asked (Gadamer, 2004, Collingwood, 1991). It is one of the reasons I am attracted to Living-Theory research. There is an explicit acknowledgement that the question arises through the responses created, not in a static link but through a creative, dynamic, responsive-receptive process, which includes the inter-relationship with the complex ecologies of self, other and community.

An approach to research in education, with predetermined hypothesis, matched groups, pre- and post- 'test' and statistical analysis of results, gives rise to questions that do not come near to what is of educational interest or to describing a scientific process as Medawar (1969), a Nobel prize-winner, explains:

'If the purpose of scientific methodology is to prescribe or expound a system of enquiry or even a code of practice for scientific behaviour, then scientists seem to be able to get on very well without it.' (p.8)

Such research is about determining whether an answer is right or not right. The question in the hypothesis is of the form, "Do children's test scores increase if they are taught in this way?" In some respects the hypothesis is not a question but a pre-statement of an answer with the intention of showing it to be 'true' or not 'true'. The question does not integrate the educational intent of education, for instance, "As I teach children to read how do I help them learn to become emancipated in their own learning and life?" Yet all questions concerned with improving practice and provision in education should surely be concerned with the contribution the educator is making, to the learner's ability to live a loving, satisfying, productive and worthwhile life.

It is not that I find the results of research in education using social science methodology and methods uninteresting or not useful. What I am saying is that they should be used with care, as it is possible to improve instructional techniques but damage the educational experience of a learner. While some of the methods have their uses, such methodologies are not appropriate to explore and create responses to questions concerning educational practice, such as, "How did I know whether I was making a difference that enhanced the lives of children?", "How could I improve the advice I gave concerning individual children?" and "How could I contribute to improving the educational experience of children and young people?" However, knowing what does not work does not help me to know what might be more useful. I like the way Medawar (1969) put it:

'The exposure and castigation of error does not propel science forward, though it may clear a number of obstacles from its path. To prove that pigs cannot fly is not to devise a machine that does so.' (p.7)

It is unfortunate that 'education' is a term that is now used without reference to what is 'educational' about education. 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 am not intending to imply that one form of research is more important than another. Rather, I hope to reduce this unhelpful confusion by clarifying the distinction I make between education research and educational research.

Whitty (2005) made this distinction between educational research and education research:

'In this paper, I have so far used the broad term education research to characterize the whole field, but it may be that within that field we should reserve the term educational research for work that is consciously geared towards improving policy and practice...' (pp.13-14)

I think there is something more that distinguishes educational research from research in education than the politics of power between 'pure' and 'applied' research. Pring (2000) having made a distinction between research in education concerned with the disciplines and what is educational, says that he sees educational practice as concerned with values:

'... what makes this *educational* practice is the set of values which it embodies – the intrinsic worth of the activities themselves, the personal qualities which are enhanced, the appropriate way of proceeding (given the values that one has and given the nature of the activity).

... The *practice* of teaching embodies certain values – the importance of that which is to be learnt, the respect of the learner (how he or she thinks), the respect for evidence and the acknowledgement of contrary viewpoints.' (p.135)

However, Pring appears to be talking about educational practice denoted by values that are reified, impersonal and which do not communicate the personal and emotional commitment that is inherent in what is educational about education. He hints at this earlier in the same paper:

'Central to educational research, therefore, is the attempt to make sense of the activities, policies and institutions which, through the organization of learning, help to transform the capacities of people to live a fuller and more distinctively human life. Such research needs to attend to what is distinctive of *being a person* – and of being one in a more developed sense. It needs to recognize that the 'what' and the 'how' of *learning* those distinctively human capacities and understandings are by no means simple – they need to be analysed carefully. And *a fortiori* 'teaching', through which that learning is brought about, will reflect that complexity.' (p.17)

While Pring recognises the importance of research recognising, 'the 'what' and the 'how' of *learning*', he makes no reference to the 'why' of the person doing the learning. This might account for Pring's reference to values giving no sense of the living reality of 'being a person' as a unique individual learning to live their own life as fully as possible, rather than an abstract 'distinctively human life'.

Elliott (2009) claims in 1978 to have:

'... coined a distinction between 'Research on Education' and Educational Research'. I was drawing attention to the difference between viewing research into teaching and learning as a form of ethical inquiry aimed at realizing the educational good, and viewing it as a way of constructing knowledge about teaching and learning that is detached from the researcher's own personal constructs of educational value. *Educational Research*, I argued is carried out with the practical intention of changing a situation to make it more educationally worthwhile.' (p.28)

However, although making reference indirectly to values in citing the ethical nature of educational inquiry and referring to the 'educational good', the connection with the persons involved as contributing to understanding what is 'educationally worthwhile' is severed. I prefer Whitehead's (1989) notion of educational research 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. He distinguishes between education research and educational research with respect to the disciplines as Pring does, but goes further to distinguish what is educational research by reference to the nature of values and the theory generated.

Living-Educational-Theory research as an opportunity for transformational, generative continuing professional development

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. Living-Educational-Theory research is established internationally as legitimate academic research with a coherent philosophical underpinning and 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. Whitehead (2011) succinctly describes living-educational-theories as:

'... the explanations that individuals produce 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. I usually call such explanations **living educational theories** to distinguish the explanations **created** by individual practitioner-researchers from the explanations **derived** from theories of education (Whitehead, 1989). In the creation of a living theory an individual explains their present practice and influence in terms of an evaluation of the past and an intention to create something better in the future that has yet to be realised in practice.' (Whitehead, 2011, Bergen Keynote)

This quotation brings together the key features that distinguish Living-Theory research and shows an internal consistency to expressions of energy-flowing, life-affirming and life-enhancing values, which, as Crompton (2010) describes, are a 'better source of motivation for engaging in bigger-than-self problems than other values' (p.9). Crompton, drawing on Schwartz's work, puts forward two classes of values:

'Intrinsic values include the value placed on a sense of community, affiliation to friends and family, and self-development. Extrinsic values, on the other hand, are values that are contingent upon the perceptions of others – they relate to envy of 'higher' social strata, admiration of material wealth, or power.' (pp. 9-10)

He argues these act in opposition, and:

‘Intrinsic values are associated with concern about bigger-than-self problems, and with corresponding behaviours to help address these problems. Extrinsic values, on the other hand, are associated with lower levels of concern about bigger-than-self problems and lower motivation to adopt behaviours in line with such concern.’ (p. 10)

In the process of researching to create their living-theory the researcher comes to know themselves, the person they are and want to be making a contribution to a world worth living in. The self is studied not as an egotistical exercise or a form of therapy. It is a study of embodied expressions of ontological values that enable the researcher to understand how they are in and of the world in the act of trying to improve it. In the process the researcher brings imagined possibilities of a better future into being in the present. The educational influence of Living-Theory research is not just in learning but also in life, as knowledge is created of self and self in and of the world in the process of creating knowledge of practice/the world.

The learning demanded of a Living-Theory researcher is empowering, generative and transformational because the individual accepts their responsibility for having an educational influence in their own learning, and dispels their ignorance through the struggle to not simply acquire knowledge but to create and offer knowledge of the world and self in and of the world as a gift. By accepting their educational responsibility for themselves, they clarify and evolve the values that give their life meaning and purpose, and understand the living standards by which they evaluate their life as loving, satisfying, productive and worthwhile. The learning demanded of a Living-Theory researcher offers possibilities to people concerned with learning as an educational process and not just those identified as professional educators. Living-Theory research is:

- Inclusive - Through the cooperative engagement with others, in the process of creating their living-theories, each researcher develops and offers, talents, expertise and knowledge that are recognised and valued. The unique ‘i’ is valued as distinct from ‘you’ but not discrete within ‘we’.
- Emancipating – The researcher as learner is empowered to accept and express their responsibility for the educational influence they have in their own learning and life, that of others and the social formations they are part of.
- Egalitarian – Power to create, contribute and benefit from talents and knowledge is by each and all and is expressed within an i~we, i~you relationship.

Before moving on I will summarise what I believe distinguishes Living-Educational-Theory research and methodology. A Living-Theory methodology is a form of knowledge-creating self-study research of practice to improve practice, where the researcher:

- Accepts responsibility for their practice.

- Researches their educational influences in their own learning, the learning of others and the learning of social formations, to improve it.
- Recognises that their educational influence comes from the expression of their embodied knowledge and values.
- Identifies where and how they are a living contradiction, and/or living a contradiction in terms of their life-affirming and life-enhancing values, to improve their practice.
- Studies their self, not an egotistical, self-serving self, or 'I', but a loving 'i', intending to enhance their contribution to making this a better world to be.
- Clarifies and evolves their embodied knowledge and values. Values are understood to be those energy-flowing values that are life-affirming and life-enhancing and give meaning and purpose to life the researcher's life and work.
- Evaluates and offers a theory to account for their practice with their values as living standards of judgement and explanatory principles.
- Draws on the knowledge created and offered by others, for instance in the various disciplines or other fields of enquiry, to enhance their research-practice.
- Creates and offers reasoned and reasonable accounts as valid educational explanations of educational influence in learning.
- Offers multimedia narratives to communicate the relationally-dynamic nature of energy-flowing values.

I will now go on to show the implications for educational professionals enquiring into improving their educational practice and generating educational knowledge in creating their living-theory.

Evidence based explanations of the implications for improving educational practice and generating knowledge

As I developed APEX I was concerned that teachers should have the opportunity to engage in the sort of educational learning that I wanted children and young people to experience more in the classrooms. I thought that if teachers could experience learning to develop, recognise, value and offer as gifts their talents, expertise and knowledge they might bring some of their understandings into improving the educational relationships, space and opportunities they provide for their pupils and students.

As I began to understand Living-Theory research and the possible implications for teachers learning to enquire into their practice to create their living-theories I asked Jack Whitehead to provide a Masters programme. We began working together to provide support for educators wanting to engage in CPD by researching their practice to improve it and creating explanations of their educational influences in learning. These have been legitimated by the Academy at Masters level and can be accessed from

<http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/mastermod.shtml>.

The pedagogy of the Masters programme was not the traditional one with a series of lectures and workshops followed by an assignment to be submitted that showed that knowledge had been acquired and applied. The pedagogy was that

of Living-Theory research and the pedagogy I hope to see developing more in classrooms, schools, universities and other contexts concerned with improving educational experiences of people as learners.

Evidence of the educational influence of this form of CPD has can be seen in, for instance, the account of Sally Cartwright gifts, talents and education Masters unit - *How Can I Enable The Gifts And Talents Of My Students To Be In The Driving Seat Of Their Learning?* (Cartwright, 2008) which can be accessed from <http://actionresearch.net/writings/tuesdayma/scgandtnov08.htm>.



You can get a sense of the energy flowing life-affirming values that Sally expressed in her practice as an educator in this 1.55minute video clip accessible from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YDqRGZ2uzzg> where she has been asked to talk about her values at a CPD group. A 'sense', a 'feeling', of her values is important for a full understanding of the text-based account she offers of the knowledge she has created in researching her educational practice as a living-theory researcher.

Sally's research has influenced not only her own learning but had a systemic influence as her students presented their understandings to meetings of strategy managers, Head-teachers and young people from other schools across the authority. You can access the four ten-minute videos of their presentation beginning at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GK1uLrb7aAs>.

Sally's work particularly excited me as she shows how it is possible for an educator to engage young people in their own knowledge creation while contributing to and benefitting from their own learning and that of others, within the constraints and demands of a traditional school. She makes clear the implication for her as educator learning through her living-theory research:

'Like my students I have been on a learning journey. Through the concept of embodied love promoted by Jack Whitehead I have come to accept that there is a space to reflect on our own gifts and talents and that it is right for each one of us to recognise them in a public forum and use them to the benefit of our students.

I have learnt to value how I can be sensitive to the entirety of a person when they communicate described by Whitehead, (2008) 'as a gaze of recognition of the other', It is inclusive by nature and has a role to play in dealing with all people. For me this is part of recognising others for who

they are and not what they are and coheres with my views on what Gifted and Talented education should be about. It is about us being valued for who we are, and about enabling others to have the confidence to discover their hidden gifts and talents.'

Sally ends her account with the hope full statement:

'To conclude I do believe that within this tension of space it has been possible to leave behind the no risk approach, spoon-fed, exam driven system of qualifications and we have made a journey of learning together which contained uncertainty, pleasure, challenges, effort and a recognition of the other. I believe this opportunity has enabled the gifts and talents of my students to be in the driving seat of their learning and that their achievement is summed up in the following words:

'The hallmark of successful individuals is that they love learning, they seek challenges, they value effort, and they persist in the face of obstacles (Dweck, C.S. 2008, p.1)'

A further multi-media analysis of Sally's work can be found in 'Developing Talents to Create and Offer Knowledge of the Self and the World as Educational Gifts' (Huxtable, 2009) which can be accessed freely from <http://ejolts.net/node/139>. As you engage with the video together with the text I believe you will gain a greater insight into the quality of the educational relationships, space and opportunities that Sally created than her text based account enables you to understand.

While concerned to provide opportunities for teacher to research their practice I was also concerned to have an educational influence in the context created by the local authority, within which the teachers and schools were working, So I opened the opportunity for local authority educational practitioners to become familiar and engaged with Living-Theory research.

Many accounts of those who have participated, teachers and other educational professionals, can be accessed from <http://actionresearch.net>. Each is concerned with researching to transform their practice by creating values related explanations, not simply descriptions, of their educational practice and educational influence in learning. They follow no predetermined frameworks, which would have afforded a simple way of achieving accreditation. Instead each educator takes responsibility for themselves as learner and makes the effort to have an educational influence in their own learning. They also find the courage and generosity to offer their knowledge as a gift. What communicates through these accounts is the warmth and love of being, which for me distinguishes the lived expression of educational values. I believe the accounts of their living-theory research make a significant contribution to knowledge as they show the transformational nature of their CPD (Continued Professional Development) by creating and offering their living-theory research accounts freely as gifts on the web.

Concluding

Although APEX has ended the work is still evolving. I am continuing to work with Jack Whitehead on the international CPD/research programme, Living Values Improving Practice, to provide opportunities for educational practitioners, from very diverse worlds, to benefit from and contribute to their own learning, the learning of others, and other disciplines and fields. This offers a response to the challenge of Ball (2012) in her presidential address, 'To Know is Not Enough: Knowledge, Power and the Zone of Generativity', to the AERA (American Educational Research Association) memberships:

'... to move away from research designed as mere "demonstrations of knowledge" toward generative research that has the power to close the *knowing-doing gap* in education-research that is designed to inform others, influence others' thinking, and inspire others to action.'(p.293)

Reminding the membership that Mindful of the AERA goal is to:

'... advance knowledge about education, encourage scholarly inquiry related to education, and promote the use of research to improve education and serve the public good.' (p.293)

Ball highlights that the same notion of 'closing the knowing-doing gap' exists in other disciplines and domains, citing examples from the worlds of those in business, medical and legal professions. Rather than conceptualising 'a gap to close' we are developing a programme where we can enquire co-operatively in the living-boundaries (Huxtable, 2012) between us, so we can each recognise, value and 'create something that endures beyond ourselves' and that 'contributes to the common good'.

The programme is not located in one specific site or just with a particular person but attracts educational professionals from diverse, and usually bounded worlds of for instance, school teacher, school head-teacher, early years practitioner, local authority manager, university administrator, academic, health-visitor, community worker, to name but a few, as well as the diversity offered by researchers engaging from various countries. The programme is evolving to enable each to be part of a co-operative space, enquiring at their own rate, in their own way, into their practice, drawing from their own field and integrating learning from others and to contribute locally, nationally and internationally. You can participate by joining the jiscmail practitioner researcher list and the virtual international CPD/research project currently to be found at <http://www.spanglefish.com/livingvaluesimprovingpracticecooperatively/>; both can be joined and accessed from <http://www.actionresearch.net>.

We are finding ways to support and enable participants, who want to, to have their work recognised and legitimated at Masters and Doctoral level by the Academy, and others to have their work recognised by their professional bodies and heard influentially in their fields, for instance by publishing in journals and presenting at conferences. The knowledge they create and offer as evidence-based accounts is transforming what counts as educational theory in international contexts as well as local ones.

I hope this account has inspired you to access other living-theory accounts, many of which can be accessed freely on <http://www.actionresearch.net> and <http://ejolts.net>, and to create and offer accounts of your own living-theories to contribute to a generative and transformational epistemological change that is needed to bring more into existence a world where humanity can flourish and, in the process, contribute to the international reputation of the University of Cumbria for knowledge-creation and improving practice.

References

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