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**How am I integrating the personal and political in improving professional practice and generating educational knowledge with collaborative/cooperative action research?**

Jack Whitehead, University of Cumbria

9<sup>th</sup> November 2016

**A paper presented at the CARN 2016 Conference (on the 12/11/16) at Bishop Grosseteste University in Lincoln, UK, 10-13 November, with the theme of 'Integrating the Personal and Political in Professional Practice.'**

**The 29:08 minute video of the presentation**



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4qGBy2pPoV0>

### **Summary**

This paper outlines my living-educational-theory as an explanation of my educational influences in my learning, the learning of others and the learning of social formations, over the 49 years of my research programme, whilst working with political, historical and cultural influences in my practice and understandings. It integrates insights from the work of De Sousa Santos (2014) on 'Epistemologies of the South: Justice against Epistemicide' as one of the most advanced social theories of today.

Since my first educational study in 1967 on 'A way of improving Professionalism in Education?' for my Dip. Ed (1966-67) with the Department of Education at the University of Newcastle, UK, my educational research has been grounded in asking, researching and answering my question, 'How do I improve what I am

doing in my professional practice?’ My judgments on ‘improving’ are grounded in my personal, ontological values in the sense that they are the values that give meaning and purpose to my life and the social values that I identify as carrying hope for the flourishing of humanity. The explanation includes the enquiry, ‘How am I integrating the personal and political in improving professional practice with collaborative action research?’ The explanation includes the emergence of:

- 1) My first action reflection cycles (Whitehead, 1976) in a co-operative project. This coincides with the formation of CARN.
- 2) The genesis of the idea of a living educational theory with ‘I’ as a living contradiction (Whitehead, 1985, 1989).
- 3) The integration of the politics of educational knowledge in the creation of a living-theory, engaging with the most advanced social theories of the day (Whitehead 1993).
- 4) Generating a new discipline of educational enquiry (1999) with validity.
- 5) Using digital multi-media narratives to produce inclusional explanations of educational influence with a new educational epistemology including its unit of appraisal, standard of judgments and living logics (Whitehead & Rayner 2006).
- 6) Contributing to Living Theory research as a social movement with living-global-citizenship (Coombes, Potts and Whitehead 2014).
- 7) Using methods of empathetic resonance for clarifying meanings of the expression of embodied values with energy and emotions.
- 8) The use of living-posters (Huxtable, 2015) with contributions from collaborative action researchers in enhancing the flow of values and understandings that carry hope for the flourishing of humanity in the creation and sharing of living-educational-theories. These understandings include insights from the ideas of De Sousa Santos (2014) in one of the most advanced social theories of today.

## Introduction

I am making the assumption that a professional educator has two distinguishable practices. The first is to improve practice in the sense of 'How do I improve what I am doing in my professional practice to enhance my own learning, the learning of students and the learning of the social formations that influence my practice and understandings?' The second is to improve practice in the sense of making a contribution to the educational knowledge-base of education. Both forms of practice are included in asking, researching and answering my question, 'How am I integrating the personal and political in improving professional practice?'

I make a clear distinction between education research and educational research. I take education research to be focused on the methods and conceptual frameworks of disciplines such as the philosophy, psychology, sociology and history of education and fields of enquiry such as the economics, theology, politics, leadership and administration of education. I take educational research to be focused on the generation and testing of the explanations of individuals for the educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations that influence their practice and understandings.

I distinguish the expressions of the meanings of embodied values from a philosophical understanding of ethics. I understand the meanings of embodied values to be clarified, ostensibly, in the course of their emergence through practice (Feyerabend, 1975, p. 17). I understand ethics, from a philosophical perspective, to be the meanings of value-words that are clarified through lexical expressions of meaning where the meanings of words are understood in terms of other worlds. My personal, ontological values, are the values I use to give meaning to my life and my work and research in education. I shall use digital, multi-media data from my practice, to clarify and communicate the meanings of the expression of my embodied values, using a method of 'empathetic resonance' to share my meanings. These personal values are expressed with a life-affirming and life-enhancing energy with values that carry hope for the flourishing of humanity. To do what I can to reduce bias, in the values that I claim carry this hope, I submit my values-based, explanations of educational influence to the mutual rational control of democratic evaluation within validation groups (usually between 3-8 peers).

My political values are grounded in the Co-operative Party which I serve as secretary for the Bath and West Co-operative Party:

**Definition** - A co-operative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise.

**Values** - Co-operatives are based on the values of **self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity** and **solidarity**. In the

tradition of their founders, co-operative members believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others.

Co-operatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members. (International Co-operative Alliance, 2016)

The main assumption in this paper is that Chaos Theory is correct in the postulate that when a system is reproducing itself, a small change in the initial conditions, when amplified, can generate a transformation in the system. The change I am proposing to amplify, in transforming social orders in a way that carries hope for the flourishing of humanity, is a collaborative researchers' capacity to see themselves as included within the network of relationships that they are seeking to influence. This change can be understood with the help of an image from a multi-screen SKYPE recording that was recorded on the 18<sup>th</sup> September 2016, from a Living Theory research support conversation with clockwise from top left to bottom left: Tammy Nichols, Robyn Pound, Surrinder Sandham-Bains, (myself) Jack Whitehead, Per Jensen and Marie Huxtable.



This digital technology enables individuals to see themselves as included within a group, community or gathering and as participating within a conversation. This inclusional perspective can be understood: from Rayner's (2004) natural inclusional perspective of a relationally dynamic awareness of space and boundaries as connective, reflexive and co-creative; from Bateson's (1987) perspective of steps towards an ecology of mind and from Huxtable's (2016) perspective of 'i~we~I' relationships. These relationships are distinguished by an Ubuntu way of being from Africa in which 'I am because we are', with the additional recognition of 'we are because I am'. In the conversation represented in the image above, each individual is being influenced by the others in the group, and if any individual 'I' is removed from the group, the nature of 'We' changes.

The perspective I am offering here, as the small change in initial conditions that, if amplified, can generate a transformation in social formations towards enhancing the flow of values and understandings that carry hope for the flourishing of humanity, is to see ourselves within the i~we~i relationships shown in digital, visual data, and to ground our explanations of our educational influence from within co-operative/collaborative action research projects (and/or self-study, narrative, autoethnographic enquiries) with the generation of our individual living-educational-theories.

In the creation of my own living-educational-theory from my Living Theory research. I draw a distinction between Living Theory research and an individual's living-educational-theory. An individual's living-educational-theory is an explanation of the individual's educational influence in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations that influence their practice and understandings. Living Theory research distinguishes the living-educational-theories as a social movement that is enhancing the flow of values that carry hope for the flourishing of humanity. Living Theory research also carries the conceptual understandings that enable individuals to recognise a living-educational-theory as being within the genre of Living Theory research whilst at the same time being an original contribution to knowledge that is contributing to the extension in meanings of Living Theory research.

Here are the 8 episodes in my research programme (1976-2016) that show the educational transformations in my practice and understandings and that produced the viewpoint offered in this paper.

### **1) My First Action Reflection Cycle (Whitehead, 1976),**

The first time I explicated my use of action-reflection cycles in improving professional practice and contributing to the knowledge-base of education, emerged from a collaborative, local curriculum development project, funded by The Schools Council in the UK. This took place in 1976 as CARN was being founded. I worked for over a year with 6 teachers, in three comprehensive schools, from my position as a Lecturer in Education at the University of Bath. We shared the common purpose of improving the learning of 11-14 year olds in mixed ability science groups with enquiry learning. Part of my responsibility during the project was to gather data and to produce an evaluation report. I produced a draft report in March 1976 which evaluated and explained what we had done in terms of 'academic' models of innovation, change in the teaching learning process and models of evaluations. I submitted this report to the teachers for validation:

<http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/jack/jwmaemarch1976all.pdf>

I was surprised by the teachers' response when they said that they could comprehend the report but could not see themselves in it. They asked me to return to the data I had collected and produce a report in which they could see themselves. As they made their criticism I could see that it was justified. My

desire to produce an 'academic' report had focused on evaluating and explaining our influence in the learning of their students in terms of the above 'academic' models. You can see this focus in the contents of Part Two of the evaluation report that focused on my evaluation and explanation of the project:

## CONTENTS OF PART TWO

I) As a synthesis of four models of innovation (with the proposal for The Mixed Ability Model)

- a) Social Interaction/Diffusion
- b) Research Development Dissemination
- c) Problem Solving
- d) Creativity
- e) The Mixed Ability Model

II) As a change in the teaching learning process:

Formal Instruction – Informal Instruction – Discovery – Enquiry

III) As a model of evaluation (with a proposal for a new view of the curriculum)

- a) The democratic model of evaluation studies
- b) A general research strategy
- c) An aid for improving learning with norm, criterion and illuminative evaluation procedures
- d) A new view of the curriculum

My use of these pre-existing models of innovation, teaching and learning and evaluation to explain the educational influences of the teachers had omitted the teachers' explanations of their influence! I had contributed to what Santos (2014, p. 92) refers to as 'epistemicide' in denying the legitimacy of the knowledge of another.

I did what the teachers asked. I returned to the data I had collected, with the help of Paul Hunt, and Aaron Evans, two former students. Paul was a teacher in one of the project schools and Aaron contributed the art work and graphics to add to the communications of printed text. We constructed the report and submitted it to the teachers for validation:

<http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/ilmagall.pdf>,

with the contents:

## INTRODUCTION

TEACHERS PROBLEMS AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS .....page 5

- 1) Relationships between pupil and teacher
- 2) Learning resources
- 3) The nature of Science

#### 4) The process of Evaluation

### THE OPERATION AND FUNDING OF THE PROJECT .....page 7

- 1) How the group formed.
- 2) Problems encountered.
- 3) Factors increasing the group effectiveness

### RESOURCES PRODUCED IN THE MIXED ABILITY PROJECT.....page 11

- 1) High structured Resources
- 2) Resources for enquiry learning
- 3) Monitoring effects of resources.

### THE PROCESS OF EVALUATION .....page 17

- 1) Methods of Evaluation
- 2) The value of the evaluation process (i)
- 3) The possibility of improvement through evaluation
- 4) The realisation of improvement through evaluation
- 5) The value of the evaluation process (ii)
- 6) The relation between evaluation and teachers' problems.

### IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROJECT .....page 25

- 1) For models of curriculum innovation
- 2) For models of evaluation
- 3) For educational research
- 4) For in-service education

This evaluation report was accepted by the participants as a valid explanation and evaluation of their learning and their educational influences in the learning of their students. As I studied the form of the report I could see that it was in the form of an action-reflection cycle, in that it expressed the teachers problems or concerns in terms of their values and their own voices. It proposed possible ways forward in action plans. It included the data that was gathered as we acted on our action plans. It included evaluations of our influences in living as fully as possible the values that we claimed to hold. It included future possibilities for improving practice in the light of the evaluations. The evaluation report was presented as an explanation of educational influences in learning. Rather than subordinate the practical principles the teachers used to explain their practice, to the principles of 'academic' theories, I drew insights from these theories without masking the teachers' voices.

This explication of an action-reflection cycle had been produced intuitively in making sense of the data. This formed the my future use of action-reflection cycles in asking, researching and answering my question, 'How do I improve what I am doing?' With the help of video-tapes of my classroom practice, in



1972) I began to appreciate the significance of including my experience of existing as a 'living-contradiction' in an explanation of my educational influence.

## **2) The genesis of the idea of a living-educational-theory with 'I' as a living contradiction (Whitehead, 1985, 1989).**

My move, in 1973, to becoming a Lecturer in Education at the University of Bath, from being Head of Science at Erkenwald Comprehensive School, was motivated by my recognition of a mistake in the dominant disciplines approach to educational theory. It was also motivated by my passion to contribute to enhancing professionalism in education with valid explanations of educational influence. The mistake was recognized by Paul Hirst (1983), one of the original proponents of the disciplines approach, when he said that much understanding of educational theory will be developed:

... in the context of immediate practical experience and will be co-terminous with everyday understanding. In particular, many of its operational principles, both explicit and implicit, will be of their nature generalisations from practical experience and have as their justification the results of individual activities and practices.

In many characterisations of educational theory, my own included, principles justified in this way have until recently been regarded as at best pragmatic maxims having a first crude and superficial justification in practice that in any rationally developed theory would be replaced by principles with more fundamental, theoretical justification. That now seems to me to be a mistake. Rationally defensible practical principles, I suggest, must of their nature stand up to such practical tests and without that are necessarily inadequate. (p. 18)

My move to the University of Bath was prompted by my desire to contribute to the creation of a valid form of educational theory that could explain the educational influences of educators in their own learning and in the learning of their students. I came to the University with an understanding of the importance of including 'I' as a living contradiction within an explanation of my educational influence. This awareness of 'I' as a living contradiction occurred through watching a video-tape of my classroom in 1972. I believed that I had established enquiry learning with my students in the sense that I was encouraging them to ask their own questions to which I was responding. The video showed that I was negating enquiry learning as I was giving my pupils the questions. This was my first experience of seeing myself as a 'living contradiction' in that I believed in enquiry learning yet I was denying it in my practice. The experience of myself as a 'living contradiction' prompted me to coin the phrase, a living-educational-theory. Having experienced myself as a 'living-contradiction Ilyenkov's (1977) work on dialectical logic focused my attention on the importance of the idea of 'a living contradiction'

Contradiction as the concrete unity of mutually exclusive opposites is the real nucleus of dialectics, its central category. On that score there cannot be two views among Marxists; but no small difficulty immediately arises

as soon as matters touch on 'subjective dialectics', on dialectics as the logic of thinking. If any object is a living contradiction, what must the thought (statement about the object) be that expresses it? Can and should an objective contradiction find reflection in thought? And if so, in what form? (p. 313)

The statements I had in mind were explanations of educational influence in learning, grounded in experiences of being a 'living-contradiction. The significance of including 'I' as a living contradiction in an educational theory can be appreciated in relation to Santos' idea of Epistemicide when it is applied to Popper's rejection of the validity of dialectical theories:

In answering his question, 'What is Dialectic?', Popper (1963) rejects dialectical claims to knowledge as, '*without the slightest foundation. Indeed, they are based on nothing better than a loose and woolly way of speaking*' (p.316). Marcuse, however, claims that Popper's logic conceals rather than reveals the basic dialectical proposition:

In the classical logic, the judgement which constituted the original core of dialectical thought was formalized in the propositional form, 'S is p.' But this form conceals rather than reveals the basic dialectical proposition, which states the negative character of the empirical reality. (Marcuse, 1964, p. 111).

In 1985, in my first analysis of my educational development as a living contradiction (Whitehead, 1985), I proposed the idea of a living-educational-theory as an individual's explanation of their educational influence in his or her own learning.

In creating and legitimating my own living-theory and those of others in the Academy, I encountered and analysed the influence of the politics of educational knowledge

### **3) Integrating the politics of educational knowledge in the creation of a living-theory and engaging with the most advanced social theories of the day (Whitehead 1993),**

In 1993 I produced *The Growth of Educational Knowledge. Creating Your Own Living Educational Theories*. This was originally published by Hyde publications and you can access it from

<http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/jwgek93.htm>. The analysis of the growth of my educational knowledge, through responding to experiences of myself as a living-contradiction within the politics of educational knowledge, includes the extension of my cognitive range and concerns over some twenty years.

Here are the contents of this 1993 publication, together with the introduction to the text from my web-site <http://www.actionresearch.net> at:

<http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/jwgek93.htm> .

## **THE GROWTH OF EDUCATIONAL KNOWLEDGE - CREATING YOUR OWN LIVING EDUCATIONAL THEORIES. Part One, 1973 to 1993.**

(The Growth of Educational Knowledge was originally published by Hyde Publications in 1993)

The story of my educational development is focused on two connected threads of my life of educational enquiry. The first is my experience of existing as a living contradiction within the disciplinary and legitimating powers of my workplace, the University of Bath. The second is my published papers. You can access both the papers and narrative below. The published papers are in italics, the narratives in bold. The paper on Creating a Living Educational Theory from Questions of the Kind, 'How do I improve my practice?' from a 1989 issue of the Cambridge Journal of Education, is perhaps the most influential of these publications. For the sake of completeness I have also included as an Appendix my 1988 Presidential Address to the British Educational Research Association. This was not included in the original text of the growth of educational knowledge.

CONTENTS, ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS,  
INTRODUCTION

<http://www.actionresearch.net/bk93/0con.pdf>

<http://www.actionr>

RELATING TO YOU

<http://www.actionresearch.net/bk93/0you.pdf>

PART 1 THE GROWTH OF EDUCATIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING ABOUT POWER,

1 1977 *Improving learning in Schools - an in-service problem*

<http://www.actionresearch.net/bk93/1ins77.pdf>

2 1976 Living contradictions - I am a University Academic. I am not.

<http://www.actionresearch.net/bk93/2ten.pdf>

3 1980 *In-service Education, The Knowledge-Base of Education*

<http://www.actionresearch.net/bk93/3ins80.pdf>

4 1980 Living contradictions - I am a creative academic. I am not a creative academic. I can question the judgements of examiners. I cannot question.

<http://www.actionresearch.net/bk93/4PhD.pdf>

5 1985 *An analysis of an individual's educational development - the basis for personally orientated action research.*

<http://www.actionresearch.net/bk93/5anal.pdf>

6 1987 Living contradictions - My writings are consistent with my duties as a University Academic. No they are not.

<http://www.actionresearch.net/bk93/6disc.pdf>

7        1989 *Creating living educational theories from questions of the kind, 'How do I improve my practice?'*

<http://www.actionresearch.net/bk93/7livth.pdf>

8        1990 *How do I improve my Professional Practice as an Academic and Educational Manager? A dialectical analysis of an individual's educational development and a basis for socially orientated action research*

<http://www.actionresearch.net/bk93/8wc90.pdf>

9        1991    The actions of a Senate Working Party on a Matter of Academic Freedom.

<http://www.actionresearch.net/bk93/9senwp.pdf>

10    1992 *Paper - How can my philosophy of action research transform and improve my professional practice and produce a good social order? A response to Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt.*

<http://www.actionresearch.net/bk93/10wc92.pdf>

## PART 2 - THE ACTION RESEARCH LITERATURE FROM AROUND THE WORLD

<http://www.actionresearch.net/bk93/pt2.pdf>

## PART 3 - EDUCATIVE RELATIONSHIPS

ERICA HOLLEY,

<http://www.actionresearch.net/bk93/14Erica.pdf>

MOIRA

LAIDLAW <http://www.actionresearch.net/bk93/15Moira.pdf>

PEGGY KOK <http://www.actionresearch.net/bk93/16Peg.pdf>

## PART 4 - INTO THE MARKET PLACE

WORKING WITH LOCAL AUTHORITY MANAGERS, 1991-1993

<http://www.actionresearch.net/bk93/17man.pdf>

ACTION PLANNING FOR MY FUTURE 1993-2009

<http://www.actionresearch.net/bk93/18fut.pdf>

BIBLIOGRAPHY <http://www.actionresearch.net/bk93/19bib.pdf>

APPENDIX: How Do We Improve Research-based Professionalism in Education?-A question which includes action research, educational theory and the politics of educational knowledge. Text of Presidential Address to the British Educational Research Association at the University of East Anglia, 1 September 1988. British Educational Research Journal, Vol. 15, No.1, pp. 3-17, 1989. Retrieved 5 May 2004 from

<http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/jwberapres.html>

In 1980 and 1982 both of my doctoral submissions were rejected. The rejections, and my response to the University's refusal to permit me to question the judgments of the examiners, are documented in the book in section 2) above. Whilst academic freedom permits the examiners to make their judgments, my own academic freedom was denied in the refusal to permit me to question their judgment. This refusal was made with the powerful regulatory influence of the University Senate. In 1999 with the submission of a third thesis, I was successful in being awarded a doctorate for my thesis on creating a discipline of educational enquiry. The dialectical nature of this contribution to knowledge based in the logic of the growth of educational knowledge explicated the dialectical nature of an educational epistemology for an individual's explanation of their educational

influences of their own learning and in the learning of others, and a new discipline of educational enquiry.

#### **4) Generating a new discipline of educational enquiry (1999) Moving into a living/inclusional epistemology**

Since recognizing the mistake in the disciplines approach to educational theory in 1972, of removing my practical principles from explanations of educational influence, I focused my educational research on generating an alternative approach to educational theory. In my 1999 doctorate I developed my idea that a living-educational-theory was an individual's explanation of their own educational influence in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations that influenced their practice and understanding. At the heart of the thesis was a **dialectical epistemology** for the explanation with the rationality of a discipline of educational enquiry being understood through a dialectical logic. I understand logic as a mode of thought that is appropriate for comprehending the real as rationale (Marcuse, 1964, p. 105). The following publications describe this new discipline of educational enquiry in the context of the politics of economics of educational knowledge:

Whitehead, J. (1999) Creating a New Discipline of Educational Enquiry in the Context of the Politics and Economics of Educational Knowledge. Paper presented at the BERA Symposium in AERA 1999 in Montreal. Retrieved 24<sup>th</sup> August 2016 from <http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/jack/AERA99.pdf>

Whitehead, J. (1999) How do I improve my practice? Creating a discipline of education through educational enquiry. Volume 2 of Ph.D. Thesis, University of Bath. Retrieved 4 September 2016 from <http://www.actionresearch.net/living/jackwhitehead2.shtml>

During 2002 I became familiar with Alan Rayner's (2005) understanding of natural inclusion as an awareness of space and boundaries as connective, reflexive and co-created. Here is a video of Rayner's communication that transformed my epistemology from a dialectical epistemology that held insights from propositional theories, to an inclusional epistemology that held insights from dialectical and propositional theories.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yVa7FUIA3W8>

This idea of natural inclusion, together with my reflexive engagements with multi-media data from my practice, helped me to generate a new, relationally dynamic, educational epistemology with its distinctive unit of appraisal, standards of judgment and living logics.

**5) Using digital multi-media narratives to produce:**  
**a) inclusional explanations of educational influence with**  
**b) a new educational epistemology including its unit of**  
**appraisal, standards of judgment and living logics.**

By 2006, working and researching with Marie Huxtable we presented a multi-media explanation on the co-creation of living standards of judgement in researching our educational practices, from an inclusional perspective.

a) Whitehead, J. & Huxtable, M. (2006) How are we co-creating living standards of judgement in action-researching our professional practices? Multi-media text presented at the World Congress of ALARPM and PAR 21-24 August 2006 in Groningen. Retrieved 4 September 2016 from <http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/jack/jwmh06ALARPMmulti.pdf>

I also produced a paper with Alan Rayner on a living inclusive logic:

b) Whitehead, J. & Rayner, A. (2009) From Dialectics to Inclusionality A naturally inclusive logic for environmental and educational accountability. Retrieved 4 September 2016 from <http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/jack/arjwdialtoIncl061109.pdf>

and explicated further the nature of my relationally dynamic epistemology in:

c) Whitehead, J. (2011) Developing a relationally dynamic epistemology for educational knowledge - Presentation at the British Educational Research Association Conference, 7th September 2011. Retrieved 19 September 2017 from <http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/jack/jwbera11dr040911opt.pdf>

Having satisfied my ambition to contribute to a form of educational theory that could explain the educational influences of professional practitioners in education, I turned to research questions and methods of enquiry that could help to explain how to extend the global influence of Living Theory research and living-educational-theories with values and understandings that carry hope for the flourishing of humanity. This extension included the creation and use of a method of 'empathetic resonance'.

**6) Using methods of empathetic resonance for clarifying and**  
**communicating meanings of the expression of embodied**  
**values with empathetic validity**

Extending the global influence of any idea requires the communication of the ideas to others and persuading as many people as possible, around the world, to explore the implications of living the implications of the ideas as fully as possible within the local contexts in which individuals are researching questions of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing?'

I use the ideas of empathetic resonance (Sardello, 2008) and empathetic validity (Dadds, 2008) in developing a method for **generating shared understandings** of inclusional meanings of expressions of life-affirming energy with values.

I first encountered the idea of empathetic resonance in the writings of Sardello (2008). For Sardello, writing from a theistic perspective, *empathetic resonance*, is the resonance of the individual soul coming into resonance with the Soul of the World (p. 13). I am using *empathetic resonance*, from my humanistic perspective, to communicate a feeling of the immediate presence of the other in communicating the living values that the other experiences as giving meaning and purpose to their life.

The idea of empathetic validity comes from the work of Dadds (2009). Empathetic validity is the potential of practitioner research in its processes and outcomes to transform the emotional dispositions of people towards each other, such that greater empathy and regard are created. Dadds distinguishes between internal empathetic validity as that which changes the practitioner researcher and research beneficiaries and external empathetic validity as that which influences audiences with whom the practitioner research is shared. (p. 279).

I am including below Arianna Briganti's (2015) conclusion to her EJOLTS paper on *Generating my own living-theory: An interim report*, to exemplify the use of digital video data in a method of **empathetic resonance** to communicate meanings of embodied values that are used by the individual in giving meaning and purpose to their lives. The **empathetic validity** is provided in the responses of Moira Laidlaw, a supervisor of Arianna's Briganti's doctoral research programme. Both Moira Laidlaw and I are members of Arianna's doctoral supervisory team. We have shared with Arianna ideas on empathetic resonance and validity and stressed the importance of enhancing the influence of Living Theory research as a social movement with values that carry hope for the flourishing of humanity, through publishing multi-media narratives. These influences are explicitly acknowledged in Arianna's publication in the multi-media journal, EJOLTS.

**Briganti's Conclusion to her 2015 EJOLTS paper that demonstrates the use of empathetic resonance in clarifying and communicating the meanings of ontological and relationally dynamic values.**

The nature of this work is an early-stage narrative of my on-going learning. Hence, I'm aware that it's not appropriate to conclude a work, which is progressing and developing together with my professional development. However I feel that I made some fundamental progresses so far, due to the research on my values and on the nature of my living theory. I'd like to conclude this paper talking about authenticity and the realization of how important it is in the growth of my living theory. I believe that claiming I hold certain values is not enough and that I have to demonstrate that I'm living them fully. In other words I ask myself whether I'm being authentic in claiming all the above. In my attempt to foster and spread peace and fight for the protection of human rights I ask whether my actions are matching my words. The following narrative provides an answer to this question.

In 2005 while I was working in Ethiopia, I in Addis Ababa I met four very young destitute girls (age four, six, nine and twelve) who were marginalised by the society, with no access to housing, education or sufficient food. Three of the girls were living with their mother in a slum-like area of the city's outskirts and all of them received support from the missionary nuns living nearby.

These three girls Semira, Salwa and Fozjia became my husband's and my foster-daughters while we have adopted the youngest Marta. More than ten years later in Italy, one of them Salwa (currently 19 years old) had a conversation with me recorded by my husband, about our family, her two sisters and mother, on how to protect vulnerable people and how life can change for the better if disadvantaged individuals are given a chance. The relationship with our four daughters and the values we exposed them to throughout the years such as inclusion, gender-equality, cultural cohesion, equity, educational development and respect for diversities, have become a crucial part of my living theory. My living theory here refers to my way of individually contributing to strengthen the global social movement, which aims at a fairer world.

Our conversation is divided into three short videos (video 5, video 6, video 7) in which we both express our values and how we are influencing each other. At minutes 1:15 of the first clip Salwa recalls when her sisters and herself were living in poverty and isolation. From minutes 3:05 to 6:57 she explains how education has changed her life and talks about her goals in life. Her goals are to complete her education and help poor people. From 7:00 to 9:25 Salwa is showing the impact that the help we provided her with has transformed in her into a desire to help other people in the same condition she used to inhabit. She is already helping underprivileged people living in her neighbourhood together with her classmates and teachers. In the second clip Salwa talks about what is she doing to fight for people's right. From minutes 2:28 to 9:00 the focus is on young girls victim of female genital mutilation (FGM), sexual violence and early marriage. Her words resonate with the sense of togetherness I discussed with my peer researchers in the video above and show that she is being influenced and is influencing the people around her. Salwa claims that knowing that other young women are fighting for their rights give her strength. At minutes 8:47 she adds 'I can do it, even better'.

The experience with our daughters is providing my life with a deep sense of authenticity. In fact their lives represent a testimony to the nature and the quality of our relationship, gives me hope for the future and assure me that what I'm doing is not fighting for the past, but for a brighter future, in which my girls will be protagonists. My living theory starts at the grassroots-level, evolves into something that transcends the academic, and impacts on those I have the privilege to meet along the way.



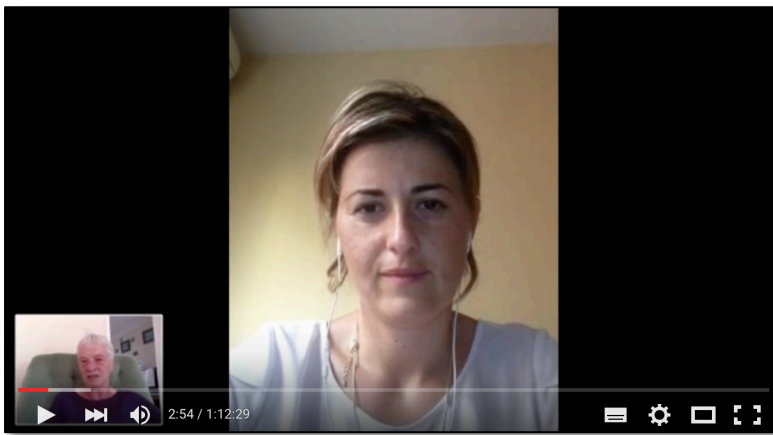


**Video 5.** [Salwa Ismail and Arianna Briganti- part 1](#) (Briganti, 2015)

**Video 6.** [Salwa Ismail and Arianna Briganti-part 2](#) (Briganti, 2015)

**Video 7.** [Salwa Ismail and Arianna Briganti-part 3](#) (Briganti, 2015)

My conversation with my PhD supervisor Moira Laidlaw offers feedback on the interaction between Salwa and myself and provides a form of triangulation. In the videos (video 8 and video 9) Moira speaks on how she has perceived my discussion with Salwa. She also senses this empathetic resonance between us and the life-affirming energy flowing from and to us (Whitehead, 2015, p. 250). My understanding of empathetic resonance echoes Whitehead's (ibid.) who defines it as 'the feeling of the immediate presence of the other in expressing the living values that the other experiences as giving meaning and purpose to their life'. Salwa's and my relational value emerges clearly in our conversation according to her response at minutes 1:48 to 4:33 and 10:29 to 11:30. When I look at the video again I believe that for both Salwa and myself the quality of our relationship emerges very visibly in the clip, unveils the dialectic peaceful space I'm discussing in this narrative. I would argue that this shows a consistency between my espoused values and my lived values. Salwa and I have recreated that peaceful space and we inhabit it together.



**Video 8.** [Moira Laidlaw and Arianna Briganti on Moira's feedback-part 1](#)  
(Laidlaw,2015)

**Video 9.** [Moira Laidlaw and Arianna Briganti on Moira's feedback-part 2](#)  
(Laidlaw,2015)(Briganti, 2015, pp. 94-97)

Having shown how empathetic resonance and validity can be used to make explicit and share meanings of inclusional and embodied values, I now want to focus on spreading the influence of Living Theory research as a social movement through expressing our responsibilities for living as fully as we can, values of living-global-citizenship. I shall then focus on sharing globally, our understandings with living-posters and with ideas from De Sousa Santos (2014).

### **7) Contributing to Living Theory research as a social movement with living-global-citizenship (Coombs, Potts and Whitehead 2014)**

I think that it bears repeating that I draw a clear distinction between a living-educational-theory and Living Theory research as a social movement. 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 the social formations that influence practice and understandings. Living Theory research as a social movement is a collaborative/cooperative enquiry, grounded in collaborative/cooperative relationships, 'I am because we are ~ We are because I am' or i~we~I (Huxtable, 2016a & b). This ontological, relationally dynamic, and multidimensional value forms the explanatory principle and living-standard of judgment for explaining the educational influences of Living Theory research as a social movement that carries hope for the flourishing of humanity. I include this value in my understanding of living-global-citizenship in the sense of contributing to the creation and sustaining of a good social order (McNiff, Whitehead & Laidlaw, 1992).

(see Coombs, S., Potts, M. & Whitehead, J. (2014) 'International Educational Development and Learning through Sustainable Partnerships: Living Global Citizenship' London; Palgrave Macmillan.)

Here is how I am using, with others, living-posters to enhance the flow of such values and understandings in the creation and sharing of living-educational-theories and in Living Theory research as a social movement with ideas from De Sousa Santos (2014).

**8) The use of living-posters (Huxtable, 2015), with ideas from De Sousa Santos, in enhancing the flow of values and understandings that carry hope for the flourishing of humanity in the creation and sharing of living-educational-theories in Living Theory research as a social movement.**

The first presentation of living-posters in the context of spreading the influence of Living Theory research as a social movement was in the Town Hall meeting convened by Jacqueline Delong at the Action Research Network of the Americas conference in Toronto, on the 8<sup>th</sup> May 2015.



You can access the homepage with all the live url links from <http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/posters/homepage061115.pdf>

These living-posters were also shared by Sonia Hutchison in the Action Learning, Action Research Association (ALARA) Conference in Johannesburg, South Africa, in November 2015.

My intention is to extend the influence of Living Theory research as a social movement with the help of living-posters and ideas from De Sousa Santos (2014)

on the ecologies of knowledges, international cultural translation and a subaltern, insurgent cosmopolitanism:

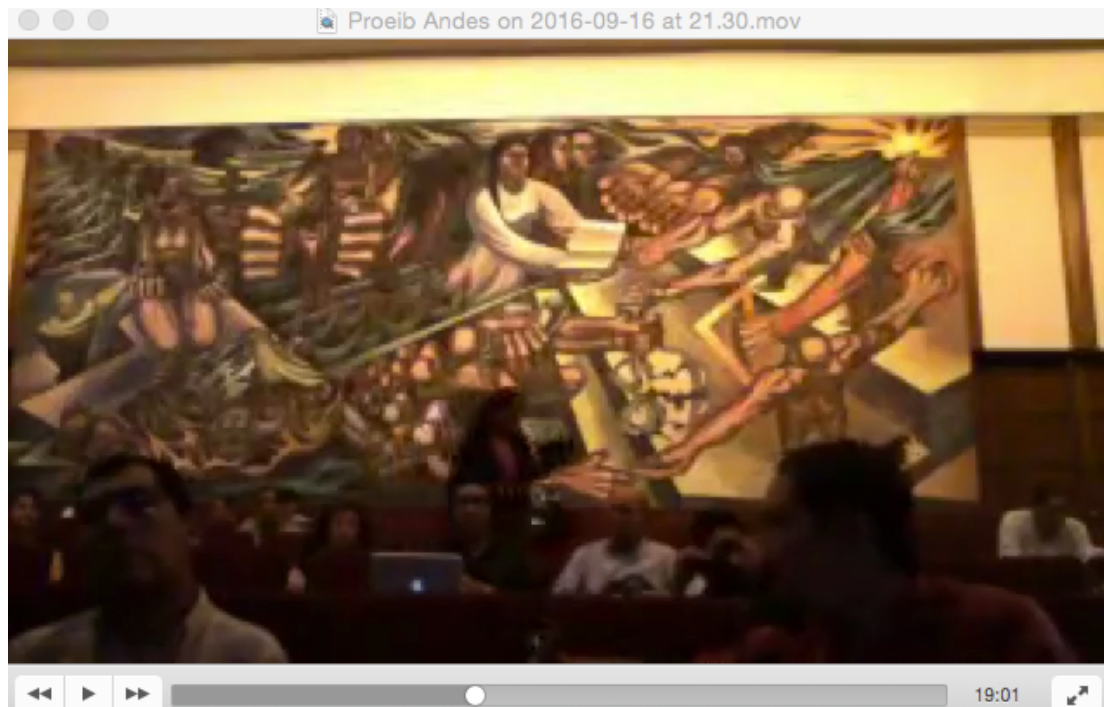
- i) as part of the workshop I led at San Simon University in Cochabamba, Bolivia, 25-29 September 2016. Here are my first two slides and an image from a mural at the back of the room with the audience on my SKYPE introduction to the on-line part of the workshop on the 16<sup>th</sup> September 2016. I used the mural to encourage the use of Bolivian art in the creation of living-posters and explanations of educational influence that show the researcher's political engagement with the historical and cultural influences on their practice and understandings.

**Introduction to  
"Pedagogical innovations for university  
teaching"  
with Jack Whitehead**

**The purpose is to develop professional competences to promote educational innovations in teaching practice. The program is for colleagues from the School of Humanities and Educational Sciences at the Universidad Mayor de San Simon (Cochabamba, Bolivia).**

**Teaching practice and action research**

- The goal is to develop reflective skills on higher education teaching practice to promote professional development.
- Some topics to be addressed in the course are: 1) action research: theory and practice, 2) types and features of action research, and 3) the action research process.



Whenever I present ideas from my research to audiences and workshops in different countries I am aware of a danger of imposing my ideas from a Western context in a way that is experienced as colonising by my audience. Because of this danger I always try to recognise the significance of the historical and cultural heritage in the place I am presenting my ideas. I do this to stress the importance of the unique contributions, to what De Sousa Santos calls 'ecologies of knowledges' (2014, pp. 188-212), as participants express their own creativity in generating their own living-educational-theories.

Because I felt intuitively that the vivid image on the screen above had a relationship with the cultural and historical influences in Bolivia and Cochabamba I asked for information about the mural and Eliana Coca Pilar Cossio (Munaya) responded:

The mural of René Reyes Pardo, dating from 1962 summarizes the long struggle of the Bolivian people for liberation and decolonization. It has been declared a Cultural Heritage of the State.

The mural seems to be a prescient warning in relation to the struggles related to constitutional processes in living in the Plurinational State of Bolivia, formerly called Collasuyu, then Alto Peru, and later the Republic of Bolivia. Such struggles have not always been armed in processes of resistance and constant persistence to reach a Pachakuti (Pacha = space, time and Kuti = return on that cyclicality above) The mural presents at the right end a woman handing a book to a man, but behind this the presence of a naked woman (female energy = warmth) that extends her arms to this action, as a blessing or giving approval. Next to him one can also see the presence of a masculine image below (male energy = chacha), behind the sun shining. The moon almost imperceptible is lost between the feet of what I interpret as LA PACHA, the conjunction of male feminine energy and

also is represented in three layers, the Ukhu Pacha (space time below), kay Pacha (space time here and now) and Anak Pacha (the upper space time or ethereal, for some infinity).

For me the mural is the expression of this time, the female energy that returns to the Warmth Pachakuti, loaded with everything she brings with her creative energy, it resurfaces with the rising morning because even the future does not exist. The morning IS present in the present as it is in the day that transformed us, we can make changes to the here and now. I would have liked a red background, as red as the menstrual blood, life giver, not always human but also animal, vegetable and ethereal. Eliana Coca Pilar Cossio (Munaya) (personal email, September 2016).

The invitation to lead the workshop on ‘Teaching Practice and Action Research’, as part of the professional development programme at Saint Simon University on ‘Pedagogical Innovations for University Teaching’, was because of ideas I had generated in my research at the University of Bath (between 1973-2012). Fernando Galindo, a Professor at Saint Simon University, had spent some of a sabbatical in the Department of Education at the University of Bath. Fernando liked some of my ideas and was influential in the invitation extended to me to lead the workshop.

Whilst bringing my ideas into this new context (for me), I was determined to emphasise the importance of the creativity of all participants in generating their own living-educational-theories as explanations of their educational influences. By this, I mean their explanations of their educational influences in their own learning, in their students’ learning (with recognition of the influence of cultural and historical influences) and their influences in the learning of the social formations that influence their practice and understandings. In other words I did not want to have a colonizing influence on the nature of the knowledge they made public from the embodied knowledges that they expressed in their educational practices. Hence my stress in the workshops on the qualities of the relational dynamics, in their ways of being and working together, that carry hope for the flourishing of humanity.

- ii) as part of the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations of CARN, in a CARN study day in Bath, UK, on the 4<sup>th</sup> February 2017. (Do please contribute your own Living Poster – see below):

As part of my continuing educational enquiry into extending the educational influences of Living Theory research as a social movement and in the generation of my own living-educational-theory, I proposed the following CARN study day at Bath on the 4<sup>th</sup> February with the encouragement of virtual participants to submit their living-posters. This proposal was accepted by CARN. I then intend to analyse whatever emerges from this study day in terms of De Sousa Santos’ idea of a ‘sociology of emergences’ to show how the generation of living-educational-theories is contributing to what De Sousa Santos (2014, pp. 134-135) calls a ‘subaltern, insurgent cosmopolitanism’:





## **Collaborative Action Research Network**

### **YOUR VIRTUAL PARTICIPATION ON THE CARN STUDY DAY ON THE 4<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2017 THROUGH YOUR LIVING-POSTER**

**You could create and contribute your living poster and  
encourage others to do the same by:**

- Creating and uploading a 2-3minute video-clip to YouTube of you communicating the essentials of your context, interests, research passions, practice and values as the explanatory principles and living standards of judgment to which you hold yourself accountable in your practice.
- Creating an attractive A4 poster including text and images, and the url to your YouTube video, which provides brief details of your: context; interests; the values that motivate you and give your life meaning and purpose; research passions; details of a few of your key publications; the url to your website if you have one and your contact details.
- Sending us two files of your living poster i) as a PDF and ii) in whatever programme you have used to create it e.g. WORD, Pages, PowerPoint. with 1-4 keywords that summarise the essence of what you are about to [jack@actionresearch.net](mailto:jack@actionresearch.net).
- You can learn more about Living Theory research and individual's living-theories by visiting <http://ejolts.net/> and <http://actionresearch.net/>

### **CONTRIBUTING TO THE 40<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY YEAR OF CARN IN THE STUDY DAY ON THE 4<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2017**

THE ILLUSTRATIONS OF LIVING POSTERS AT

<http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/posters/homepage061115.pdf>

WERE GATHERED FROM PRACTITIONER RESEARCHERS FOR PRESENTATION AT THE TOWN HALL MEETING OF THE ACTION RESEARCH NETWORK OF THE AMERICAS IN TORONTO ON THE 8<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2015.

PLEASE SEND YOUR LIVING-POSTERS TO MARIE HUXTABLE AT:

[marie\\_huxtable@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:marie_huxtable@yahoo.co.uk)

<http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/jack/livingposterlettercarn.pdf>

iii) As part of the Global Assembly in Cartagena on the 16<sup>th</sup> June 2017. I intend to extend the above influence in the Action Research Network of the Americas (ARNA) conference in Cartagena on the 13-16 June 2017. I intend to do this by bringing, through my presence in the relationship 'I am because we are ~ we are because I am' (Huxtable 2014, 2016a and b), the latest iteration of the gathering of living-posters and understandings of De Sousa Santos' (2014) ideas on 'Epistemologies of the South: Justice Against Epistemicide'. In particular I intend to show how visual literacies can help to overcome limitations in epistemologies that are presented in purely printed text-based communications, through words alone, in contributing to ecologies of knowledges, intercultural translation and to Living Theory research as a social movement..

Here is the Brief and Call for Participation for the First Global Assembly on Knowledge Democracy:

<http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/brief.pdf>

**Interim conclusion on 'How am I integrating the personal and political in improving professional practice with collaborative/cooperative action research?'**

The Brief and Call for Participation for the First Global Assembly on Knowledge Democracy to be held in Cartagena, Columbia on the 16<sup>th</sup> June 2016, includes:

The keynote address at the Global Assembly will be given by Prof. Boaventura de Sousa Santos, a Professor of Sociology at the University of Coimbra (Portugal) and a Distinguished Legal Scholar at the University of Wisconsin – Madison. Among his many books in English are *Law and Globalization from Below: Towards a Cosmopolitan Legality*; *Epistemologies of the South: Justice Against Epistemicide*; and *Another Knowledge is Possible: Beyond Northern Epistemologies*. The framing of knowledge democracy, in the particular context of the work of Boaventura de Sousa Santos, indicates a commitment to deeply heterogeneous and emancipatory approaches to knowledge. The idea for an epistemology of the global south guides an understanding of a broader project of transformation, the empowerment of diverse knowledge communities and knowledge systems critical to the long-term sustainment of people and the planet, which sits in the context of the



(current) hegemony of West / neo- liberalist knowledge systems.  
“Cognitive justice,” another term used by Santos, indicates the project of making subaltern knowledges visible and legitimate in this neo-liberal context.

What I am doing in my interim conclusion is to draw insights from the ideas of De Sousa Santos in the evolution of my living-educational-theory and exploring their implications for Living Theory research as a social movement whilst using multi-media communications to overcome what I see as a limitation in the statements:

The framing of knowledge democracy, in the particular context of the work of Boaventura de Sousa Santos, indicates a commitment to deeply heterogeneous and emancipatory approaches to knowledge. The idea for an epistemology of the global south guides an understanding of a broader project of transformation, the empowerment of diverse knowledge communities and knowledge systems critical to the long-term sustainment of people and the planet, which sits in the context of the (current) hegemony of West / neo- liberalist knowledge systems.  
“Cognitive justice,” another term used by Santos, indicates the project of making subaltern knowledges visible and legitimate in this neo-liberal context.

My raising the possibility of a limitation of these statements is focused on the epistemology used by De Sousa Santos and other contributors in the 240 pages of ‘Epistemologies of the South: Justice Against Epistemicide’ and the 436 pages of ‘Another Knowledge is Possible’. The logic used in these 676 pages conforms to the Aristotelean Logic that continues to dominate Western Academies, with its elimination of contradictions between statements and its complete reliance on printed words to communicate embodied meanings expressed in practice. The 676 pages of words contain no still images, or references to visual data from practice and its use as evidence in presenting an epistemology of the South in making visible, subaltern knowledges and subaltern, insurgent cosmopolitanism.

From my visits to many different countries I am aware that I have access to the use of new digital technologies that are only just beginning to be used for research in these countries. For example, I have over 1000 video clips on youtube that I can download to my desktop, using the free application ‘download helper’ for Firefox. I can then use the process of empathetic resonance, described by Briganti above, to focus attention on visual expressions of embodied meanings in using language to help to communicate these meanings through ostensive expressions of meaning.

I shall end this interim conclusion with video-clips from the workshop at San Simón University. My aim is to draw attention to the expressions of embodied meanings that are necessary to explain educational influences in learning, but which I am claiming cannot be adequately communicated through printed text alone. The first is from a presentation by Leonila Valdez Torrez in which Leonila is making her subaltern knowledge visible. The mural in the background

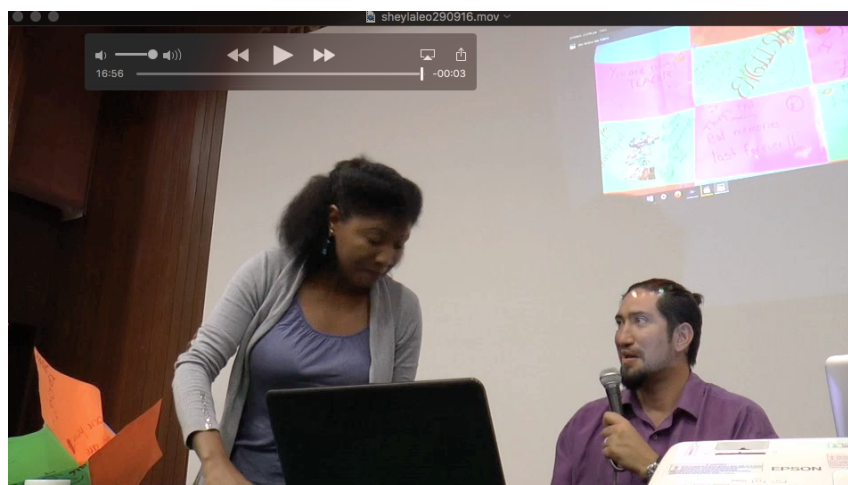
(recognized by the Bolivian government as a cultural artifact) helps to locate the knowledge within the social context of Bolivia, Cochabamba and San Simón University.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0fwtYINL4pc>

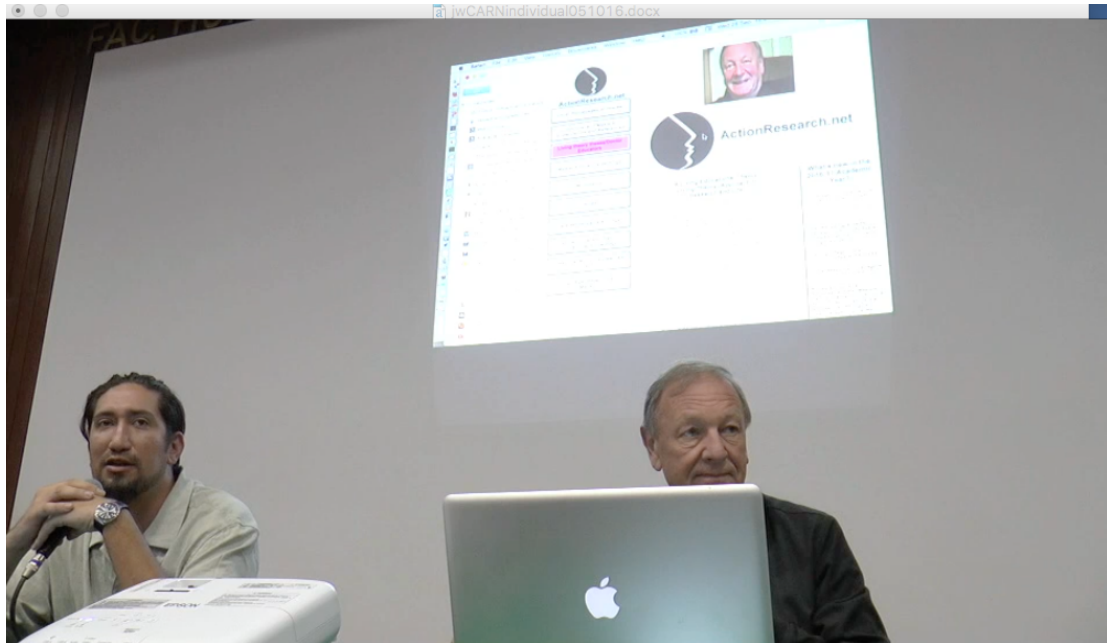
Sheila Liliam Siles Rocha, Leonila's friend, colleague and interpreter is on the left of the picture. Sheila is developing her research interests in enhancing the international reputation of educational research from the Universidad Mayor de San Simón

At 10:50 minutes the clip transitions from Leonila's practice presentation to the actual presentation in the workshop with Giovanni Fossati, Leonila's husband and colleague helping with the presentation. The following images are from the last 3 seconds of the presentation:





Giovanni has degrees from Bolivia and the USA. He could work in different countries but has chosen to work in Cochabamba. He explained to me that he felt 'at home' in Cochabamba because of the qualities of community he experienced in living within the culture with Leonila. Giovanni contributed hugely to the success of the workshop through his intercultural translations:



A video clip of 25:15 minutes of Day 3 of the workshop with Jack presenting and Giovanni translating at <https://youtu.be/qfCKjZBhH64>.

From 16:44 minutes of the video-clip Giovanni is translating the following slide, on the screen, in which I am encouraging the participants to start the writings for their living-educational-theories that will form the assessment task for the workshop:

## **A) IN YOUR WRITING INTRODUCE YOUR READER TO THE CONTEXT OF:**

- 1) **BOLIVIA**
- 2) **COCHABAMBA**
- 3) **UNIVERSIDAD MAYOR DE SAN SIMON**
- 4) **YOUR CLASSROOMS**
- 5) **YOUR STUDENTS**

## **B) TELL YOUR READERS (USING THE ACTION REFLECTION CYCLE OF):**

- 1) **SOMETHING THAT I HAVE BEEN IMPROVING FOR STUDENTS' LEARNING?**
- 2) **WHAT HAVE I DONE TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' LEARNING?**
- 3) **WHAT DATA DID I COLLECT TO MAKE A JUDGMENT (EVALUATE) ON MY EFFECTIVENESS/INFLUENCE IN MY STUDENTS' LEARNING?**
- 4) **HOW DID I EVALUATE MY INFLUENCE IN STUDENTS' LEARNING?**

**C) SHARING MY LIVING EDUCATIONAL THEORY WITH MY READERS AS AN EVIDENCE-BASED EXPLANATION OF MY EDUCATIONAL INFLUENCE IN MY OWN LEARNING AND IN MY STUDENTS' LEARNING.**

From the feedback I received on the workshop I think that it can be called a success. Its success largely depended on Giovanni's passion and the clarity and creativity in his responses to the communication of ideas I brought into the workshop. Giovanni understood how important it was to stress to the participants the importance of the uniqueness of their embodied knowledges and creative responses into the construction of their living-educational-theories. Giovanni engaged with participants from the ground of his relational values from his cultural context of Cochabamba. Giovanni not only translated my meanings into Spanish, he brought his own unique enthusiasm and comprehension, about the participants' historical and cultural context of Cochabamba and Bolivia, into his creative responses to my meanings. In terms of what De Sousa Santos (2014, pp. 212-235) is calling intercultural translation I believe that ideas from my research, that were generated with the dominant influence of a Western epistemology, were offered and received, through Giovanni's intercultural translation, in a way that can be used creatively, rather than experienced as a colonizing influence, in the contributions of the living-educational-theories of the participants to the ecologies of knowledges and to a subaltern, insurgent cosmopolitanism (p. 135)

I am also claiming that the nature of the embodied expressions of educational knowledge, in explanations of educational influence, require more than words in printed text to communicate their meanings in an epistemology of educational knowledge.

So, for my 40<sup>th</sup> CARN Anniversary contribution, I am continuing to account for my educational influences in my enquiry, 'How do I improve what I am doing?' From my first collaborative enquiry with teacher-researchers working to improve and research the processes of improving learning with 11-14 year olds in Mixed Ability Groups, I have documented and explained how I am integrating the personal and political in improving professional practice and generating educational knowledge with collaborative/cooperative action research (Whitehead & Huxtable, 2016). My present focus is on extending the influence of Living Theory research as a social movement and I have explained how I am using 'empathetic resonance', 'living-posters' and ideas from De Sousa Santos (2014) in researching this extension of educational influence.

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