

**MY LIVING THEORY OF
LEARNING TO TEACH
FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE:**

**How do I enable primary school children with
specific learning disability (dyslexia)
and myself as their teacher
to realise our learning potentials**

CAITRÍONA MCDONAGH

For the award of PhD from the University of Limerick

Thesis Supervisor Professor Jean McNiff

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Abstract

My living theory of learning to teach for social justice: How do I enable primary school children with specific learning disability (dyslexia) and myself as their teacher to realise our learning potentials

Caitríona McDonagh

This thesis is a narrative account of how I have improved my teaching of pupils with specific learning disability (dyslexia), as a resource teacher in a primary school, thereby generating my living theory of learning to teach for social justice, within a context of normative theories and practices, which prevent the realisation of my pupils' and my own learning potential.

I link my research commitment to my Christian values of justice, freedom, equality, an ethic of change for a better social order, and the recognition of the uniqueness of the individual. These embodied values inform my life and work, and have become the living standards by which I judge the quality of my research.

I explain my self-study action research methodology as a living transformational process. My findings about my pupils' and my own learning offer new conceptualisations about the capacity of pupils to learn in their own ways, and about reconceptualising metacognition against normative theories in contemporary literatures. I have deepened my understanding of learning and knowledge creation processes through dialogical interactions, and developed new understandings about forms of theory and logic, and the relevance of living theory to changing practice.

I am claiming that the significance of my research is grounded in my capacity to show how I can enable children with specific learning disability (dyslexia) to learn through person-centred pedagogies. This has potential implications for new forms of practice and theory in teaching children with special educational needs. A distinctive feature of my account is my explanation for how my Christian values have transformed into my critical epistemological standards of judgement, and the development of a living theory of practice that enables me to account for my educational influence in my pupils' and my own learning.

