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## Critical Reflection in Educational Practice

Jack Whitehead, University of Cumbria, UK.

A presentation to the Network Educational Action Research Ireland (NEARI) Meeting of the 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2022

### Summary

This presentation builds on the NEARIMeet of the 29<sup>th</sup> January 2022 (see the notes at <http://www.eari.ie/2022/02/08/notes-from-nearimeet-29-january-2022/> ) with its theme of Transforming Practices. Stephen Kemmis provided the keynote with ideas from his book on 'Transforming Practices' (Kemmis, 2022). I shall explore the implications of including 'educational' in Critical and Creative Reflection in Educational Practice for members of NEARI. Whilst working from a different educational perspective to that offered by Kemmis', I do agree with Kemmis' idea that:

Once education systems and the work of schools are conceptualised principally in systems terms, their essential *lifeworld* character, their grounding in the everyday life of people's lifeworld is obscured and then ignored... Obscuring and ignoring these lifeworld processes, many PEP (Pedagogy, Action and Praxis) researchers argue, is to obscure and ignore the very substance of the process of education. Neoliberal approaches to educational systems management throw the baby of education out with the bathwater. (p.28)

My different 'educational' perspective, is focused on the generation and sharing of living-educational-theories with values of human flourishing as explanatory principles in explanations of educational influences in learning and as embodied, evaluative standards of judgment. A living-educational-theory is an individual's explanation of their educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations within which the practice is located (Whitehead, 1989). Such explanations help individuals to answer questions of the kind, 'How do you know that your practice has improved?' and 'what standards of judgement do you use to justify a claim that your practice has improved?'

This perspective is related to Ciara O'Brien's account, to the NEARIMeet of the 29<sup>th</sup> January 2022, in her research into her practice and the solutions that emerged as she spoke about 'Finding the way with Critical Reflection'.

My focus on critical reflection in educational practice can also be understood as a response to the recent publication in Irish Educational Studies on 'Exploring trans-generational and trans-institutional learning: educational action research possibilities in a virtual environment' by Bernie Sullivan, Caitriona McDonagh, Cornelia Connolly, Máirín Glenn & Mary Roche (2022):

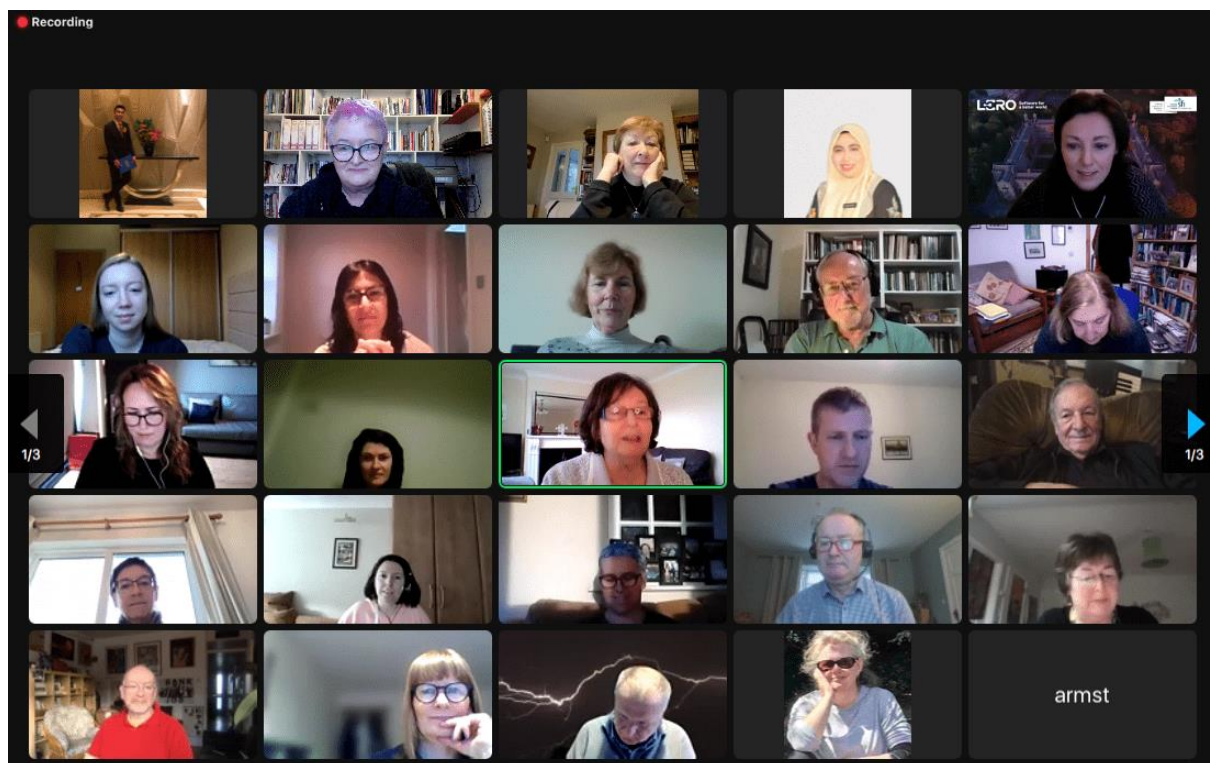
We explain the generation of a living-educational-theory from the research community, which was convened by the authors. We have created both a face-to-face and an online professional development community of action researchers...

The original contribution of this paper is the creation of an open and shared learning community to support action research practitioners in their processes of accessing, collaborating in and undertaking research. The significance of our paper is in the emergence of socially constructed knowledge in a fluid and flexible space that is underpinned by our lived values of inclusion and respect. (Sullivan et al., 2022, p.1)

I shall draw your attention to original contributions to educational knowledge from Living Educational Theory Research from Maynooth University in the Republic of Ireland and North West University in South Africa. I shall then suggest ways in which a critical reflection on these original contributions could provide a creative response in the generation of more original contributions to educational knowledge by participants in NEARI.

### Introduction.

In the notes for the NEARIMeet on the 29<sup>th</sup> January 2022. at <http://www.eari.ie/2022/02/08/notes-from-nearimeet-29-january-2022/>, you will see the following image from one of several screenfuls of participants.



Projecting ourselves into a future, with the purpose of bringing into being a world we want to live in, involves living as fully as we can values of human flourishing. I am suggesting that participants, in NEARIMeets and in the ESAI, VPAR SIG, could develop a language, with the help of digital visual data, to share meanings of the expression of their embodied values that bring them together as a community (Whitehead & Huxtable, 2022). I shall also suggest

that this sharing of meanings could take place in a way that enhances your original contributions to educational knowledge in the process of improving your professional educational practice.

Using action-reflection cycles we could project ourselves, as a community, into a future that enhances the flow of values that carry hope for the flourishing of humanity. In future NEARIMeets, participants could show how they are living their educational responsibilities, as fully as they can, in researching their questions, 'How do I improve what I am doing in my educational practice and helping others to do the same?' I am thinking of contributions such as that being made by Michael Russell (2021) in his doctoral research on 'Privileging Tacit Knowledge within a Software Engineering Curriculum: A Living Educational Theory of Practice,' at Maynooth University, Merna Mayer (2019) in her doctoral research on 'Becoming participatory artists, researchers and teachers: my living theory of Art Education.' and Swaroop Rawal through her post-doctoral work in writing India's new school curriculum with insights from her research into life-skills education.

In the Abstract to his doctorate Michael Russell outlines his original contributions to educational knowledge:

Through action research I inquired into my pedagogical practice by questioning the nature of knowledge I valued as a lecturer. This questioning led me to develop my 'living educational theory' (Whitehead, 1989, p.41) of privileging tacit knowledge within a Software Engineering curriculum.

My living educational theory is grounded in ideas of professional knowledge, relationships, competence, and expertise. In developing my theory, I explain how I transformed my ontological values of justice, democracy, and care in relation to students through standards of judgement that I developed to direct, test, and evaluate actions I took to improve my pedagogical practice. I describe how I experienced conflict between my existing practice and ontological values that led me to see myself as a 'living contradiction' (Whitehead, 1989, p.41) and to critique the dominant didactic perspectives located within my practice which privileged explicit disciplinary knowledge within a Software Engineering curriculum.

To overcome feeling like a living contradiction, I researched and engaged with dialogical problem-posing pedagogies to encourage and support students to actively participate in their own development of becoming competent software engineering professionals. The dialogical problem-posing pedagogy I developed during this inquiry is constructed on the basis of just, democratic, and caring relationships with students, who are capable of exercising their agency and are constantly remaking their identity as they both create and use professional knowledge to solve Software Engineering problems.

As I engaged with this dialogical problem-posing pedagogy, I re-conceptualised my identity as a pedagogical practitioner. I questioned the traditional and dominant orthodoxies that I subscribed to and which dictated that I positioned myself as the knowledge expert within the classroom. In doing so, I took action to move from

being the knowledge expert to being a facilitator within the classroom to help students to realise their capacity to become competent software engineering practitioners. (Russell, 2021, Abstract)

I also want to focus on the Acknowledgements:

I owe an immense debt of gratitude to Dave McCormack, my supervisor, for his support and belief in me throughout this research journey. His insightful critique raised my awareness of the epistemological concepts that were significant for my research and helped me to focus more clearly on relevant issues. Dave's educative influence on me has given me a different perspective on education and on life.

I wish to acknowledge the teaching staff, my fellow PhD students, and critical friends in the Maynooth University PhD Study Group within the Department of Adult and Community Education who advised, listened, critiqued, and provided strong and sympathetic support when it was needed.

I am suggesting that it would be worthwhile to research the relationally dynamic values that are expressed in the acknowledgements together with the support given to the research by Dr. Mary Ryan as Head of Department.

I shall make a similar point in relation to Merna Meyer's doctoral research to emphasise the importance of extending the systemic educational influences of communities of Living Educational Theory Researchers, with values that carry hope for the flourishing of humanity.

In the Abstract to her doctorate, Merna Meyer outlines her original contributions to educational knowledge:

In this thesis, I present my living theory of professional development in art education. Drawing on my own and student's knowledge and experiences, I offer a professional framework to guide novice art teachers to position themselves as leaders in schools and the broader society. As an art lecturer in higher education, I conducted this research because I am concerned about the state of art education in South Africa. I addressed my three concerns in this study, namely i) the lack of status accorded to the subject and consequently to the art teacher's role, ii) the fact that art is marginalised, undervalued and mostly reserved for the talented few, and iii) the fact that art is taught in isolation removed from the social realities of learners' contexts.

These concerns urged me to take action and set me on a path to change my teaching and learning career practices. My aim was to develop a professional framework for art teachers which defines the roles and socially engaged practices that answer the question; *How can I better prepare art education students to become participatory artists, researchers and teachers (P)ART?*

Drawing on Thornton's ART theory and Helguera's notion of socially engaged art, I engaged in four cycles of action and reflection, generating evidence of my learning from student assignments, visual artefacts and reflections. This learning journey enabled me to develop a pedagogical framework which empowered me to teach

prospective art teachers to become leaders in schools who are able to restore the status of art education through interdisciplinary and socially engaged practices.

The model developed from this learning represents my living theory of art education and explains how students can be developed as participatory artists, researchers and teachers. This '(P)ART'-praxis, can also help to prioritise professional development as a main focus to steer teaching across inter- and trans-disciplinary borders towards an open, inclusive and creative educational landscape in 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching and learning practices. (Meyer, 2019, Abstract)

Merna's Acknowledgements includes the following:

The divine Spirit who gave me insight into matters of the heart and strength to fulfil my dream.

Coming the full circle many people guided, inspired and supported me during this journey. I am thus indebted to you all:

My supervisor Professor Lesley Wood who helped me to find my own voice and guided me with professional diligence...

Professor Lesley Wood has been influential at North West University in supporting Community-Based educational research. Extending the communities of Living Educational Theory Researchers between South African and Irish University could help to enhance the flow of values that carry hope for the flourishing of humanity (Whitehead & Huxtable, 2022)

Swaroop Rawal, in her post-doctoral work and research is contributing to writing India's New School Curriculum:

### **University of Worcester Alumna Chosen to Help Write India's New School Curriculum**

Tuesday, 22 March 2022

A University of Worcester graduate and Honorary Doctorate recipient has been selected as one of around 100 educators who will re-write the schools' curriculum for India.



Dr Swaroop Sampat-Rawal was awarded an Honorary Doctorate from the University in 2018.

Dr Swaroop Sampat-Rawal has been appointed to the National Focus Group to write the position papers for the new school curriculum – the first time it has been re-written in more than 35 years.

“We have a new education policy just released,” said Dr Sampat-Rawal. “The last time the curriculum was written for India was in 1986. I am honoured to have been selected as one of around 100 educators chosen from the thousands and thousands of educators, academics etc from all over India to work on this.”

Dr Sampat-Rawal was named among the top 10 best teachers in the world in the Varkey Foundation’s annual Global Teacher Prize 2019.

Dr Sampat-Rawal earned her PhD in Education at Worcester, graduating in 2006. Her doctoral thesis was on the theme of using drama to enhance life skills in children with learning disabilities.

She has since dedicated herself to community development and advocacy, travelling across India training teachers, while also campaigning to get more children, such as those in tribal communities or street children, into the classroom.

She recently delivered 75 workshops in 17 States to commemorate the 75th anniversary of Indian independence – an achievement that was recognised with a personal letter from India’s Prime Minister, Narendra Modi. (see <https://www.worcester.ac.uk/about/news/2022-university-of-worcester-alumna-chosen-to-help-write-indias-new-school-curriculum> )

In my educational research I accept Foucault's (1979, p. 132) distinction between the 'specific intellectual' as opposed to the 'universal intellectual'. He says that for a long period the 'left' intellectual was acknowledged as a champion of truth and justice. The intellectual was a spokesperson of the universal in the sense of moral, theoretical and political choices. In opposition to the universal intellectual, Foucault describes the specific intellectual in terms of an engagement in a struggle at the precise points where their own conditions of life or work situate them. It is important to understand that Foucault takes care to emphasise that by 'truth' he does not mean 'the ensemble of truths which are to be discovered and accepted'. By 'truth', he means the ensemble of rules according to which the true and the false are separated and specific effects of power attached to the true. The struggles 'around truth' are not 'on behalf' of the truth, but about the status of truth and the economic and political role it plays. (Whitehead, 1993, p. 69)

In this presentation, on critical reflection in educational practice, I accept Foucault understanding of the 'ensemble of rules according to which the true and the false are separated and specific effects of power attached to the true.' However, my own focus is on the role of critical reflection in educational practice, in generating and testing the contributions that the living-educational-theories of individuals are contributing to the global knowledgebase of education.

You can access the latest contribution being made by Swaroop Rawal to the global knowledgebase of education in her Symposium contribution at the American Educational

Research Association on 'Cultivating Equitable Education Systems for the 21st Century through Living Educational Theory Cultures of Educational Inquiry in an Indian /global context (Rawal, 2022).

The presentation is organised in terms of:

- i) What do I mean by 'educational' and the importance of 'embodied values' in distinguishing education research from educational research?
  - ii) What do I mean by 'educational action research' and how is this related to the generation of living-educational-theories?
  - iii) Why is 'critical reflection' necessary in improving educational practice and in generating a living-educational-theory?
  - iv) Sharing our ideas using padlets and other digital technologies and in sharing the evolution of our contributions to a global knowledgebase of education in our community of professional educational practitioners.
  - v) Projecting ourselves into a future with values of human flourishing, educational action research and Living Educational Theory Research.
- 1) What do I mean by 'educational' and the importance of 'embodied values' in distinguishing education research from educational research?

What I mean by educational is learning with values of human flourishing. I stress the importance of values of human flourishing in learning because not all learning is educational. History shows many examples of where individuals, communities and societies have learnt to behave in ways that have led to crimes against humanity, rather than to human flourishing. Hence my emphasis on learning with values of human flourishing that distinguish the values-laden nature of education and what is educational.

I also want to be clear about a distinction between education research and educational research. I see education research as research that is carried out within the conceptual frameworks and methods of validation of disciplines of education such as the philosophy, psychology, sociology and history of education, and other forms and fields of education. I see a Living Educational Theory Research approach to educational research as generating valid and evidence-based explanations of educational influences in learning with values of human flourishing. I call these explanations living-educational-theories. I do this to distinguish educational research from the disciplines approach to Educational Theory. I want to be clear that I value the use of insights from the disciplines of education in the generation of a living-educational-theory. However, I want to emphasise the distinction to avoid the mistake in the disciplines approach that led to the replacement of the practical principles educators use, to explain their educational influences in learning, by the conceptual frameworks and methods of validation of the disciplines of education (Hirst, 1983, p. 18).

The importance of embodied values can be appreciated by focusing on the values expressed in exploring the implications of asking, researching and answering questions of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing in my professional educational practice?' I use two approaches in clarifying the meanings of values in improving educational practice. The first is lexical in which the meanings of value-words are defined in terms of other words. For



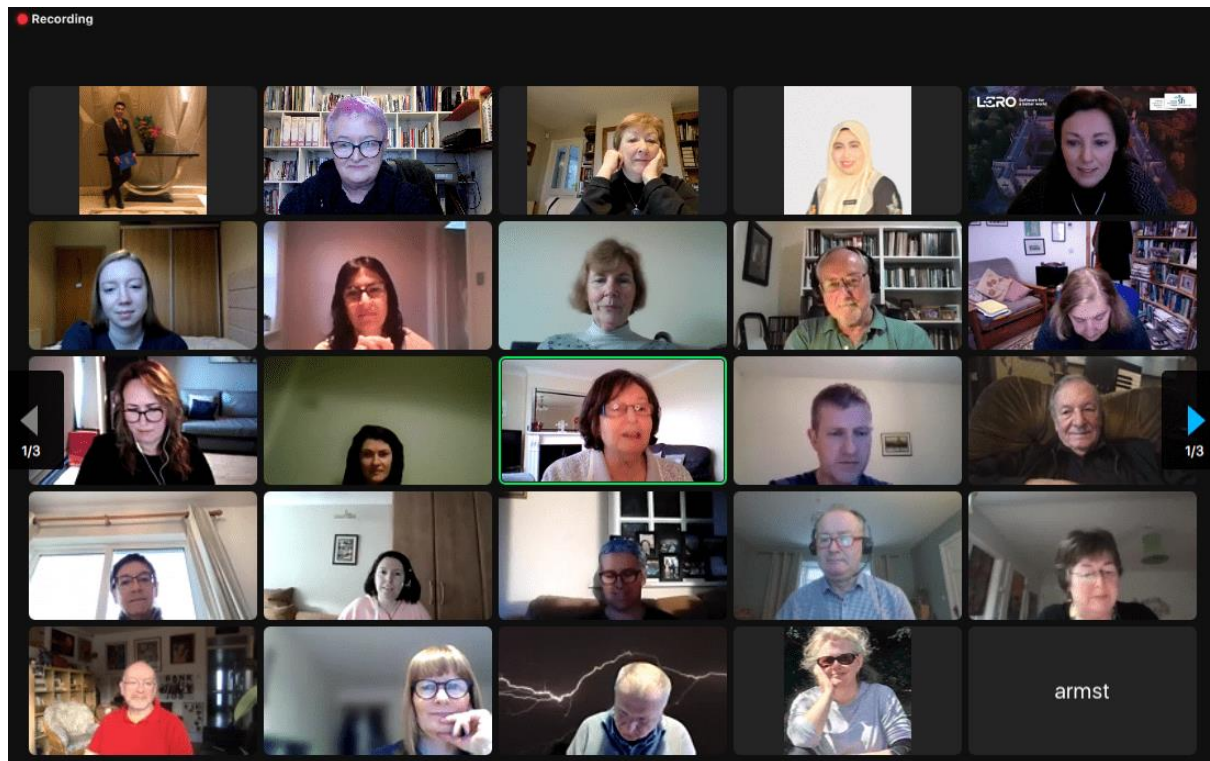
example, we could define punishment as the intentional infliction of pain by somebody in authority on somebody who has broken a rule. The second is ostensive where the meanings of embodied values are clarified in the course of their emergence in practice. In clarifying the meanings of embodied values, I often use a process of empathetic resonance with digital visual data from educational practice, to clarify and communicate the meanings of the embodied values, expressed in educational practice and used as explanatory principles in explanations of educational influences in learning. I identify these values as those that carry hope for the flourishing of humanity and that enable individuals to lead lives that are personally flourishing and as they do so they help others to do so too (Reiss & White, 2013, p. 1).

I identify with Farren's (2004) point:

There is a vitality, a life force, an energy, a quickening that is translated through you into action, and because there is only one of you in all of time, this expression is unique. And if you block it, it will never exist through any other medium and it will be lost. The world will not have it. It is not your business to determine how good nor how valuable nor how it compares with other expressions. It is your business to keep it yours clearly and directly, to keep the channel open. (Zander & Zander, 2000)

I do urge NEARI and ESAI, VPAR participants, to consider researching the relational dynamic values that carry hope for the flourishing of humanity and that bring them together as communities of educational researchers, within their Irish contexts, in a way that has a global influence. The spread and amplification of these values is all the more urgent as the world recovers from the ravages of the Covid-19 and the death and destruction that is going on as I write from the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

I repeat the above image from the last NEARIMeet and ask you to imagine the possibilities of researching the living and relational dynamics within this community as you generate and share your own living-educational-theories with values of human flourishing.



- 2) What do I mean by ‘educational action research’ and how is this related to the generation of living-educational-theories?

My meaning of educational action research first emerged in a local curriculum development I organised in 1976 on Improving Learning for 11-14 in Mixed Ability Science Groups (Whitehead, 1976 a & b). As I worked with a group of six teachers to improve our own and pupils’ learning we found ourselves using action-reflection cycles in which we expressed our concerns, imagined possible ways forward, selected an action plan, acted and gathered data to make a judgement on our effectiveness, evaluated our effectiveness and modified our concerns, plans and actions in the light of our evaluations. This process of improving our educational practice I understood as educational action research. This process was integrated into the generation by each individual of an explanation of their educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations within which the practice was located. The educational action research provided a methodology for improving our educational practice. There was no necessity for generating and sharing a valid, evidence-based explanation of educational influence in learning. A necessary condition of a living-educational-theory is that it generates such an explanation.

- 3) Why is ‘critical reflection’ necessary in improving educational practice and in generating a living-educational-theory?

Critical reflection is necessary in improving educational practice as it provides the criteria for judging something as an improvement. These criteria are contentious and problematic as

they are influenced by political, cultural and historical contexts. I find it helpful to bear these influences in mind with the following point from an analysis of 'Whose Justice, Which Rationality:

The rival claims to truth of contending traditions of enquiry depend for their vindication upon the adequacy and the explanatory power of the histories which the resources of each of those traditions in conflict enable their adherents to write. (MacIntyre, 1988, p. 403)

My earlier understandings of being critical were influenced by a Western Critical Academic Tradition, especially by the ideas of Habermas (1976). However, with the help of Maxwell's (2021) distinction between knowledge-inquiry and wisdom-inquiry I have come to understand the importance of Eastern Wisdom Traditions. Dhungana has helped me to develop a view of critical reflection that includes a sense of educational responsibility with bringing together an Eastern Wisdom Tradition, with a critical Western Academic Knowledge Tradition:

Although I developed a sense of educational responsibility since I chose teaching as my profession, it was not explicit until I connected the notion of satva from the Eastern Wisdom Tradition with the emancipatory interest of Habermas (1972) and thereby, found the limitation of human cognitive interests. Although emancipatory interest supports working for the benefit of all with empowering intent by engaging in critical reflection, this cognitive human interest seems insufficient to promote a sense of educational responsibility as it overlooks the merit of living values such as love, care, respect, and joy. (Dhungana, 2021)

- 4) Sharing our ideas using padlets and other digital technologies and in sharing the evolution of our contributions to a global knowledgebase of education in our communities of professional educational practitioners.

On 12 Mar 2022, at 13:29, NEARI people <info@eari.ie> wrote:

Dear Colleagues,

We are delighted to announce that the Spring meeting of the Network for Educational Action Research in Ireland (NEARI) and Values-based Practitioner Action Research SIG (VPAR SIG) will take place **online** on **Saturday, 2 April 2022 at 10.00 am (Irish Standard Time)**....

**Our theme for this meeting is: *Critical Reflection in Educational Practice***

We thank our colleagues at the [Education Studies Association of Ireland \(ESAI\)](#) for supporting our [Values-Based Practitioner Action Research Special Interest Group \(VPAR SIG\)](#). We are therefore delighted to announce that [Jack Whitehead](#) will be our guest speaker at this event. Jack will speak around the theme of *Critical Reflection in Educational Practice*. **Jack has asked us to share this Padlet with**

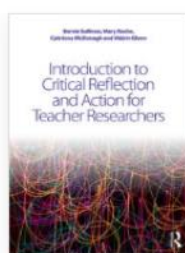
you <https://padlet.com/jack499/ptkbgfl2f7he92xh>, and has invited you to contribute to it before the NEARIMeet (if you wish) to create a living archive that could be referred to and developed over time...

Bernie Sullivan, Caitriona McDonagh, Cornelia Connolly, Máirín Glenn and Mary Roche.

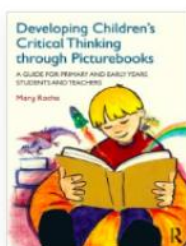
Like Swaroop Rawal, Bernie, Caitriona, Mairin and Mary received their Living Educational Theory Doctorates in 2006-7. Since then, their contributions to the global educational knowledgebase have included:



**Enhancing Practice through Classroom Research**  
A Teacher's Guide to Professional Development, 2nd Edition  
By **Caitriona McDonagh, Mary Roche, Bernie Sullivan, Máirín Glenn**  
Paperback – 2019-08-12  
Routledge



**Introduction to Critical Reflection and Action for Teacher Researchers**  
1st Edition  
By **Bernie Sullivan, Máirín Glenn, Mary Roche, Caitriona McDonagh**  
Paperback – 2016-04-28  
Routledge



**Developing Children's Critical Thinking through Picturebooks**  
A guide for primary and early years students and teachers, 1st Edition  
By **Mary Roche**  
Paperback – 2014-06-22  
Routledge



**Enhancing Practice through Classroom Research**  
A teacher's guide to professional development, 1st Edition  
By **Caitriona McDonagh, Mary Roche, Bernie Sullivan, Máirín Glenn**  
Paperback – 2011-11-03  
Routledge



**Learning Communities in Educational Partnerships**  
Action Research as Transformation  
By **Máirín Glenn, Mary Roche, Caitriona McDonagh and Bernie Sullivan**  
Published: 16-11-2017  
Imprint: Bloomsbury Academic

5) Projecting ourselves into a future with values of human flourishing, educational action research and Living Educational Theory Research.

i) Projecting ourselves into a future with values of human flourishing

Our individual contributions to a future, with values of human flourishing, can be amplified as we learn to work together in communities to enhance the flow of these values. As I write, the Taliban in Afghanistan have turned girls away from their secondary school, Russia's invasion of Ukraine is killing women and children in residential areas and pushing millions of Ukrainians as refugees into many European countries, with a majority of women and

children. The Co-vid 19 pandemic continues to exacerbate inequalities in education and other opportunities as it affects populations in disparate ways.

In projecting myself into a future, I identify my values of human flourishing with those of Frankl and Eger, whilst recognising the reality of the above denials of the values of human flourishing. Both Frankl (1956; 2020) and Eger (2017) survived concentration camps and both say 'Yes to Life, in spite of everything'. For me this hope is accompanied by a flow of life-affirming energy with values such as freedom, justice, love, care and compassion. You will have your own unique constellation of values that you could share in your living-educational-theories. It may be that those of you with an Irish cultural heritage will be able to share a sense of community that is influenced by this cultural heritage. I identify with Farren's (2005) engagement with the 'Web of Betweenness' from the work of O' Donohue (2003) in her Irish context, in her doctoral inquiry on 'How Can I Create A Pedagogy Of The Unique Through A Web Of Betweenness?'

### Abstract

This thesis examines the growth of my educational knowledge and development of my practice, as higher education educator, over six years of self-study. The thesis sets out to report on this research and to explain the evolution of my educational influence in my own learning, the learning of others and in the education of social formations. By education of social formations I refer to Whitehead's (2005a) meaning of living values that carry hope for the future of humanity more fully in the rules and processes that govern its social organization.

The context of my research was the collaborative process that developed between myself and participants on the M.Sc. in Computer Applications for Education and the M.Sc. Education and Training Management (ICT) at Dublin City University. Within that context, I worked with a sense of research-based professionalism, seeking to improve my practice through using a 'living educational theory' approach that has sustained me in asking, researching and answering the question; 'How do I improve my practice?' This has enabled me to critically examine my own assumptions and values.

I clarify the meaning of my embodied values in the course of their emergence in my practice-based research. My values have been transformed into living standards of judgement that include a 'web of betweenness' and a 'pedagogy of the unique'. The 'web of betweenness' refers to how we learn in relation to one another and also how ICT can enable us to get closer to communicating the meanings of our embodied values. I see it as a way of expressing my understanding of education as 'power with', rather than 'power over', others. It is this 'power with' that I have tried to embrace as I attempt to create a learning environment in which I, and practitioner-researchers, can grow personally and professionally. A 'pedagogy of the unique' respects the unique constellation of values and standards of judgement that each practitioner-researcher contributes to a knowledge base of practice.

Living Educational Theory Researchers have already been awarded their doctorates from Limerick and Maynooth Universities as well as other universities around the world (see- <https://www.actionresearch.net/living/living.shtml> ). I am suggesting that further original contributions to educational knowledge could be made, to the global knowledgebase of education by participants, in NEARI and the ESAI VPAR SIG, researching the relationally dynamic values that are emerging as our communities of educational researchers, ask, research and answering the question, 'How do I improve my professional, educational practice?'

ii) Educational Action Research

My first use of an action-reflection cycle, that distinguishes educational action research as a way of researching questions of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing in my professional practice?', was in the 11-14 Mixed Ability Exercise in Science (Whitehead, 1976). This action-reflection cycles involves expressing concerns when values are not being lived as fully as they could be; imagining possible ways of improving practice and choosing one of them in an action plan; acting and gathering data to make a judgement on the influences of the actions; evaluating the influences of the actions in terms of living the values as fully as possible; modifying the concerns, plans and actions in the light of the evaluations. See the planner:

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

What Educational Action Research does not require is the generation of an evidence and values-based explanation of educational influences in one's own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations within which the practice is located.

iii) Living Educational Theory Research

What Educational Action Research does not require is the necessary condition of Living Educational Theory Research. That is, the generation of an evidence and values-based explanation of educational influences in one's own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations within which the practice is located and which contributes to the global knowledgebase. The values used as explanatory principles are at the heart of Living Educational Theory Research. Each of us has their own unique constellation of values that we use as explanatory principles in explanations of our educational influences in learning. Part of our professional educational responsibility is to live these values as fully as possible and contribute our explanations of educational influences in learning to the global educational knowledgebase. I have suggested that NEARIMeets, with their digital visual record of our presentations and conversations, could provide us with data on the evolving relational dynamic values that we can use, as a community of educational researchers, to enhance and amplify that spreading influence of values that carry hope for the flourishing of humanity. Other Living Educational Theory Researchers have identified such values as, the African value of Ubuntu (Charles, 2007); Briganti's (2021) value of international development; the Hindu value of Satchidananda (Dungana, 2022); Demirbag's value of Aloha (Boland & Demirbag, 2017) from Hawaiian culture:



I can see that what was advocated was really the aloha spirit – a warmth, acceptance, and inclusion extended to everyone. In addition, the Hawaiian cultural belief that the land is alive with spirit was one that eventually connected me intimately to the cosmos and then led me to anthroposophy, the philosophy which stands behind Waldorf schools. (p. 21).

As Farren (2005) did with her values of the ‘web of betweenness’ I am suggesting that it will be possible and desirable for NEARI participants to clarify and communicate the values from Irish culture and history. I see these values as contributing to human flourishing, in your particular contexts, in Ireland and in other, global contexts, as you deepen and extend your creative responses to your critical reflections in your educational practice and educational research. I do hope that we can continue to help each other to share and extend our educational influences, through NEARI and the ESAI VPAR SIG, as we work and research to improve our professional practices and contribute to the global knowledgebase of education.

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