A self-study contribution to a history of the self-study of teacher education practices

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Introduction

My self-studies of my teacher education practice began in 1973, with my appointment as a Lecturer in Education at the University of Bath, UK. Between 1973-1993 I explored my question, 'How do I improve what I am doing in my professional practice?' In 1993 I published a book on 'The Growth of Educational Knowledge: Creating your living educational theories' (Whitehead, 1993). In this I offer an analysis of my contributions to educational knowledge between 1973-1993, which I brought into S-STEP. These contributions included the original idea that individuals could create their own living-educational-theories (Whitehead, 1985, 1989) 'as explanations of their educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations in which the enquiry was located.' The idea that S-STEP researchers could generate their own living-educational-theories provided the organising principle for a Special Issue of Teacher Education Quarterly in 1995 (TEQ, 1995).

In 1999 my doctoral thesis (Whitehead, 1993) demonstrated the existence of a Living Educational Theory methodology that transcended limitations in social science methodologies for enquiries of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing?' I communicated this methodology (Whitehead, 2009a) within the limitations of a printed-text based medium for instance in a chapter in a book (Tidwell, et. al. 2009) and transcended these limitations in a multimedia paper on Living Theory methodology, published in the multimedia journal, Educational Journal of Living Theories (EJOLTS), (Whitehead, 2008).

Over the course of my research between 1993-2014 I have consistently sought to make a contribution to the evolution of S-STEP in two ways. The first concerns the rationality of explanations of educational influence that include evidence of their influence in the learning of students. I am thinking here of the nature of the rationality in the unit of appraisal, living standards of judgment and the living-logics used by S-STEP researchers in their explanations of educational influence in learning. The second concerns the development of methods for clarifying and communicating the meanings of the embodied expressions of energy-flowing, ontological values as explanatory principles in explanations of educational influence.

The paper is organised in terms of the Aims, Context, Methods and Outcomes.

Aims

In 1995 Schön, drawing on the work of Boyer (1990), advocated that researchers develop a new epistemology from Action Research for the new scholarship of teaching. My main aim is focused on responding to, and going beyond, Schön by clarifying and communicating the rationality of the explanations of S-STEP researchers of their educational influences in learning. I am thinking of a rationality that is distinguished by its unit of appraisal, living-logic (Whitehead, 2013a) and living standards of judgment (Laidlaw, 1996; Delong & Whitehead, 1998).

One of the ways in which I distinguish an educational influence is in terms of the energy-flowing, ontological values that enhance the flourishing of humanity. I shall focus on the use of digital, multimedia narratives, for clarifying and communicating the meanings of the embodied expressions of these values, in the creation of a new educational humanism.

The self-study questions at the heart of this contribution are:

- How have I contributed to a history of S-STEP through my enquiries, 'How do I improve what I am doing as an educational practitioner?'
- Do digital multimedia narratives enable more valid communications, of the meanings of the explanatory principles of S-STEP researchers, than solely print-based texts?
- Is the rationality of the explanations of my educational influence in my own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations in which I live and work, distinguished by a living logic and living standards of judgment?
- Are sociohistorical and sociocultural influences from the dominant language and logic of Western academic discourses exerting a limiting influence on the communications from S-STEP researchers on the nature of their explanations of educational influences in learning?

As I prepare this paper I also want to deepen and extend my cognitive range and concern and that of others as distinguishable characteristics of educational learning. I am therefore drawing on Delong's (2002) articulation of 'cultures of inquiry' Potts', Coombs' and Whitehead's (2013) articulation of 'living-global-citizenship', Forester's (2013) notion of 'living-legacies' and the African way of being of Ubuntu, as living standards of judgment, in the generation of an educational humanism in the creation of my own living-educational-theory (Whitehead, 1989)

Context

The context includes data from over 30 living-educational-theory doctoral theses I supervised between 1993-2013 as explanations of educational influence. The explanations are contextualized within sociohistorical and sociocultural influences on educational researchers. The explanations include their constraining influences whilst offering possibilities for transcending these influences in self-study contributions to a history of S-STEP with the generation of a new educational humanism (Hamilton & Zufiaurre, 2014). Each living-theory researcher includes evaluations of past learning and an intention to improve practice in the future in ways that are not yet realized in practice (Whitehead, 1999, Abstract).

In 1995 the Teacher Education Quarterly (TEQ) published an issue on Self-Study and Living Educational Theory with contributions from Pinnegar and Russell (1995); Guilfoyle (1995); Hamilton (1995); Placier (1995); Pinnegar (1995); Russell (1995); Whitehead, 1995).

Pinnegar and Russell pointed out:

> *The issue as a whole expresses the documentation of living educational theory (Whitehead, 1993). Over the past five years, the seven of us have worked collectively to research out own practices and to examine what a living educational theory might be. (p.9)*

In my responses to the contributions in Teacher Education Quarterly (Whitehead, 1995) I focused on the importance of a teacher educator explaining his or her educational influence in the learning of students as well as their own. Because the language and logic of traditional, propositional forms of academic discourse, eliminate contradictions from correct thought, and can mask the dialogical nature of educational influences, my contributions to a history of S-STEP include a focus on overcoming this elimination and masking (Whitehead, 1995, p. 27).

In 2000 I further developed my contribution to the history of S-STEP with my first digital, multimedia narrative to communicate meanings of embodied expressions of energy-flowing ontological values as explanatory principles in the explanations of educational influences in learning of S-STEP researchers. In 2003 I was a member of a Senate working party at the University of Bath reviewing the regulations governing the submission of research degrees. In 2004, following

a recommendation from the working party, the regulations were changed to permit the submission of e-media. This significant change opened the way for the legitimation of the multimedia narratives of S-STEP researchers, available from http://www.actionresearch.net/living/living.shtml with their living-logics that transcended limitations in propositional discourses. I have already drawn attention to the epistemological significance of these digital, multimedia narratives (Whitehead, 2013b).

Since 2000 I have emphasised the limitations of print-based texts such as the S-STEP Journal on Studying Teacher Education (STE) to communicate the nature of these explanatory principles.

I understand why S-STEP researchers seek recognition of their knowledge by publishing in high status academic journals. However, in doing so it is my claim that we S-STEP researchers have conformed to a traditional propositional format and limited the meanings of the living logics and standards of judgment of S-STEP research. During my tenured academic appointment (1973-2009) at the University of Bath I was caught in this tension. At the same time as producing propositional publications I was working, as a research supervisor, to enable doctoral researchers to gain academic legitimation for their theses, which transcended limitations in propositional discourses, as contributions to educational knowledge. I was also a founder member of a multimedia journal, the Educational Journal of Living Theories (EJOLTS). Both the doctorates from 2004, and EJOLTS from 2008, were open to new forms of representation using digital technology. In 2009 I explained my concerns to the readers of STE:

> *At this point I invite you to view the visual narrative of Branko Bognar and Marica Zovko (2008), two Croatian educators, in the Educational Journal of Living Theories. This visual narrative shows pupils and teachers and researchers co-creating their living educational theories and is available at the URL http://ejolts.net/node/82 . I believe this visual narrative shows how video-clips of our practices as teacher educators can be integrated with words on pages of text. This is particularly important in communicating the meanings of the expression of the energy-flowing and values-laden standards of judgment that we use in evaluating our educational influences in learning. (Whitehead, 2009, p.109)*

The contrast between the meanings communicated in a solely print based S-STEP account and a multimedia S-STEP account, can be seen in the differences between an analysis of Living Theory methodology (Whitehead, 2009) in Tidwell, et. al. (2009) and an analysis of this methodology in EJOLTS (Whitehead. 2008). These differences are most marked in the multimedia narratives of the December 2013 issue of EJOLTS (2013) with visual data being used to communicate the meanings of the embodied expressions of the energy-flowing value of 'being loved into learning' (Campbell, 2013; Griffin, 2013) and the meanings of values described within printed texts such as those in the December 2013 issue of Gifted Education International (GEI, 2013).

In relation to my four questions above, I continue to explore the implications of asking, researching and answering my question, 'How do I improve what I am doing?' For instance, in 2011, I presented the Inaugural Nelson Mandela Day Lecture at Durban University of Technology (Whitehead, 2011). I focused on the meanings of an Ubuntu way of being as described by Nelson Mandela (2006). With Ubuntu, Africa can now be associated with a valued way of being that carries hope for the flourishing of humanity. The relationally dynamic value of Ubuntu in the sense of 'I am because we are', stresses the centrality of recognizing the relational nature of 'I' in 'i~we' relationships (Whitehead & Huxtable, 2006). The small 'i' in 'i~we' relationships serves to emphasise a non-egotistical 'I', an 'I' that holds within itself, Buber's (1947, p. 122) notion of the humility of the educator.

'i~we' serves to emphasise the relationally dynamic influences of the individual in relationship with others. I claim that an i~we relationship can be clearly seen in a recent text by two S-STEP researchers (Allender and Allender, 2014). I also claim that the inclusion of Ubuntu (Charles, 2007) as a living standard of judgment within his living-theory thesis is a significant contribution to a history of S-STEP and the development of a new educational humanism.

Methods

The methods for gathering data include the bringing together of multimedia masters and doctoral writings and degrees of self-study researchers that are publically available from:

http://www.actionresearch.net/living/living.shtml

and

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

The data analyzed are the living-educational-theories produced in my self-study research between 1993-2014. The analysis is focused on explicating the living-logics and living standards of judgment (Laidlaw, 1996) in published texts that distinguish the rationalities of the explanations (Whitehead, 1993, 1995, 1999, 2005, 2008, 2009a &b, 2013 a, b &c). The unit of appraisal, as with all living-educational-theories, is the individual's explanation for their educational influence, in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formation in which their enquiry is located. The analysis is also focused on the explanations of the educational influences of S-STEP researchers that relate to enhancing the flow of energy-flowing, ontological values that contribute to a flourishing of humanity in a new educational humanism.

The analysis of the digital visual data is intended to clarify and communicate the meanings of the embodied expressions of the energy-flowing values that form the explanatory principles of the self-study researcher. I use a method I developed of empathetic resonance (Huxtable, 2009). This presents digitalized visual data grounded in the expression of energy-flowing ontological values. These are the values that the researcher uses to give meaning and purpose to their educational practices and which contribute to the flourishing of humanity. The cursor is moved backwards and forwards around the point of the video-clip at which the researcher feels the greatest resonance with an ontological value that they are seeking to live as fully as possible. The researcher uses the value-words that relate most appropriately to the embodied expression of the energy-flowing value. The method stresses the importance of a relationship between the embodied expression of meaning and the meanings in the words we use. It requires both the digitalized visual data and the meanings in the value-words we use.

Campbell (2013) and Griffin (2013) have used empathetic resonance to communicate their meanings of their ontological values of 'being loved into learning' in their explanations of educational influence.

In empirical research, objectivity is grounded in inter-subjective criticism or, as Popper (1975, p.44) says, on the principle of the mutual rational control of critical discussion. In creating the method of empathetic resonance, as an approach to clarifying and communicating the meanings of embodied expressions of energy-flowing, ontological values, I use the same principle of establishing publically acceptable meanings. These are focused on both the embodied expressions of meanings, as revealed by the digitalized visual data, and the meanings of the value-words that are used to clarify the embodied expressions of meaning.

My use of visual data emphasizes the importance of a relationally dynamic awareness in comprehending the continuously changing network of relationships, which are influenced by the researcher and which influence the researcher. The importance of a living-logic, in distinguishing the rationality of the explanations of these influences, is that it can include relationally dynamic and energy-flowing ontological values as explanatory principles in the explanations of educational influence.

The data analysis, with its living-logic, emphasizes the continuously evolving nature of explanations of educational influence. This evolution involves providing evidence of the extension and deepening of an individual's cognitive range and concerns – one of the criteria that distinguishes learning as educational. My most recent learning is focused on my creative response to ideas of culture of inquiry (Delong, 2002, 2013), Ubuntu (Charles, 2007), living global citizenship (Potts 2012), educational humanism (Hamilton & Zufiaurre, 2014) and living legacies (Forester, 2012), as expressions of energy-flowing ontological values that lived more fully in the world I believe carry hope for the future of humanity.

Outcomes

The outcomes of this self-study contribution to educational knowledge between 1973-2014 include the explication of an action research approach to questions of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing?' This includes the systematic process of expressing concerns when ontological values are not being lived as fully as they could be; explaining why the concerns; imagining possible ways forward and the choice of an action plan; acting and gathering data to make a judgment on the influence of actions; evaluating the influence of one's actions; modifying concerns, ideas and actions in the light of the evaluations; producing and sharing a validated explanation of educational influences in learning. The question of why the researcher is concerned is important because it moves the researcher beyond expressing concerns by focusing on clarifying their ontological values as these are expressed in practice.

The above question (whose meaning is continuously changing) and validated explanations include the relational and ontological 'I' as a living contradiction. In the course of the action reflection process, the

meanings of the embodied expressions of energy-flowing ontological values can be clarified and communicated as explanatory principles

I brought into S-STEP research the original idea of a living-educational-theory as a validated explanation of an individual's educational influence in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations in which the enquiry is located.

In stressing the validity of the explanations I introduced into S-STEP research the use of validation groups of between 3-8 peers using 4 questions derived from Habermas' (1976, pp.2-3) four criteria of social validity on comprehensibility, rightness, truthfulness and authenticity:

1. How could I enhance the comprehensibility of my explanation of educational influence?
2. How could I strengthen the evidence I use to justify the assertions I make?
3. How could I deepen and extend my sociohistorical and sociocultural awareness of their influence on my practice and writings?
4. How could I enhance the authenticity of my explanations in the sense of showing that I am truly committed over time and interactions to living as fully as I can the values I claim to hold?

With the use of digitalized visual data, I pioneered the use of empathetic resonance for clarifying and communicating the meanings of the embodied expression of ontological, energy-flowing values as explanatory principles in explanations of educational influence that focused on explaining this influence in the learning of others.

In distinguishing the rationality of the living-theories of S-STEP researchers I explicated the unit of appraisal, living standards of judgment and living-logics of the explanations of educational influence.

In the creation of my own living-educational-theories and supporting others to create and make public their living-educational-theories I continue to seek to contribute to a history of S-STEP and a new educational humanism.

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