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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?

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A summary of a paper presented at the 2016 CARN 40th Anniversary Conference at Bishop Grosseteste University in Lincoln, UK, 10-13 November, on with the theme of 'Integrating the Personal and Political in Professional Practice.'

Summary

The full 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. It can be accessed from:

<http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/jack/jwCARNindividual091116.pdf>

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.

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 understand the meanings of embodied values to be clarified, ostensibly, in the course of their emergence through practice (Feyerabend, 1975, p. 17). 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.

My political values are grounded in the Co-operative Party which I serve as secretary for the Bath and West Co-operative Party (see <http://ica.coop/en/whats-co-op/co-operative-identity-values-principles>)

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. These are described in details in the full 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 in 1976. My first evaluation report was rejected by the teachers on the groups that they could not see themselves in the report:

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

I reconstructed the report, in the form of action-reflection cycles and this was accepted by the teachers:

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

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

I came to the University of Bath in 1973 with an understanding, from video-tapes of my classroom practice, of the importance of including 'I' as a living contradiction within an explanation of my educational influence. (see the full paper).

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 includes 'I' as a living-contradiction within the politics of educational knowledge.

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

In my 1999 doctorate (Whitehead, 1999a&b) 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.

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. See

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

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.

Working and researching with Marie Huxtable (Whitehead & Huxtable, 2006) we presented a multi-media explanation on the co-creation of living standards of judgement in researching our educational practices, from an inclusional perspective (Whitehead & Rayner 2009; Whitehead, 2011).

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

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.

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

'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).

8) The use of living-posters (Huxtable, 2015), with ideas from De Sousa Santos (2014), 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.

For the first presentation of living-posters in the context of spreading the influence of Living Theory research as a social movement see <http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/posters/homepage061115.pdf>

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.

As part of my continuing educational enquiry into extending the educational I proposed the following CARN study day at Bath on the 4th February 20167 see <http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/jack/livingposterlettercarn.pdf>

As part of the Global Assembly in Cartagena on the 16th June 2017. I intend to extend the above influence in the Action Research Network of the Americas (ARNA) conference in Cartagena.

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?'

So, for my 40th CARN Anniversary contribution, I am continuing to account for my educational influences in my enquiry, 'How do I improve what I am doing?' I have documented and explained how I am integrating the personal and political in improving professional practice and generating educational knowledge with a Living Theory approach to 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 as my living-theory action research continues.

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