

Creativity, Visual Literacy with New Media Development Work

How am I, as an educational practitioner-researcher using new technology to enhance educational learning?

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Abstract

This research is part of my doctoral programme researching my practice as a senior educational psychologist responsible for the development of inclusive gifted and talented educational theory, practice and provision for all learners.

In this paper I describe and explain my living educational theory research to improve my values-based practice. I develop the use of multimedia-narratives and the web to create, enhance and support educational relationships, space and opportunities for learners creating and offering knowledge of the world, themselves and themselves in and of the world.

I introduce a notion of generative and transformational evaluation and use digital, multimedia forms of representation to communicate values, which flow with life-affirming and life-enhancing energy. I particularly focus on the development and sharing of multimedia-narratives and conversations that enable learners to develop and offer their talents and knowledge to enhance their own educational learning, that of others and social formations we live in.

Background and Context

I have worked for a number of years in a small English local authority to enhance the educational experience of all children and young people by focusing through the lens of gifted and talented education. Since 2006 I have been engaged on a doctoral programme researching my practice as a senior educational psychologist responsible for the development of inclusive gifted and talented educational theory, practice and provision for all learners. The focus of my research has been how to enhance the educational experience of children and young people learning to live loving, satisfying, productive lives for themselves and others.

Following Whitehead (1989, 2010) I am making a distinction between educational research, and research in education, and employ a living theory methodology. What I am concerned with is research to improve educational theory, practice and provision. I am distinguishing educational research by life-affirming and life-enhancing values that form explanatory principles and living standards of judgment. Emerging through my research has been an understanding of how my ontological values of a loving recognition, respectful connectedness and educational responsibility and values of an inclusive, emancipating and egalitarian society influence my practice.

In distinguishing learning as 'educational' I am agreeing with Biesta (2006) when he says:

'We might look at learning as a response to what is other and different, to what challenges, irritates, or even disturbs us, rather than as the acquisition of something we want to possess... [this] conception of learning is educationally the more significant, if it is conceded that education is not just about the transmission of knowledge, skills and values, but is concerned with the individuality, subjectivity, or personhood of the student, with their "coming into the world" as unique, singular beings.' (p. 27)

In this paper I intend to focus on the creative use of multimedia narratives (Huxtable, 2009) and the web to create, enhance and support educational relationships, space and opportunities for learners creating and offering knowledge of the world, themselves and themselves in and of the world.

Description of the development work

Examples of the creative use of new media in the development of multimedia narrative in research can be found in my publications which can be accessed from my website - <http://www.spanglefish.com/mariessite/publishedwritings.asp>

These recent papers show the current thinking with which I am working and building on:

Huxtable, M. (2010) [Educators and learners co-developing as action researchers. A presentation on the 7th November 2010 to the Collaborative Action Research Network Conference at Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge.](#)

Huxtable, M. (2010) '[Educational research: Evolving forms of representation, which communicate relationally dynamic energy-flowing values.](#)' Presented at the 2010 Annual Conference of the British Educational Research Association at the University of Warwick on the 1st September 2010.)

Whitehead, J. and Huxtable, M. (2010) [Educational Knowledge and Forms of Accountability Within the Complex Ecologies of Self-Study. Presented 2nd August 2010 at AERA S-STEP Castle Conference V111 August 1-5, 2010 Hersmonceux Castle, UK](#)

Huxtable, M. (2009) Enhancing Creativity in Educational Practice and Teachers Continued Professional Development Through Contributing to Improving Inclusive and Inclusional Gifted and Talented Educational Theory and Practice. pp.128-141. In L. Bognar, J. Whitehead, B. Bognar, M. P. Kraljik, K. Munk (Eds) Encouraging creativity in education: Collection of papers – a Handbook for Current and Future Teachers, "A Creative Approach to Teacher Education", Pozega, Croatia, 27-30 Sept 2009. Retrieved 10th January 2010 from <http://ejolts.net/node/145>

I will integrate the development of <http://www.livinglearning.org.uk> into my description and explanations of how I am using new media to develop relationships, space and opportunities to enable learners to enquire collaboratively.

Evaluation work that has been done

The purpose of many forms of representation in traditional social science research is to provide evidence to vindicate or justify what has happened and often includes some form of quantitative data. However as Eisner (1985) points out:

'If we want to understand why we get what we get from our schools, we need to pay attention not simply to the score, but to the ways in which the game is played.' (p.5-6)

I believe the purpose of evidence in educational research is to understand how we might go beyond the game and represent evidence that is generative and transformational. The forms of evidence therefore need to evolve, again as Eisner points out:

'For educational evaluation this means that the form of the qualities we use: the particular words we select, the sentences we construct, the cadence, tempo, tone, and tenor of our language is a primary means for conveying what our (hopefully) refined sensibilities have revealed to us. We have the task – ubiquitous in human experience – of creating an equivalent in the public world for the ideas and feelings we have construed in the private world.' (p.9)

What Eisner didn't have in 1985 was the ability to develop digital, multimedia forms of representation to communicate values, which flowed with life-affirming and life-enhancing energy. In the paper I will introduce a notion of generative and transformational evaluation that makes use of new forms of media. I will particularly focus on the development and sharing of multimedia narratives and conversations that enable learners to develop and offer their talents and knowledge in areas of their interest to enhance their knowledge of themselves and the world they want to contribute to.

Significance of work for others

The significance of the paper is in the contribution it makes to the development of educational research through its use of multi-media narratives to communicate the meanings of the ontological values as explanatory principles in explanations of educational influences in learning.

Future work

I intend to develop collaborative links with others, such as Margaret Farren, 'Connecting, Contributing, Collaborating', <http://83.70.181.166/joomlamgt/>, to enable educators and learners to develop and make public the knowledge they create of the world, themselves and themselves in and of the world to enhance their own learning, the learning of others and the learning of the social formations within which we live and work.

References

Biesta, G. J. J. (2006) Beyond Learning; Democratic Education for a Human Future. Boulder: Paradigm Publishers.

Eisner, E. (1985) The Art of Educational Evaluation. London: Falmer.

Huxtable, M. (2009) How do we contribute to an educational knowledge base? A response to Whitehead and a challenge to BERJ. *Research Intelligence*, 107, 25-26. Retrieved 11 January 2010 from <http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/huxtable/mh2009beraRI107.pdf>

Whitehead, J. (1989) Creating a living educational theory from questions of the kind, 'How do I improve my practice?'. *Cambridge Journal of Education*. 19,1,41-52.

Whitehead, J. (2010) As An Educator And Educational Researcher, How Do I Improve What I Am Doing And Contribute To Educational Theories That Carry Hope For The Future Of Humanity And My Own? *Inquiry in Education*. 1(2), Article 2. Retrieved 11 January 2010 from <http://digitalcommons.nl.edu/ie/vol1/iss2/2>