Enabling authentic international Continuing Professional Development learning through acts of ‘Living Citizenship’

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This paper explores the conceptual framework of “Living Citizenship” as a means for developing international continuing professional development (i-CPD) through action research projects. The research focuses on video cases that presents findings from the development of an international educational partnership between a School in England and South Africa. Adapting Whitehead’s (2005) living educational theory approach to action research, “Living Citizenship” supports international educational partnerships' through the influence of participants' as active citizens. Such pro-active fieldwork links the values and objectives of social justice and knowledge exchange to proffering educational change within authentic i-CPD learning environments. Living citizenship also carries a message of hope for humanity. Participants in an i-CPD partnership are actively engaged in living out their values more fully and in so doing real lives are improved.

“Living citizenship” can be both understood and achieved through enabling practical project examples, such as participants living out their values through acts to further social justice, equality and Ubuntu (humanity). The intention of citizenship education (QCDA, 2007) is to equip people to play an active role in society as global citizens. Clearly, there is a powerful and synergetic link here between the curriculum of citizenship and the goals of international education and exchange partnerships. The adopted research framework illustrates three of the conceptions of the “good” citizen as outlined by Westheimer and Kahne (2004) “personally responsible, participatory and justice orientated”. Living Citizenship i-CPD projects can address the question put by the British Educational Research Association (BERA) in 2003: How do we learn to become good citizens? Such i-CPD recognised projects provide examples of state support and status given for groups rewarding civic virtue (Cooter, 2000).

The Citizenship Education Longitudinal Study conducted by NFER (2010) shows that schools need help with embedding citizenship education into the curriculum, school culture and wider community. International educational partnerships offer an opportunity to embed citizenship education as a form of “living citizenship” to achieve this goal. We present findings that suggest the need for an international dimension and reconceptualisation of continuing professional development and how this might lead to useful applied research impact evidence. We argue for an international
educational i-CPD policy that validates, levers, and celebrates the activity of living citizenship fieldwork (Coombs & Potts, 2010).

The Research Project
The principal researcher for this PhD project is an educational practitioner-researcher who seeks to live out his values more fully in his professional life, with the aim of making an original contribution to educational knowledge and theory that will inspire others to do the same. Building on the African notion of Ubuntu (Louw, 1998) (Tutu, 1999), the project seeks to bring humanity closer together and to influence the education of others through the establishment and development of a partnership between a UK and South African school. Putting values at the heart of education, this autobiographical self-study research into professional practice seeks to reflect on and evaluate how the education of the (principal) researcher, colleagues and students have been influenced through working with some students and their families in the township of Kwamashu in Durban, South Africa.

Using Sayers (2002) notion of effective citizenship education as something which touches the hearts of students and encourages them to be good citizens, the researcher seeks to show how through establishing, developing, embedding and sustaining an international educational partnership the participants in this form of i-CPD can become better citizens as they live out their values of social justice and humanity (Ubuntu) more fully.

Citizenship Education
The teaching of values is seen as a component of citizenship education in the UK. Bernard Crick (1999) launched the new subject of Citizenship as part of the national curriculum;

“Citizenship is more than a statutory subject. If taught well and tailored to local needs, its skills and values will enhance democratic life for us all” (Crick, 1999).

The researcher agrees that it ought to be about more than delivering a content curriculum. It should also be about exploring values, developing human relationships and enhancing the democratic process. This research project can be directly related to the programme of study for Citizenship, which says that in order to be informed citizens, pupils should be taught about:

“the opportunities for individuals and voluntary groups to bring about social change locally, nationally, in Europe and internationally”.
And,
“the wider issues and challenges of global interdependence and responsibility” (QCA, 1999).

Although the curriculum for citizenship is clearly prescribed (QCA, 1999 and QCDA, 2007), what the government body fails to do is to provide a pedagogy and i-CPD programme for delivering effective citizenship in schools. It fails to address questions about how to deliver the goal of more informed citizens, or to address the question.
as put by the British Educational Research Association (BERA) in its professional user review of 2003: *How do we learn to become good citizens?*

Recognition of this lack of pedagogy for citizenship is not new, for as Kymlicka and Norman say in their article in 1994, “.. *most citizenship theorists either leave the question of how to promote citizenship unanswered* (Glendon, 1991, p. 138) or focus on ‘modest’ or ‘gentle and relatively unobtrusive ways’ to promote civic virtues (Macedo 1990, pp. 234, 253)” (Kymlicka and Norman, 1994 p. 368).

**Research Methodology**

The research methodology adopted is a self-study participant living theory action research approach. This authentic action research field approach enables methodological inventiveness within practitioner research and validates the importance of allowing practitioners’ the opportunity to account for their own learning and the learning of others through a range of creative means and methods. Such a biographical case study approach towards action research is validated by McNiff (2006) who proffers the living educational theory paradigm of developing case study narrative as authentic research evidence. Engaging in a self-study reflective research paradigm one can see how practice as a professional educator can be improved through such narrative-based inquiry and fed back as improvement to teaching (Doyle & Carter, 2003). Such an applied research process underpins Doyle and Carter’s concept of ‘Learning to Teach’ and espouses the ethical virtues of Schön’s (1995) reflective practitioner as a means of authentic on-the-job CPD. Consequently, the researcher has formulated his own question and has found meaningful ways of solving it. Wright-Mills (1959) maintains that the “methods must not prescribe the problems; rather, problems must prescribe the methods”.

**From Living Theory to Living Citizenship**

“I want to see if I can captivate your imaginations with the idea of your living educational theory. I see your accounts of your learning, to the extent that they are explaining your educational influence in this learning, as constituting your own living educational theory” (Whitehead, 2005)

A living educational theory approach is about explaining educational influence in authentic and meaningful learning environments. This is a particularly valuable notion for practitioners as it provides recognition of their potential as knowledge creators. Teachers can generate their own theories of practice, which they then make available for public testing, meaning that they are accountable. These can be validated as a meaningful professional learning activity if given the additional status of being recognised as a legitimate CPD project (Coombs and Harris, 2006). The individual practitioner who undertakes the research is at the heart of their own educational enquiry. The practitioner researcher is responsible for holding themselves to account for their potential influence on the learning of others. The researcher’s living educational theory comprises of his educational influences on his/her own learning, on the learning of others and in the education of social formations.
The living theory approach to action research is one that best suits the perception of people as human beings who live in relation to each other and who are participants in educating themselves and creating their own lives. This links to a more authentic and humanistic research policy as espoused by Heron (1981), who argues that humans are intelligent creative beings; who are self-determining; and, who take up freely the thinking that determines their actions. It also fits with Rom Harré’s (1998) notion of people as:

“active beings using all sorts of tools, including their own brains, for carrying on their life projects according to local norms and standards”. (Harré, 1998, p.1)

Drawing on this notion of living theory, “Living Citizenship” in relation to an international educational partnership can be understood as explaining the educational influence of the participants’ actions as active citizens on themselves, others in the partnership and on the social formations of the communities in which they live. In this form of i-CPD the living citizen acts publicly and is accountable for his/her own actions. She/He holds themself to account for their actions as a citizen and their potential influence on the lives of others in the partnership.

**Features of Living Citizenship**

As with a living educational theory approach to action research, various components of living citizenship through the partnership can be identified:

1. There is recognition by the person that they are not living out their values fully, or that they are not fully aware of what their values are. This recognition of a living contradiction motivates them to engage in i-CPD as participants in the educational partnership. Thus, one participant in the partnership says that as a result of her visit to South Africa she wants to do something different with her life and she goes on to fully participate in the activities of the partnership.

2. The values that they wish to live out more fully they share with the other participants in the partnership. These are values that have been developed and agreed through dialogue between a wide range of participants in the partnership. This is evident in the shared dialogue around the values of Ubuntu, social justice and equal opportunities. This is a key aspect of the i-CPD project.

3. The individual participant is central to the partnership. Thus, the significance of the “I” is recognised in relation to the other and carries status and validity in reporting such action research in the voice of the first person. The actions of the individual participant can have an influence on the lives of themselves, other participants and the communities in which they live. Evidence of these influences is found in the examples given below where participants’ own motivations for action are explored, as is the influence of their actions on other people and their communities.

4. There is a focus on continuous improvement or “kaizen” (Imai, 1987). The living citizen is not acting to prove anything, but is acting to improve a situation and thus falls within the ‘improve’ paradigm of carrying out authentic social research as argued by Coombs (1995) and Gardner and Coombs (2009). There are social benefits to this approach, which produces social and organizational impact, as well as personal impact in the form of a new
professional identity underpinned by ‘values’. Thus, there is a social manifesto to this form of i-CPD for enabling social change.

5. The notion of living citizenship carries with it a message of hope for humanity. The participants in the partnership are actively and meaningfully engaged in living out their values more fully through the defined activities of the partnership and in so doing real lives are improved.

The notion of “living citizenship” can best be explained through examples of it in action. Thus, the examples presented in the next section illustrate the living out of values through acts to further social justice, equality and Ubuntu (humanity).

Examples of Living Citizenship

Four case study examples serve to illustrate “Living Citizenship” as a means for developing i-CPD through this international education project. They exemplify the influence that the activities of the partnership have had on the education of others and at the same time allow others a voice in the narrative.

1. The publication of a book called Black Dust by fantasy fiction award winning writer, Graham Joyce. A colleague of the researchers at Sarum Academy, was touched by the accounts of the lives of the students in Nqabakazulu School as told in Assemblies and personally to him by students and staff who had visited the School. He made contact with Graham who agreed to write the book and with publishers, artists and printers who gave their services for free. The sales from the book fund the bursaries for Nqabakazulu students to attend University. Graham’s words at the book launch give some insight in to why he did this project,

“When I was eighteen I wanted to change the world and everyone told me that you can’t change this world. Well, maybe they are right, but what is true is that you can change the world for one person and you can change the world for ten people and projects like this are here to remind us about what you can do.”
(Dvd – Black Dust, Roberts, 2005)

2. The actions of Aurore in raising over £2000 to send Lunga, a talented art student at Nqabakazulu School to University. Aurore recounts her meeting with Lunga and the impact it had on her,

“We talked about his life and family. He lives in complete poverty with his mother and numerous siblings as his father died when he was younger and his mother’s unemployed. He has only one dream, which is to go and study architecture at University. But when he talked about it he knew it was only a dream and that it would never happen. And when I thought of it, I realised how easy it would be for me to send him to University. I would need to raise £2000 in ten months. I started the charity events after Easter.”

3. During the UK Schools’ visit to South Africa in 2007 the researcher was approached by one of the teachers at Nqabakazulu School and asked whether Zulu crafts made by the students at the School could be taken to the UK and sold with profits being shared between the two communities. The Head of Business Studies at Sarum Academy took this on as a viable business proposition and an agreement was drawn up for a joint business
venture. The Sarum Academy business studies students have been marketing and selling the jewellery. Over £1500 worth has been sold and the project has provided an income for residents of Kwamashu township and a real business experience for the students. Furthermore, it has been built into a project on fair trade in the Humanities curriculum and the Academy is now seeking a fair trade award with the involvement of the local community for its’ work in this area.

4. During the 2007 Salisbury High School visit to Kwamashu township a visit to a Children’s Home and AIDS Hospice was organised. Many of the children from the Hospice attend Nqabakazulu School. Whilst there, participants were told about their efforts to raise funds to buy a minibus to take patients to hospital and the orphans to School. There is a danger of girls being raped on the way to and from School. This appeal touched the hearts of the participants and discussions took place as to how help might be provided. A Salisbury High School Governor who was on the trip agreed that she would seek to get her church community involved. Individual donations were forthcoming and the church decided to make it one of their chosen charities to support in the coming years. At Salisbury High School some additional funds were raised through sponsored events. The local Rotary Club agreed to support the fundraising efforts. The appeal was publicised on the local radio and in the local press. Within a few months sufficient funds had been raised to pay for a minibus. Further partnership activity between the two communities of Bemerton, Salisbury and Kwamashu township was initiated when members of Nqabakazulu school visited Salisbury accompanied by the matron of the Children’s Home/Hospice. She was introduced to the local community and friendships were forged. She visited the hospice in Salisbury and a link between the two hospices has now been created.

The evidence suggests that values are at the heart of this form of i-CPD and that those values are shared and developed by the participants. They have emerged through constant dialogue and a shared language to express these values and the partnership’s vision has consequently been developed.

**Living Citizenship as a Means of Embedding Citizenship Education**

The notion of living citizenship as presented here through an international educational partnership can help to address the question put by the British Educational Research Association (BERA) in its professional user review of 2003: *How do we learn to become good citizens?* The examples narrated above clearly show participants playing an active role as global citizens (QCDA, 2007). The examples also illustrate all three of the conceptions of the “good” citizen as outlined by Westheimer and Kahne (2004) *“personally responsible, participatory and justice orientated”*. The participants have taken personal responsibility in engaging in activities to further social justice.

They also provide an illustration of the way that the State can support groups in rewarding civic virtue (Cooter, 2000). The Teachers International Professional Development (TIPD) programme (British Council Learning, 2007) provided the impetus for the development of the partnership. The British Council provided some
financial support for the activities of this partnership. It was then up to the participants to devise the activities to engage people in acts of civic virtue. According to Cooter, civic acts by citizens help the State to overcome agency problems:

“Officials have remote relationships with citizens in modern States, the State lacks the information needed to reward virtuous citizens. Instead of promoting civic virtue directly, the state must rely on families, friends and colleagues to reward civic virtue” (Cooter, 2000, P28)

Thus, the UK Government has promoted the notion of community cohesion in schools recognising that schools can play a central role in rewarding civic virtue. In their 2007 document, Guidance on the duty to promote community cohesion to support schools, the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) defined community cohesion as:

“Working towards a society in which there is a common vision and sense of belonging by all communities; a society in which the diversity of people’s backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued; a society in which similar life opportunities are available to all. (DCSF, 2007)

The examples of how participants have responded provide evidence of a commitment to valuing diversity and providing more equal opportunities for all, thus promoting greater community cohesion.

Nor has the response of the participants been an uncritical one resulting in the reinforcement of stereotypes and negative prejudice as feared by Martin (2007) and Disney (2004). Rather, the evidence suggests that the participants have adopted a critical approach and have made a considered response to circumstances and one that promotes the fulfilment of potential within both communities. The participants have shown a willingness to engage with and question their own assumptions and values about global development issues and as Martin (2005) says, this is fundamental to good practice in school linking. This process has taken time. The partnership has been sustained over a period of ten years and continues. There is evidence to suggest that learning has been particularly strong for the participants referred to in the examples above. The activities have been designed to encourage the examination of pre-conceptions, thus the use of video to record thoughts and to promote critical reflection on practice prior to visits and after visits, and to challenge existing values. They have had the opportunity to reassess their view of the world and to act accordingly, embedding new values and emerging with a new professional identity. As Scott (2005) suggested, such learning from school linking needs managing, it does not automatically occur.

The Citizenship Education Longitudinal Study conducted by NFER (2010) showed that schools still require help to embed citizenship education, not just in the curriculum, but also in the school culture and wider community. International educational partnerships offer an opportunity to embed citizenship education as an authentic and meaningful form of “living citizenship” into schools’ curricula, culture and community.

The case study evidence presented in this narrative demonstrates that international partnerships have the potential to embed citizenship education in schools by raising awareness of international issues, challenging existing cultural perspectives, promoting discussion about values and encouraging more active citizens who live out their values with a view to making a difference to their own lives and the lives of others. Thus, such participants can become ‘Living Citizens’ and in so doing they promote greater community cohesion. Therefore, traditional locally delivered and passive citizenship education in the UK, the US and in other countries can be reconceptualised using an international educational partnership as a vehicle for the development of activities that touch the hearts of participants and mobilise them to act to live out and identify their values more fully. These ‘citizenship’ values should be negotiated and agreed by the participants in the partnership so that they become shared and underpin the activities that are carried out. This process gives rise to the notion of ‘Living Citizenship’ and helps develop a new professional identity for participants through such active fieldwork CPD.

**Recommendations for Design of International CPD.**

In order to support the development of ‘Living Citizenship’, the following recommendations for the design of international CPD are made:

1. Government should be encouraging the establishment of international educational partnerships as a vehicle for social and educational change to support the work of DFID and other organisations.

2. Government should provide guidelines which emphasise the importance of values in establishing an international educational partnership.

3. Participants in international partnerships should develop channels of communication to encourage discussion of values so that they can reach agreement on the underpinning values.

4. Guidelines should emphasise the importance of the adoption of a democratic approach to decision making. This is on two levels, between schools and in each of the communities, recognising the existence of hierarchies in some communities making the democratisation process difficult.

5. The Partnership Agreement between the partners should emphasise the values that underpin the partnership and provide a shared vision. Recognition that this document will take time to develop and will need to be reviewed and updated regularly.

6. Guidance can be given on the sorts of activities that can encourage wider participation and that promote learning and active citizenship. This to be linked to the DfE/QCA guidance on citizenship education and linked to raising standards through the development of socio-educational values.

7. Emphasis to be given to those activities that challenge values, change dispositions and lead to actions and the embedding of the partnership as a form of ‘Living Citizenship’.

8. Consideration of the second order impact tools, those tools that have most impact for those who cannot afford, or do not have the opportunity to have, direct experience of the other culture through the partnership.

9. Implications for the design of international CPD with a focus on an action research approach with attendant accredited postgraduate qualification.

10. Encouragement of participants (teachers and others involved in international development work) to put the findings from research projects in to the public domain and to have them validated through accreditation by universities.

11. Possible transferability to other cultural contexts, eg disability.

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