

Respecting and Legitimizing the Embodied Knowledge of Practitioners in Contexts of Power Struggles

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Abstract

In this article, I present some arguments to show what is needed for school and medical systems and educational research journals to respect and legitimate the embodied knowledge of practitioners through their own living-theories in terms of making original contributions to academic and professional educational knowledge. The students' stories that address obstacles, constraints and, thankfully, transcendence reveal the significance of leadership, sustainability, and accreditation in respecting their embodied knowledge and for improving the social order and the flourishing of humanity. To support my arguments, I show how a living-culture-of-inquiry and multi-media possibilities focus on clarifying and communicating values-based expressions of meaning. I draw insights from the work of De Sousa Santos (2014), including the idea of 'epistemicide'. Epistemicide draws attention to the ways in which the validity of indigenous and practitioner-knowledge is not recognised or is killed off in the dominant epistemology of western universities.

This article shows how the embodied knowledges of practitioners are being made public in the context of the power struggles in which I am making this contribution as part of my living legacy (Forester, 2015).

Keywords: Living-theory; Living-culture-of-inquiry; Practitioner-Research; Action Research; Self Study.

Framing the paper

To talk about Living Theory Research and its constraints, it seems important to address issues concerned with the meanings and representations of the embodiment of knowledge. I found the following helpful:

Embodiment means the integration of the physical or biological body and the phenomenal or experiential body... instead of representing knowledge as a commodity or toolbox it is crucial for educators to expose students to authentic forms of learning that reflect the embodied, dynamic, collective and ecological webs of knowing. (Hocking, Haskell, & Linds, 2001, p. xviii, xxiv)

In justifying below my claims to educational knowledge I shall locate them in 'embodied, dynamic, collective and ecological webs of knowing'. I shall also take care to include 'my whole living and vibrating being' in my claims.

When you read this, ... You will no longer have my voice; you will no longer have my whole living and vibrating being, for man [*sic*] thinks and expresses himself orally with his whole body (Sorbonne 22-2-34) (Jousse, 2000, p. 13).

I understand the dangers of distorting embodied expressions of meaning though representing these in words alone in pages of printed text. I am not, however, a word-sceptic in the sense described by Hamburger (1972):

Like Hofmannsthal and other post-Symbolists, Valery turned to mixed media – the fusion of words with music, décor, gesture and dance in *Amphion and Semiramis*, of words with music only in the *Narcissus Cantata* – out of an aversion to the 'base currency' of words. These media did not describe or relate; they enacted: and Valery's aversion expended to the epic and descriptive modes: 'What can be recounted cannot count for much!' (6) (p. 69)

I explain below how I draw on digital visual data from educational practices, together with my linguistic expressions of meaning, to include both of these as evidence in claims to educational knowledge.

I shall cover the following topics with these headings:

1. Issues of power and knowledge
 - a. the historical paradigm struggle of qualitative research;
 - b. the creation and emerging influence of Living Theory Research;
 - c. a living-culture-of-inquiry where democracy and mutual respect live;
 - d. students' stories of oppression, constraints and transcendence.
2. How influential teachers and other leaders effect change in power and knowledge structures.
3. Influencing individuals, others, systems and organizations for an improved social order and the flourishing of humanity.
4. Findings:
 - a. About constraints, obstacles and transcendence;
 - b. About leadership;

- c. About sustainability;
 - d. About accreditation.
5. Conclusions.
 6. Next Steps.

I begin with issues of power and knowledge.

Issues of Power and Knowledge

a) The historical paradigm struggle of qualitative research

I start in this section with the helpful critique of my colleague, Marie Huxtable, who assisted me in thinking about the challenges inherent in bringing any new idea into acceptance:

I know little of the history of ideas but a familiar theme, irrespective of the field, seems to be the struggle of people have to get new ideas recognised, valued and worked with. In our culture to say you have changed or revised or transformed your thinking is taken as an admission that you weren't good enough in the first place. I understand that scientific theory is the best explanation scientists can come up with at the time and tomorrow, with new data and thinking, they may be able to come up with a leap in imagination that transcends where they have been. However, scientists don't necessarily seem to keep that in mind when faced with 'challenge'. Knowledge is created by people and those persons have all sorts of motives and fears which influence their ability to let go of what they have spent years polishing and which has established their name and reputation. (Huxtable, 2016)

While I do not want to expend much energy on the qualitative-quantitative debate, I did recognize the paradigm wars in my doctoral thesis (Delong, 2002) and there continue to be many warriors in the battles. In 1996 when Bob Donmoyer (1996) was editor of *Educational Researcher*, and wondering how he was to operate in the midst of the paradigm-wars, there was a series of papers arguing one side or another. In the midst of this were people like Eisner (1997) who encouraged alternative ways of representing data and research using the arts to more fully explain than the print could do.

Bob Donmoyer, Handel Wright, Patti Lather, and Cynthia Dillard revisited the paradigm wars in New Orleans AERA (Donmoyer, Dillard, Lather, 2000) in a session called "Paradigm Talk Revisited: How Else Might We Characterize The Proliferation of Research Perspect Within Our Field?" Amongst the four there was consensus that the prescription of the positivist approach and the quantitative paradigm no longer was the only means to acceptance but still questioned the nature of 'other' that is not of the dominant paradigm. Patti was proposing 'a thousand tiny paradigms and a decolonizing methodology', and Cynthia wondered 'how we evaluate multiple truths'. Cynthia was 'interested in thinking against yourself, in the shoe that does not quite fit and in research that is spiritually and intellectually moving'. Donmoyer felt that, 'knowledge is contaminated and inevitably political' (Donmoyer *et al.*, 2000). I found the session very helpful, not only because of the thoughtfulness of the panel members but also because of being present and in the presence of people whose work I had read. Seeing them mattered to my understanding of my embodied knowledge. We need multiple ways of teaching, learning, assessing and researching so that we have 'grounded criteria for determining validity from inside of them. (Lather in Donmoyer *et al.*, 2000; Delong, 2002, pp. 312–313)

In her review of this paper, Sonia Hutchison shared how she was influenced by meeting some of the great thinkers 'in the flesh':

I have experienced this when I have gone to conferences or events where I have met the people I have read. I find it very exciting and often transformatory to my thinking to meet people in the flesh. I think this is a really interesting if not obvious point when we think about the importance of embodied knowledge (Hutchison, 2017).

Part of this historical perspective is the work of Jack Whitehead and his creation of the Living Theory methodology (1989) that 'crosses the Abyssal Line' and is 'capable of grounding a new, nonconformist, destabilizing and indeed rebellious theory and practice' (Santos, 2014, p. 88).

b) The creation and emerging influence of Living Theory Research

Jack Whitehead created and developed living-educational-theory while teaching and researching at the University of Bath from 1973 to 2012. The opposition he faced between 1973–1993 is the subject of his book (Whitehead, 1993). This included opposition from his superiors and colleagues, which I experienced myself as a doctoral researcher at the University, to threats to his employment there and to the initial rejection of two of his doctoral submissions. In addition, he works, and has worked for 30 years, to help his students and colleagues around the world to overcome challenges when creating their own living-educational-theories and generating their living-theory methodology.

I have seen first-hand the negative responses of quantitative and qualitative researchers at the American Educational Research Association (AERA) conference from 1996 to 2013, especially when Jack said, 'I'm just wondering if you have researched your own practice'. Santos describes the abyssal line that defines those inside the line as having the power and those on the other side as having none. Santos (2014) says that what we need most urgently is a new capacity for wonder and indignation that is, 'capable of grounding a new, nonconformist, destabilizing, and indeed rebellious theory and practice' (Whitehead, 2016, p. 88). Over the years, this 'rebellious theory and practice' has grown in acceptance, both at AERA and internationally. In 1993, Jack and other members of AERA, created the Special Interest Group 'Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices' (S-STEP) at AERA which Zeichner (1998) described as the single-most important event at AERA. Thankfully, this negative response has gradually dissipated over the years of AERA to the point now that his Living Theory methodology is more accepted and respected and he is a sought-out speaker/presenter at conferences and workshops both locally and globally.

While the genesis of the idea of a living-educational-theory and living-theory-methodology is his, each living-theory doctorate, as an original contribution to knowledge, with their own living-theory methodologies, extends Jack's work. His Ph.D. student and early supporter, Jean McNiff (1988; 1992), influenced many people with prolific publications and her teaching and supervising of many students who produced their own living-theories. Many of Jack's other former students have exerted influence in their realms of teaching: Moira Laidlaw (1996), writing and teaching to improve the lives of students at The Open University, developed the 'living' in 'living standards of judgement'; Marie Huxtable's (2012) influence with young students, Master's students, developed 'living-boundaries'; Peter

Mellett's (2016) creation of a Master's-level management-course module uses Living Theory principles. Colleagues like Pip Bruce Ferguson (1999), learning with and from the Māori in New Zealand, finds alternative ways of representing knowledge, and has co-created the Network of Educational Action Research in Ireland (NEARI). (See <http://www.eari.ie/>) and <http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/aran/aranposters/1Irish2704.pdf> for details). In addition, Swaroop Rawal (2006) is transforming the lives of girls and women in Gujarat, India through workshops on her life-skills program, which can be seen at <http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/aran/aranposters/SwaroopRawal2704.pdf> All these people have supported and extended the Living Theory movement.

I move now to describing and explaining how the negative effects of power are escaped in living cultures of inquiry, democracy and mutual respect.

c) A living-culture-of-inquiry where democracy and mutual respect live

In this paper, I hope to present the stories, narratives and visual data of students and colleagues (myself included) who have struggled and persisted despite the powerful forces in universities and institutions working against them and me. I will also share some of the ways around, under and over the walls that protect the power in the status quo that have worked for me, students and colleagues, albeit somewhat inconsistently. I believe that the power of what is knowledge and who owns it must be shared, and that sharing it does not reduce one's power as seems to be the position of many in the academic community. Practitioner-researchers create new knowledge; they do not take away knowledge from academics in control of who has the knowledge; I believe that knowledge is not finite.

I think that in the general, commonly-held sense, 'the knowledge' is seen to reside in the universities and not in the schools and classrooms. Practitioners, as we know, create knowledge but it is not well-respected. Hargreaves (1996) in his address to the Teacher Training Agency, called for an end to the:

... frankly second-rate educational research which does not make a serious contribution to fundamental theory or knowledge; which is irrelevant to practice; which is uncoordinated with any preceding or follow-up research; and clutters up academic journals that virtually nobody reads. (p. 7)

The topic of power is mammoth and I wish only to deal with it in the sense of how it has worked in my life and the lives of students and teachers with whom I have worked. It is a subject that has arisen in my writing over the years.

Power is a significant theme in understanding the modus operandi of schooling. The processes of professional development and teacher training, and indeed teaching, still cling to the mental model (Senge, 1995) of a hierarchy of educators as the gatekeepers of the temple of knowledge to which students can be admitted. In my research and in that of my students, the embodied knowledge of each of us is valued and unique. Once that value is held, teachers and students can be co-learners and knowledge creators in a living curriculum and a culture rich with creativity and exploration (Delong et al., 2013, p. 38).

The concept of power, how it 'circulates' (Foucault, 1980) and intersects with knowledge – as opposed to being owned – is seminal to understanding Santos' (2014)

‘ecology of knowledges’, that confronts the logic of the monoculture of scientific knowledge and rigor by identifying other knowledges and criteria of rigor and validity (p. 188).

One of my values as a standard of judgement is building a living-culture-of-inquiry as articulated in my thesis (DeLong, 2002) and in other publications (DeLong, 2010a, 2010b, 2013; Campbell, Griffin, Delong and Whitehead, 2013; Delong & Whitehead, 2011, 2012). The word ‘culture’ implies that we share meaning, i.e., significance, purpose, and value. In this living-culture-of-inquiry there is no intended hierarchy, and mutual respect lives. The following is a description:

When I use the language of Culture of Inquiry, I am meaning the creation of a safe, supportive space where students and teachers are enabled to make explicit their values and make themselves accountable for living according to those values. They learn to recognize when they are not living according to their espoused values and are what Jack Whitehead calls living contradictions. Action-reflection cycles based on asking questions like “How can I improve my teaching of these children?” become as natural as breathing. Experiencing values such as loving kindness and being loved into learning in this democratic, non-hierarchical environment and recognition of their embodied knowledge, encourages students and teachers to take responsibility for their own learning. When I use the language of culture-of-inquiry I am meaning the unique living and embodied expressions of this culture in the individual’s practice. (DeLong, 2013, p. 26)

To further clarify my values of building a living-culture-of-inquiry and respect and love for others, I include multimedia in the form of video as a means more clearly to express my often difficult-to-measure, energy-flowing values which constitute the explanatory principles (Whitehead, 1989) that inform my practice and my living standards of judgement (Laidlaw, 1996). Through the visual data, I show the nature of my practitioner-knowledge in two examples that show my meanings of life-affirming energy and democratic evaluation. The first is on the occasion of a panel of self-study-researchers at the International Conference on Teacher Research (2001):



Video 1: Meanings of life-affirming energy. (DeLong, 2007)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qsECy86hxA&list=PLj7Kbzs74R-tZ33CAeAFOIWJIZlwDbRMn>

In the panel, I shared the story that one of the teachers, Carolijn, who talked about the SWAT action research team calling her to join. Lynn Abbey and James Ellsworth carry the spirit, the aesthetic value of a caring, supportive organization but the SWAT team lives in Grand Erie!:

I talked to John Verbakel and I emailed Dave Abbey. Nowit was like magic!! All of a sudden I was swept up by the action research SWAT team. James Ellsworth called me and asked me to be part of a portfolio team receiving funding for action research. Several special dates were discussed where training would be given and opportunities to share with other practitioners given. Dave Abbey emailed me back with all sorts of suggestions. Lynn Abbey phoned and agreed to be my 'Critical friend' or 'Mentor' as we like to call it. John agreed to let me go on several P.D. days for my project. I knew that I was in a learning curve here and it is really exciting. I am going to really think things through before I meet with Lynn on Monday. (MacNeil, C. e-mail, March, 2001, journal entry of October, 2000) (Delong, 2002, pp. 221–222).

The second example is from my 2011 AERA paper with Jack Whitehead, 'Transforming educational knowledge through making explicit the embodied knowledge of educators for the public good'. Here, in the 'Democratic Evaluation Bluewater' of March 5, 2010, I describe and explain the process I created, whereby the students in my master's classroom give me critical feedback on my teaching of them and how I might improve. The first video (video 2) is the full event and the second (video 3) is a short clip showing a student providing critique of my use of grades.



Video 2: Democratic Evaluation Bluewater' (Delong, 2010c)

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



Video 3: A student providing critique of my use of grades (Delong, 2010d)

<https://youtu.be/Zbll9cqlNd8>

My living-culture-of-inquiry shares commonalities with Huxtable's (2012) 'living-boundaries'. She describes a living-boundary as a trustworthy, co-creative, multidimensional, relationally dynamic space (Huxtable, 2016). I also feel a connection to Robyn Pound's concept of 'alongsideness' (Pound, 2003). Robyn sees that:

Values of alongsideness act as explanatory principles and standards for practice evaluation. As an epistemology, alongsideness employs Living Theory (Whitehead 1989). Accessibility for participants unfamiliar with this research is increased by calling the developmental process 'enquiring collaboratively'. (Pound, 2014, Abstract)

Issues of power and knowledge continue to concern scholars around the world. One of those is de Sousa Santos (2014) who was the keynote speaker at the 1st Global Assembly for Knowledge Democracy (16 June 2017), at the Action Research Network of the Americas' 2017 Conference (12-16 June 2017) in Cartagena, Columbia.

I now move to the actual stories of oppression, of constraints and, yes, of transcendence.

d) Students' stories of oppression, constraints and transcendence

It seems that the struggles that students address and overcome should take priority in a paper about power struggles within institutions. I wrote in my Ph.D. thesis (DeLong, 2002) about the challenges of helping my students through the research-ethics process:

The evidence for my concerns/claims lies in the stories of my students. Sometimes, they seem too bizarre to be believed. When I was supporting master's students to fulfil the requirements of the ethics review board (ERB), they confronted various obstacles. First the requirements did not meet the needs of a self-study action research methodology but were designed for social science research. One example was master's student, Marilyn, who received a response to her ERB submission that asked her if she could guarantee that the students in her grade 12 English class would be returned to the state in which she found them. That would be a difficult accomplishment in that it would assume that the students had learned nothing that year in her classroom! (p. 210)

A student in our first Grand Erie District School Board (GEDSB)/Brock University Master's cohort, Geoff, took a strong values-based stand and wrote his entire research on the topic, 'The Ethics of Personal Subjective Narrative Research', in response to the rejection of his proposed project to the Senate Research Ethics Board of Brock University (SREB). Geoff graduated from Brock University, Ontario, on 20th October 2001 along with 14 colleagues in the University Master's programme partnership, available at <http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/values/gsgma.PDF>

I do recognize that some challenging issues exist around the ethics of self-study-research and agree with Smythe & Murray (2000), that 'traditional, ethical principles in research offer insufficient guidance to maintain balanced ethical standards' (p. 318). Bond and Misfud (2006) acknowledge this conundrum, stating that, '[i]nvariably, the complex issues that are a consequence of this messy research can rarely be resolved at the outset and can be difficult to anticipate' (p. 241).

As I reflect on these days, it seems that the universities were (and mostly still are) intent on 'epistemicide' (Santos, 2014): the murder of the knowledge of the practitioner-researchers as they create their own living-theories. Confronting the rejection of their voices and the constraints that I strained against for the sake of my students, I was attempting, 'to remain the writer of [my] own story' (Gawande, 2014, p. 141) so that they could remain the writers of their own stories. I do, however, want to recognize that a small number of professionals and institutions are expanding practitioner-researchers' choices in the name of living a worthwhile life. I move now to those who have done just that.

How influential teachers and other leaders effect change in power and knowledge structures.

For the most part, the leaders who have brought about improvement and positive change for those writing their own living-theories have created their own living-theories and fully understand the process and experience, having lived it with all of its challenges. From many examples of forward-thinking leadership in promoting Living Theory Research, I will share a few: Michael Manley-Casimir and Susan Drake, Cathy Griffin and Liz Campbell, Jan Johnston and Jen Vickers-Manzin, and my own.

In addition to my own systems' influence, I will describe and explain in some depth the influence of the following six leaders with whom I have worked. They provided the leadership in their systems in the face of constraints that they encountered with the power relations because they understood the importance of generating and legitimating living-educational-theories.

First, I share the incentive and how I addressed the initiative to create an on-site Master's cohort program:

Seeing Cheryl Black develop in her understanding of action research and her emerging interest in school administration added to the pressure to bring a master's course to Brantford. She was ready for the accreditation of her knowledge and, to my mind, she clearly had the capacity. At the same time, I felt that the documentation of the impact she was having on student learning was essential to get accredited by the academy, published and shared with the educational community to broaden her influence. And I felt that there were others like her wanting the accreditation. Over the period of the four years of a growing critical mass of action research in the district and with Cheryl in mind, I saw indicators that there might be a growing clientele for a master's program, another means to building a culture of inquiry, reflection and scholarship in the school system (Delong, 2002, p. 205).

a) Michael Manley Casimir and Susan Drake

In my thesis, I share the story of the creation and development of the Master of Education cohort program at Brock University to be provided in the school district by Mike, Susan and myself. It is both a victory narrative and story of ruin (MacLure, 1996).



Michael Manley-Casimir, Dean of Education, Brock University, designer of new student-focused programs.

Image 1: Michael Manley Cashmir

The three of us, Susan Drake, Mike and I met in Michael's office. I described a master of education program restricted to a cohort group of Grand Erie staff to be held on-site using the action research process. Michael not only listened intently to my proposal but also suggested that we move immediately to a seminar room so that we could design a program on the display board. We mapped out a list and sequence of courses over two years using the courses in the university calendar. Michael would teach the first course and Susan would teach the second. We would need more help as time went on. We discussed asking Jack Whitehead to teach the Action Research course in the spring. It was only the beginning of a political process to get the program offered that I was unfamiliar with. The next major hurdle was presenting the proposed program to the Graduate Studies Department. Both Michael and Susan were concerned about the resistance that could be expected from the group. I was totally unprepared for the resistance and obstacles presented. They included the fact that the staff was already stretched too thin, students would be drawn away from another program, cohort groups are too insular, it was contrary to policy to partner with one school board and concerns were expressed about the rigour of qualitative/practitioner research.

I naively thought that university personnel held loftier values and set students and program needs above territoriality, loss of power and fear of change. These very human responses to change reverberate across groups and organizations. A change is a crisis. It is an important learning for me that I need to recognize that and deliberately remind myself each time I am attempting to change something, no matter how apparently small it seems to me. This has become more apparent to me as I have come to realize that I need and enjoy change, particularly change of my own making. Even when the change is forced on me and appears to be negative, the outcome is that it is an opportunity for me to learn and grow. Amalgamation [of school districts] was a case in point.

I felt that there was a meanness about the dialogue which I found disappointing. I guess I expect more altruism among academics: just my usual naïveté. Gradually a compromise appeared to form: the program could run if it was not restricted to the Grand Erie Board staff and it would be a pilot requiring a report at the end of the first year. We could live with this, especially when we could control the advertising and admit the first fifteen who were qualified and who applied. At a celebratory dinner that night, we planned our next steps and another meeting (DeLong, 2002, pp. 206-208).

After this first cohort, there were two more with the Grand Erie District School Board and several others in boards such as the Bluewater District School Board (BWDSB).

Despite struggles with the university it was through the influence of Michael Manley-Casimir and Susan Drake that the cohort programme passed through the walls of the Graduate Studies committee, that all 15 of the students in that cohort survived the Research Ethics Board's (REB) process and with their supervision, graduated with their Master's degrees. I am of the opinion that this kind of quantum-change in systems – as complex as the ethical review process and what is accepted as knowledge – cannot happen without a senior leader (Dean) like Michael at the university, and like Jack Whitehead with his critical mass of Master's and Doctoral degrees at various universities in the UK and around the world to create a path and provide the resources. Pip Bruce Ferguson in her thesis on the development of a research culture, found that support from senior management was one of the critical factors for success (Bruce Ferguson, 1999, pp. 155-156). Pip also shared some of the constraints experienced in polytechnic environments:

Bernstein suggested that challengers of strong boundaries between departmental curricula and identities, (such as people trying to re-present themselves as researchers in departments where this has not been part of the identity of that department), are perceived as polluters of the sacred. (p. 271)

b) Cathy Griffin and Liz Campbell

Liz and Cathy are both teachers in the Bluewater District School Board in central Ontario. During their Master's program, I coordinated and taught several of the courses and then supervised Cathy and Liz's major research-projects. During that two-year period, 2009–11, they became leaders in the group of 19. Our friendship grew stronger afterward as I worked as a consultant in their school district and we researched and wrote papers together with Jack Whitehead (Campbell, Delong, Griffin, & Whitehead, 2013; Delong, Campbell, Whitehead & Griffin (2013).

After graduation, they then created and led the Bluewater Action Research Network (BARN) over three years with money from the Government of Ontario for which they had applied. (See <https://www.teachontario.ca/projects/bluewater-action-research-network-barn/pages/main> for details.) The second year spanned two years because of a conflict between the teachers and the government when no professional development activities were allowed. At first, I was active in providing consultative support but quickly they became independent of that support – I was a most fortunate consultant in that I saw my work grow and blossom through Cathy's and Liz's initiative and influence. Sustainability is alive and well because another year's funding for BARN from the Ministry of Education for 2016–17, a fourth year, under the leadership of Krystal Damm, is underway.

The nature of our influence on ourselves and on each other is explicit in our individual and collaborative writing published in the 2013 December issue of the Educational Journal of Living Theories EJOLTS. In her research, Liz described my way of being with her and the other students as being 'loved into learning' (Campbell, 2011). This was new language to me for my way of being.



Video 4: Loved into Learning (Campbell, 2013)<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zmBcrUsDG8s>

When Liz asked me in an email 12/29/16 for “something you wrote and referenced me for the concept of loved into learning”, I responded by sending her my paper: A pedagogy of loving into learning in living-cultures-of-inquiry, presented at the 2015 Action Research Network of the Americas Conference, Ontario Institute For Studies in Education, Toronto, Ontario, Canada May 9, 2015. (See <http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/arna/ARNAjdd260415.pdf> for details.) The next leaders are located in Health Sciences.

c) Jen Vickers-Manzin and Jan Johnson

Jen Vickers-Manzin and Jan Johnson were students in the 2009–11 Brantford Master’s cohort where I taught the Data-Based Decision-Making course which was, of course, Living Theory Research. As Michael Manley-Casimir said, ‘Jackie, every course you teach is about action research.’ Nurses and nurse-educators in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, they live and research in an environment that is not supportive of this kind of research:

Despite the acknowledgement of the importance of multiple ways of knowing to inform practice in the nursing literature and our (nursing) governing bodies, empirical knowing has ‘epistemological priority over other forms of nursing knowledge’. (Paley et al., 2007, p. 692; Johnson & Vickers-Manzin, 2014, p. 3)

As a result of the course, they decided to use Living Theory in their dissertation: A Living Educational Theory of Knowledge Translation: Improving Practice, Influencing Learners, and Contributing to the Professional Knowledge Base (Johnson & Vickers-Manzin, 2014) (See <http://www.spanglefish.com/ActionResearchCanada/index.asp?pageid=227469> for details.)

In their December 2014, *Educational Journal Of Living Theories*’ (EJOLTS) article, ‘Our Living-Educational-Theory of Knowledge-Translation: Improving Practice, Influencing Learners, and Contributing to the Professional Knowledge Base of Nursing,’ they share their learning in their Master’s writing process. To get the right to use Living Theory Research and write their dissertation collaboratively, they had to fight the university but, given their tenacity, they succeeded.

Jen and Jan are indeed ‘critical friends’ (MacBeath, cited in, Katz, Earl & Jaafar, 2009; Delong, Black & Wideman, 2005, p. 16) and co-creators of their own living-theories.

These days, in 2017, they influence their nursing students in the classes they teach at McMaster University and they influence their colleagues through modelling their values and the professional development programs that they run. As Scott-Findlay and Golden-Biddle (2005) put it in their Abstract:

Through understanding how organizational culture can both hinder and facilitate practitioners' research use behaviors, managers are well positioned to leverage culture to improve evidence-based practice sustainability in their organizations.

They are pioneers in their milieu without senior support but they are unflagging in living their values as standards of practice and in encouraging their colleagues and students to live and lead according to their values and to recognize when they are living contradictions (Whitehead, 1989). One must be able to:

... see oneself as a living contradiction, holding educational values whilst at the same time negating them...by identifying the discrepancies between our espoused values and our enacted values we create tension which moves us to imagine alternative ways of improving our situation. (p. 4)

Jan and I chatted on Skype on Nov 6, 2016 and she verified the conversation below on Nov 14th in an email:

Jackie: What are the obstacles or challenges to doing Living Theory Research?

Jan: In institutions there is no climate for or valuing of Living Theory. Quantitative research, 'hard' research is valued. In the medical community, the 'how' and beauty of living is lost. Jen and I try to live our values every day and to bring that into the McMaster nursing courses we teach.

This values-based research has transformed our lives. Jen saw some of her influence the other day when the MOH (Medical Officer of Health), our boss, talked about the importance of vulnerability.

I continue this thinking on how influential leaders effect change in power and knowledge structures with my own knowledge and experience. This includes issues of external and internal validations and overcoming constraints and obstacles.

d) Jackie Delong

In order to present this study of my systems' influence in overcoming constraints, I feel the need to establish my credibility as an effective systems' leader in supporting classroom research. Thus, I review evidence of the nature of my influence in my school district and then go on to the obstacles there and in the university to Living Theory Research. I also think that it is important to share the 'bumps'. Pip Bruce Ferguson reminded me of Portia Nelson's story, 'Autobiography in Five Short Chapters' at <http://www.doorway-to-self-esteem.com/autobiography-in-five-short-chapters.html> as a rationale for describing the bumps and indicating the hole in the sidewalk, lest others fall down it (Bruce Ferguson, P. email December 14, 2016).

I now conclude with some examples of transcendence. At the time that I was superintendent of the school system (1997–2007), there was an amalgamation with two other districts and thus you will see the Brant County School Board and then the Grand Erie District School Board which was the enlarged board. In addition, in the early years of supporting teacher researchers, Jack Whitehead, Jean McNiff, and others, myself included, used the general language of ‘action research’ but it was clearly defined as values-based research on your practice with ‘I’ at the centre. The defining and consistently-posed and answered question was, ‘How can I improve my practice?’

For the full description of the beginning and development of living theory action research in my school district, as well as the creation in 1988 of *The Ontario Action Researcher* which is now *The Canadian Journal of Action Research*, see Sustained Support for Action Research in Grand Erie in Passion in Professional Practice http://schools.granderie.ca/ar/passion/pppi/1_Into_TOC.pdf (DeLong, 2001, p. 11–22) and in Chapter 3B, Sustaining Support for Inquiry, at <http://actionresearch.net/living/delong.shtml> (DeLong, 2002, pp. 153–227).

I make this claim of having influenced systems with evidence from external and internal validation contained in my thesis (DeLong, 2002) and follow this with overcoming obstacles and constraints.

External Validation

First from external research, I was ‘the superintendent’ (Hannay, 1998; Schmalz, 1998) referred to in the references to Brant County:

The Superintendent was cited as an important catalyst to the project’s success. S/he provided knowledge of action research, support, a trust relationship and placed no pressure on participants. S/he initiated project involvement, gave strategic support, did the writing, provided extra professional development, gave personal support and was said to facilitate a feeling of accomplishment’ in teacher-participants (Schmalz, 1998, p. 42; DeLong, 2002, p.162).

Secondly from a research organization, from those early beginnings, I want to take you to the Ontario Educational Research Conference (OERC) on December, 2000 where I received the York Region/OERC Leadership in Action Research Award. Lindy Zaretsky, President-Elect of the OERC, said in her presentation of the award:



Image 1: Award Certificate

You are cited for:

- Facilitating the building of research networks to support a culture of inquiry and continuous improvement in classroom and school based research practices;
- Modelling reflective inquiry;
- Providing direct leadership and support to educators to enhance research-based professionalism in schools and classrooms;
- Providing opportunities for individuals to develop their own leadership capacity for innovative practice;
- Promoting the growth of a professional generated through action research (Delong, 2002, p. 163).

This could be called the story of my tenacity!

Internal Validation

First, at the 2001 Ontario Educational Research Conference, the Director of the Grand Erie District School Board, Peter Moffatt, in his keynote address said:

One person deserves a lot of the credit for institutionalizing action research as an important component of the culture within our Board. This person has brought the force, the example, the support and the perseverance. She has developed the cadre of researchers who support each other. She has brought in the outside resources necessary to keep the movement fresh. She has been able to ignore the pessimists. (Moffatt, 2001; Delong, 2002, pp. 153–154)

Secondly, The International Council of Teacher Research (ICTR) held in Montreal on April 5–7, 2002 followed American Educational Research Association (AERA) in New Orleans. Because of the timing next to AERA, I did not attend but I encouraged and supported Donna Howey (Howey, 2001), a grade 1–2 teacher and novice researcher and Heather Knill-Griesser, program consultant, experienced researcher and Brant Action Research Network (BARN) leader (Knill-Griesser, 2001), to present their research. In conversation with them on April 17, 2002 at a BARN meeting, I could hear that the experience of sharing their research on an international stage validated their learning. In the description of the session, I can see my influence:

April 6, 2002, Presentation by Donna Howey and Heather Knill-Griesser



Image 2: Heather Knill-Griesser, primary consultant, Masters grad, BARN leader

Jackie Delong (Superintendent of Education for the Grand Erie District School Board was an advocate who exerted a system's influence. Jackie:

- i. was internal to the organization and understood the inquiry process
- ii. provided networks and individuals with needed resources (workshops; release time; video equipment; professional literature)
- iii. brought people together in the form of action research networks to support each other and sustain inquiry - each network had an experienced chairperson
- iv. built capacity one person at a time. (Howey & Knill-Griesser, 2002; Delong, 2002, p. 181)

Overcoming Constraints and Obstacles

While in my thesis I write about creative compliance (MacDonald, 1987, p. 5) as a means to making a difference, I am cognizant that it is a cowardly strategy at best. To go head-on with the Ministry of Education or the University required a little prudence so that I did not provoke damaging responses to myself or my students (Delong, 2002, pp. 212–214).

That indictment of avoiding controversy appears to be true of some of our politicians as well as of me and as Pip Bruce Ferguson (2016) believes, 'to remain silent is to support the *status quo*' (p. 29).

Over these 20 years, I have committed myself to ensuring that the voices of the practitioners, teachers, consultants, principals, nurses, and practising professionals are heard, respected and legitimated. I exhort them to refuse to let anyone, supervisor, academic, *anyone*, however kind they may seem to be, speak for them, to take away their voice, to assume their knowledge. This passion that fuelled my work came, I think, from sensing condescension, from reading about and hearing that access to the temple of all knowledge is through the gates at the university and that the practitioner's knowledge is only legitimated when university academics speak for them. That practitioners have embodied knowledge and write rigorous research seemed an idea from an alien galaxy to the universities as they were negating practitioners' knowledge in forms of epistemicide (Santos, 2014).

I learned patience and persistence and creative compliance as well as some skills of finding steps to climbing over the walls that I could apply with future groups. The evidence for this emerges in the stories of the next cohorts and the Research Ethics Board. The master's students in Bluewater in 2009–11 express the fact that their experience was not very stressful which to me indicates that my ability to teach them to deal with the inapplicable REB process, had improved. One of the methods that I had developed was using a successful REB application as a model for them to follow (McDougald, 2009).

In my experience, it has been necessary for me to smooth the way for my students through 'intercultural translation' (Santos, 2014) so that the power and intimidation of the University does not prevent them from sharing their embodied knowledge and having it accredited. In his review of this paper, Jerry Allender (2017) recognized the issue:

A significant struggle is in the conflicts created by the lack of common understanding between the efforts of your students and the insensitive response of boards reviewing their research. Human research review boards are not likely to understand methods of research

that lie outside traditional canons. Our purpose is to discover flaws in current practices and experiment with change that improves practice in our view and in the responses of students. This difference marks the tension between typical scholarly communities and those of us focused on the immediate practical value of our research. (Allender, 2017)

I have learned the importance of vulnerability (Brown, 2010) and observed that capacity in my democratic evaluations (see above) with the master's students and with the principals in my Family of Schools (Delong, 2002, p. 114). We see in the work of Cathy Griffin, Liz Campbell, Jen Vickers-Manzin and Jan Johnson that that modelling enabled them to be vulnerable with their groups. As Schön says:

In the new paradigm of understanding, the 'swamp' or mess becomes the primary ground of understanding and learning. The challenges for the researcher grow; the sense of vulnerability and anxiety (as well as excitement) grows. Non-self-reflective practitioners have for many years focused on the manageable and the limited type of problem on which their discipline focuses... (Schön, 1995, pp. 181–182).

It is important to note that my work is infused with the importance of relationships. In the GEDSB, what we were able to accomplish was entirely attributable to the significant individuals who took up the leadership of the teacher-research movement in the district. Those leaders included Cheryl Amy (Black) and Diane Morgan. Both Cheryl and Diane were leaders in action research and Living Lheory.

Cheryl led hundreds of sessions teaching action research, published her research (Black, 2001, pp. 205–213, Black, 2002, Black *et al.*, 2005), supported, reviewed and published others' research and presented locally, nationally and globally. Along with Ron Wideman, we wrote and published a book, *Action Research for Teaching Excellence* (Delong, Black, & Wideman, 2005). There would not have been the longevity and sustainability of the movement in the district and provincially had it not been for her leadership.

Diane Morgan was active over many years in the editing and publishing of the *Passion in Professional Practice* publications (see <http://schools.granderie.ca/ar/passion/index.html>) and in her own writing. After she retired, she provided consulting services so that the movement continued in Grand Erie when I was too busy with my demanding role of Superintendent of Education to attend all the sessions and provide the supports. I was able to find budget and resources from my budget lines to fund the activities but she was the hands-on person leading the sessions and supporting the teachers in their school sites (Delong, 2002, p. 201).

Influencing individuals, others, systems and organizations for an improved social order and the flourishing of humanity.

An example of an educational journal that has worked to open doors for living-theorists, addressed openly the power issues and worked toward democratization of an institution, is the Educational Journal of Living Theories (EJOLTS). Created by Jack Whitehead, Branko Bogner, Je Kan Adler-Collins, Moira Laidlaw, Maggie Farren, Jean McNiff and myself in 2008, we have an educational journal that addresses many of the concerns that we have experienced with other journals where criteria for publication are restricted to

third person investigations, where multi-media narratives are not included and where submissions are accepted or rejected by reviewers without further dialogue or support. I believe we are all, including current and previous members of the editorial board and development team, committed to developing democratic and supportive processes (even though we might have differences of opinion at times as to its expression in practice). Encouragement and support is offered for submitting authors to such great lengths that one article took two years of review and revision starting from Saturday, 19 July 2014. You can access Brian Jennings' messages where he references the quality of support that he has received at <http://ejolts.org/mod/forum/discuss.php?d=133>. That support is provided by the development and editorial boards and reviewers from across the globe from India to Canada to the UK. In a Skype chat on December 11, 2016, Moira Laidlaw said that the ways in which we work together and with authors and what keeps us coming back for more:

... is the fact that it shows each is a unique example of what it means to be human and living certain kinds of values for the flourishing (Reiss & White, 2013) of humanity. I just love the diversity of being human. And, I think, that is something that EJOLTS really does celebrate. That, perhaps, accounts for why, given that we are people who work towards those kinds of ends in completely unique ways, is what I think, makes us (if I can say 'us') want to collaborate and communicate with each other because we know that there is something worthwhile going on here.



Video 6: Jacqueline Delong with others (Whitehead, 2017)

<https://youtu.be/bTm3bzAO9SI>

Creating this organization and system of support has experienced its own share of constraints and 'stories of ruin' (MacLure, 1996) as well as transcendence. Those stressful times provided periods of reflection that have strengthened the operation of the board and reviewing processes. Many procedures and guidelines have been and continue to be rewritten and refined such as the Guidelines for Publication (<http://ejolts.net/submission>). Democracy is a strongly-held value for all members of the board and infuses all decisions so that for every decision to publish a reviewed article, all members are asked to agree or disagree with publication. As any editorial board will tell you, the fact that EJOLTS is in its eighth year of publishing two issues a year, is no mean feat. What I think has made this possible is the commitment of the community to assist authors of articles using the Living Theory methodology and philosophy to bring their work to publication with loving support.

Another obstacle to conducting Living Theory Research has been criticism and rejection by individuals who in a prior time were in agreement with the philosophy of the approach to self-study practitioner action research. Marie Huxtable (2016, pp. 4–5) addresses this confusion and misunderstanding.

It's time now to look at weaving the threads of the writing together with some findings, conclusion and next steps.

Findings

a) About constraints, obstacles and transcendence

Thankfully there are exceptions around the world but, in my experience, the voices of practitioners are not heard, not encouraged and not supported by academics and universities. I believe that the reasons lie in not understanding the nature of practitioner-knowledge and in the threat perceived by those who hold the power over what constitutes knowledge. Pip Bruce Ferguson responded to this section.

Part of the reason that Freire got exiled from Brazil is that his literacy methods gave peasants the vote, and threatened the government. And I think that maintaining a docile population (who don't investigate their own practice because they don't believe they're worthy of doing that) is a good way of holding on to power. Can't have the 'natives' getting uppitty! (Dec 13, 2016).

In my school district, I was given support from Director Peter Moffatt, and I could not have built a culture of inquiry in the system without his having the same philosophy of encouraging inquiring minds. However, many of my colleagues (and Peter's successors) did not see the connection between encouraging inquiring minds and self-study practitioner action research. There may also have been an aversion to making strongly-held values explicit.

b) About Leadership

In order to legitimize and respect the embodied knowledge of practitioners, an influential leader who has political 'nous', has access to resources and has created his/her own living-theory, is essential. In addition to political knowledge, that person needs a full understanding of how systems work and can assist in moving Living Theory Research forward. A growing movement of living-theorists is highly dependent on visionary leaders with political knowledge and may not move ahead at a consistent pace and direction. As we know from the feminist movement, even when there is forward movement, it can be clawed back. For example, the budget for my school district for classroom research had only a 3-year lifespan but I was fortunate to have had access to other budgets. When I retired with no leader to continue the support, the networks disappeared in GEDSB. However, many school and system leaders have researched their practice and written Living Theory Research and continue to live their values in their practice.

c) About Sustainability

While sustainability and longevity are rarely attained, we have examples where they were accomplished in The Grand Erie District School Board and The Bluewater District School Board. BARN (Campbell *et al.*, 2016), has now been awarded three years of funding from the Ontario Ministry of Education. Cathy and Liz have ensured another year of the network by encouraging and supporting new leaders like Krystal Damm.

I know from experience that this influence does not move in a straight line nor in a continuously forward motion. There are many setbacks and obstacles along the way that require tenacity and creative thinking to overcome them. The BARN group are living sustainability. (See

https://docs.google.com/document/d/11ZQ9y2TgbJcsjK1aoMAWMI9UjL7uhGVgm23We_0BzKw/edit#heading=h.fs4tnd6jqrm1 for details.)

For the purpose of argument, longevity and long-term may be defined as three years or more. GEDSB supported practitioner research from 1996 to 2007 (11 years) and BDSB is in its fourth. Sustained support is required in terms of facilitators, release time, skills training, opportunities to share and dialogue, and a living-culture-of-inquiry. Constraints can be overcome through vision, tenacity and a supportive community. Moreover, sustainability can be evidenced in different ways:

- in long term data of a Living Theory network in a system, such as the Bluewater District School Board;
- in individuals and values-based leaders who have written their own living-theories, such as Cathy and Liz, Jen and Jan, Cheryl and Ruth;
- in a culture of inquiry in a system or organization, such as the GEDSB and BWDSB, Passion in Professional Practice <http://schools.granderie.ca/ar> and EJOLTS <http://www.ejolts.net>;
- in a system that influences systems, such as the Ontario Ministry of Education through funding for inquiry learning.

d) About Accreditation

A critical mass of original contributions to knowledge, in terms of new explanatory principles and living standards of judgment of living-educational-theories, have been accepted in some universities for academic accreditation. However, it bears pointing out that many practitioner-researchers are still experiencing obstacles to their registration at the proposal stage for Living Theory Research programmes, here in Canada and around the world.

The good news is that there are many Masters dissertations and Ph.D. theses that have been accredited at various universities around the world from Bath University, UK, to Brock University, Canada, to South Africa, to India and Nepal. I refer you to Jack Whitehead's website with its massive repository of Living Theory Master's and Doctorates, including Moira Laidlaw's Ph.D. Thesis, 1996: How can I create my own living educational theory as I offer you an account of my educational development? <http://www.actionresearch.net/moira2.shtml>, and Swaroop Rawal's Ph.D thesis, 2006: 'The

Role Of Drama In Enhancing Life Skills In Children With Specific Learning Difficulties In A Mumbai School: My Reflective Account', at <http://www.actionresearch.net/living/rawal.shtml>

I refer you, as well, to my website where the not-for-credit research-projects of the Grand Erie District School Board educators published in *Passion in Professional Practice* <http://www.spanglefish.com/ActionResearchCanada/index.asp?pageid=560361> are located, my own writings and speeches – such as Lesson Improvement and School Reform through Action Research in Canada, on November 9, 2013, at Mejiro Campus at Japan Women's University, Tokyo. See <http://www.spanglefish.com/actionresearchcanada/index.asp?pageid=512258> for details, as well as many of the Master of Education dissertations, such as Ruth Mills' 2009 Project: How Can I Change the Culture of a School?

Abstract:

My living theory action research-project sought to explore and answer the question, 'How can I change the culture of a school?' When a principal begins at a new school, the first thing he or she discovers about that school is the culture. This project examined the data connected to brain-based research and the connection between environmental stress and learning. It also looked at what research says about the role of the principal in creating and sustaining a peaceful school culture. The research focused on the Roots of Empathy program and shows how this program impacted the culture of a particular school over time (2009).

(See <http://www.spanglefish.com/actionresearchcanada/index.asp?pageid=227469> for details.)

Conclusions

Integrating the personal, professional and political enables students with supportive supervisors to generate their own living-educational-theories and gain academic accreditation. A sustained critical and creative engagement within a culture of inquiry focused on personal/professional improvement can produce a significant contribution to the flourishing of humanity. Living Theory supervisors are critical in this process of encouraging, supporting and challenging students in a culture of inquiry. I can't emphasize enough the importance of establishing and sustaining networks of practitioner-researchers, such as BARN through a commitment to community values, while acknowledging the importance of financial support.

Through the review process of EJOLTS, I have been able to strengthen this paper and am deeply indebted to Sonia Hutchison who deliberately looked for and commented on all of the criteria for a living theory account to be published in EJOLTS, encouraged me and suggested ways for improvement such as including shorter versions of long video clips; to Mark Potts who wrote very positive responses to my work and writing and caught a number of editing errors; to Jerry Allender who asked, 'Essentially, is there a way to think about practical knowledge that isn't judged by the canons of scholarship?' I certainly hope so! I also wish to thank Jack Whitehead who helped me take a much large paper (that will be part

of my living legacy) and reduce it to meet the word limit. As long as I have allies like my EJOLTS colleagues including Sonia, Mark, Jerry and Jack to critically and lovingly push me to be an improved living theorist, I am truly fortunate.

One of the most influential people in my life was Peter Moffatt, the Director of Education when I was Superintendent, who, when asked what is the best way to support self-study action research, said:

I guess the best thing you can do to support action research at the system level is to create a culture that values research and that recognizes the research that has been carried out and the fact that the teacher is the person best situated to conduct research on learning and improve education. (Delong & Wideman, 1998c, transcript, p. 7) (Delong, 2002, p. 166)

I think I have provided evidence of how I have expressed a sustained and sustaining influence in legitimating the embodied knowledge of practitioners in a school system and in the Academy by opening doors to the temple of knowledge and rejecting the ownership of teacher research by the advising academics. In their work on 'teacher as researcher', Stenhouse (1975) and Elliott and MacDonald (1975), likewise challenged the dominant 'academic as professional advisor' approach. My intention in writing the paper is to give a clear message about the importance of understanding Living Educational Theory and taking action to encourage and support the voices of educators and other practitioners. I intend that the paper clearly shows how I am standing up for and holding myself accountable for my own values.

I hope that you have felt that I am speaking directly to you and that you feel the need for a response:

We must learn to feel addressed by a book, by the human being behind it, as if a person spoke directly to us. A good book or essay or poem is not primarily an object to be put to use, or an object of experience: it is the voice of You speaking to me, requiring a response. (Buber, 1970, p. 39)

Next Steps

Using the framework of the paper, I am continuing to think of the issues of power and knowledge and how they affect the influence of Living Theory and its emergence as a social movement (Whitehead, 2016). In this paper, I have shown the transformatory nature of writing living-theory research in my own life and in that of my colleagues and students. This transformation never expires as long as we breathe and as we work at 'living a worthwhile life' (Gawande, 2014, p. 141).

It goes without saying that wherever I am able, I try to influence others to ask co-workers and students to self-evaluate and to ask for evaluation of their practice from their peers and students. Where shared power exists, there is no hierarchy, only democracy and shared learning. I have learned so much from my students ... because I asked! We need more teachers like Cathy Griffin (2013) and Liz Campbell (2013) who ask students, 'Help me to teach you better'. I expressed this in a greeting to the 2015 ARNA Conference when I said, 'In my work, I find that my students are my teachers':



Video 7: Greeting to ARNA Conference

https://www.youtube.com/edit?o=U&video_id=82Gq05hJy9s

It is in the students' stories of transcendence that I acquire the strength to continue to encourage and support teachers to share their embodied knowledge and create their own living-theories. I think that the new funding for BARN shows the influence of my 'living legacy' (Forester, 2015) with Liz, Cathy, Krystal and the other BARN members.

Influential leaders do effect change in power and knowledge-structures by sharing their values and research, by modelling and sharing their vulnerability and by recognizing and supporting practitioners that share their values and would be willing to dedicate themselves to researching their practice. Jen Vickers-Manzin and Jan Johnson live their values in daily practice, write and share their research and continue to look for colleagues and students who are receptive to investigating their practice. I try to sustain the relationship with them and offer my support.

It's important to be alert to opportunities to influence individuals, others, systems and organizations to create an improved social order and contribute to the flourishing of humanity. There is no checklist but I think that I and my former students have an awareness of the potential for the building of a living-culture-of-inquiry that will support the creation of living-theories. I plan to continue writing and publishing and to encourage and support others to do so. In particular, I will write more articles for *EJOLTS*, the Action Research Network of the Americas (ARNA) and other audiences, continue my work on the Editorial and Development Boards and my writing of my living legacy.

Another opportunity to express and extend this influence was offered by the '1st Global Assembly on Knowledge Democracy: towards an ecology of knowledges', held on June 16, 2017 in Cartagena Columbia with de Sousa Santos as keynote-speaker. Its intent was to address the extent to which epistemological, ideological and political differences can be reconciled in the interest of a sustainable and socially just world. Jack, Marie and I presented two papers. In the one to ARNA which builds on our intentions from the ARNA 2015 Town Hall we say that this presentation is intended to develop the potential of the ideas at the June 2017 ARNA conference in Cartagena, Columbia and is focused on emerging understandings of knowledge democracy with convergences among those creating knowledge. The entire proceedings from our 2015 Town Hall presentation are available at: <https://sites.google.com/site/arnaproceedings/home/2015>.

As part of my contribution to the lead-up to the 1st Global Assembly, I shall be submitting this paper to *EJOLTS* with an invitation to a continuing dialogue in the Community Space of *EJOLTS*. (See <http://ejolts.org> for details.)

I am reminded that Peter Mellett led the celebrations on the day of my graduation in December, 2002 at the University of Bath. As part of the expression of celebration was a group/community response of an 'explosion' of laughter that I associate with a community expression of life-affirming energy.



Video 6: 46 seconds of Peter Mellett celebrating on my Graduation.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HxqRF2tVLB4>

I end with a reflection on another person who has influenced my life, Dr. Fraser Mustard. In an article, 'A Remarkable Canadian' (November 20, 2011), David Crane celebrates his life:

In our many conversations, Fraser would constantly ask, 'why is there such a gap between what we know and what we do?' As someone with scientific training, it was a source of great frustration to him, whether it was a failure to invest in young children, build an innovative economy, tackle climate change or initiate some other endeavour.

This remains the question, but with Fraser gone, the rest of us must keep asking the question and demanding answers.

I keep asking and creating the answers to, 'Why is there such a gap between what we know and what we do? or as he frequently asked me, 'So, what are *you* doing about improving the lives of young children?'

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