

Living Theory research: Making a difference that matters to Educational Learning and Continual Professional Development

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Living Theory research

- ... is a form of educational practitioner self-study research to address questions of the form, 'how do I improve what I am doing?' with the intention of improving practice and contributing validated knowledge to an educational knowledgebase through disciplined enquiry
- The knowledge contribution includes a valid explanation by the practitioner-researcher of their educational influence in their own learning, the learning of others, the learning of the social formation within which they live and work.

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What differences do I, as a professional educator, want to make that matters to me?

Education includes a life-long values-laden process of learning.



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What differences do I, as a professional educator, want to make that matters to me?

- ‘learning’ - an activity that a person engages in that leads to a change
- Educational learning - an activity a person engages in that improves their ability to live a loving, satisfying, productive and worthwhile life for themselves and others

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Engaging in the process of learning demands courage and creativity

- Courage, ‘mental or moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear, or difficulty’.
- Creativity, ‘the ability to create, to bring into existence’, ‘the ability to produce or use original and unusual ideas’, and it takes courage to develop that ability.

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A professional educator has a responsibility to:

- Enhance a learner's ability to progress through a 'given' curriculum (the programme of study given by the institution or organisation the learner is registered with) *and* to contribute to a learner's educational learning

And as a *professional* educational practitioner

- To research their practice to improve it and contribute to an educational knowledgebase

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Implications for professional educators of engaging in Living Theory research as a form of CPD

Understanding and improving practice to improve educational learning

- Am I doing what I think I am doing?
- Are there things I am not doing that I think I should be doing?
- Are there things I am doing which I should stop doing?
- What *will I do* to improve my practice?
- What evidence can I find of my educational influence in my students learning – given and living curriculum?
- What are my values as standards of judgment and explanatory principles?
- Where do I experience myself as a living contradiction, and/or experience their values ‘negated’ – and what do I do?

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Contribute to professional educational knowledgebase:

- How do I extend my cognitive range and concern?
- How do I engage critical peers to help me strengthen my research and test the validity and rigour of my claims?
 - Comprehensibility, evidence to justify knowledge claims, complex ecology of context – intra, inter and extra personal (socio-historical and socio-cultural), authenticity. (Habermas, 1976)
 - Dialectical and reflexive critique...

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Implications for professional educators of engaging in Living Theory research as a form of CPD – examples

Ongoing Living Theory research into supporting educational learning

- <http://www.actionresearch.net>
- Living-posters
<https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/posters/homepage0619.pdf>
- NEARI, Mounter Values-led Leadership Masters
- Living Theory wiki
http://ejolts-wiki.mattrink.co.uk/index.php/Main_Page
- EJOLTs (Educational Journal of Living Theories)
<https://ejolts.net/>

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Risks

- Identifying where things are not going well
- Experience self as a living contradiction
- Dealing with expectations, which feel to be negating values
- ...

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Benefits

And here you are. Here you are! In the sacred present. I can't heal you – or anyone- but I can celebrate your choice to dismantle the prison in your mind, brick by brick. You can't change what happened, you can't change what you did or what was done to you. But you can choose how you live *now*.

My precious, you can choose to be free.

Edith Eger (2017) The Choice: Even in hell hope can flower

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- A brief overview is given of Living Theory research as a form of educational practitioner self-study research.
- Doctorates and Masters of Living Theory researchers drawn on to illustrate how, with courage and creativity, professional educational practitioners are improving the educational learning of their students and the wider learning community.

The discussion focuses on

- the influence engaging in Living Theory research has on educational-practitioners' creative professional learning and development as they live and work in contexts dominated by economic rationalism.
- the significance of engaging in Living Theory research for professional educators

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1. What differences do I, as a professional educator, want to make that matter to me?
2. Educational CPD as a process of creative professional learning and development
3. Overview of Living Theory research as a form of educational practitioner research that makes a difference to educational learning.
4. Implications for professional educators of engaging in Living Theory research as a form of CPD
5. Ongoing Living Theory research into supporting educational learning

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