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## **The significance of living-theory action research in a culture of inquiry transforms learning in elementary, high school and post-graduate settings**

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### **Abstract**

This issue of EJOLTS intends to demonstrate the capacities of teachers and students in a variety of settings to create cultures of inquiry that transform social formations within their classrooms, their schools and their school systems. These transformative changes are accredited and validated over considerable time, from 1995 to 2013. This final paper follows the works of the authors from the creation of their living-educational-theories with their original living-theory-methodologies, to their integration and evolution in cultures of inquiry by masters and doctoral students and to the improvement of learning in primary, secondary and tertiary classrooms and other professional contexts across the globe. Our organization of this article follows the pattern in our individual contributions as we distinguish the values that constitute our unique contributions to cultures of inquiry in terms of: being loved into learning; praxis; students as co-researchers; building trust and respect; unveiling embodied knowledge; the living curriculum; influencing self, others and social formations; obstacles and challenges; scholarly significance; interim conclusion.

**Keywords:** living-theory action research; culture of inquiry; elementary school settings; high school settings; post-graduate settings

## 1. Loved into learning

In the individual papers we have explained how we each experience the concept of “loved into learning” and created our own unique meanings in our practices in our various educational settings. One of our unexpected results was our understanding of the nature of our influence in each others’ writings. The embodied expression of being loved into learning provided a value through which we transcended the constraints of the poverty of traditional academic texts to communicate meanings of embodied values. We met the criteria of writing an academic paper while simultaneously honouring the unique educational experiences and diverse epistemologies and ontologies of each author. Our awareness of this process is enhanced by the availability of the visual narratives we produced during our Skype calls that were made available to each of us for further reflection and analysis.

As we engage in dialogue in our Skype calls, we each have an image of the other three participants on our screen and can see and feel their responses to our critical and creative insights, questions, and concerns. Our experience is further enhanced by witnessing the authentic struggle of seeking clarification and understanding between us. While it is possible that much of this could also be appreciated if co-writers kept a written record of all drafts showing the evolution of ideas, we are claiming that the live interaction with the aid of visuals enabled us to experience and be influenced by the energy flowing values and empathetic resonance of each individual and the group as a whole.

Here is an illustration of how we are using multi-media data to share our understandings of our energy-flowing values, empathetic resonance and being loved into learning.

The first four images below are taken directly from the YouTube thumbnail on Jack’s YouTube channel. The image was outside Jack’s control in that it is “selected” by YouTube. Using the application “download helper” with the Firefox Browser you can quickly download the whole of the video-clip, load them into quicktime and move the cursor backwards and forwards along the clip.



**Video 1.** 39:25 minutes 26/03/13 (<http://youtu.be/FLzIOcVGh3c>)



**Video 2.** 43:35 minutes 27/03/13 (<http://youtu.be/XR6kvxfrdXk>)



**Video 3.** 9:45 minutes 29/03/13 (<http://youtu.be/qcDSqyJ6Jg>)



**Video 4.** 1:49:07 hours 01/04/13 (<http://youtu.be/Fp1WPy6O1Wg>)

Image 1 below was chosen by Jack because of the empathetic resonance he felt with the pooling of our life-affirming energies and commitment to a democratic way of creating together.



**Image 1.** A still image 00:32 minutes into a conversation on the 17/03/13 where we are feeling our empathetic resonance of bring loved into learning

As we move the cursor backwards and forwards along the four video-clips of our SKYPE conversations we agree that the moments that we pause on and experience the greatest feeling of empathetic resonance are one's where we share an expression of "being loved into learning." In these expressions we recognize a flow of our own life-affirming energies and the love for what we are doing in education. We also recognize that we are pooling these flows of our life-affirming energy in a democratic way of creating together. In the first four videos, we do not experience such meanings. It is only when we move the cursor backwards and forwards along the video-clips that we can see ourselves, as in image 5, expressing the values that constitute for us, our culture of inquiry and communicating our embodied expressions of "being loved into learning." Here is access to data we use to show our pooling of our life-affirming energy in a democratic way of creating together. Branko Bogner first drew our attention to the value of a democratic way of creating together in 2013 a conversation on the future of EJOLTS.

For the sake of completeness, having shown some of our conversations in the preparation of the AERA 2013 presentation, here is a video of our presentation at AERA 2013 (Video 5). What the four of us can see, hear and experience is our individual contribution to the presentation. We can see ourselves being influenced by the sociohistorical and sociocultural norms of presentations at an international conference. We speak directly to the audience. We are focused on our aural communications and not on our embodied expressions of meaning. The video helps us to feel and re-live the energy-flowing values that motivate us to present our ideas in this public forum. When compared to the above video-clips of our conversations in preparing the presentation, what is missing from the presentation is an explicit understanding of our relationally dynamic values, through which we created the presentation and lived our value of a democratic way of creating together. The presentations in this issue of EJOLTS, with our multi-media narratives focus explicitly on overcoming this omission in the AERA 2013 presentation.



**Video 5.** 14:03 minutes of AERA 2013 presentation of 28/04/13  
<http://youtu.be/ijmfKJ7Gtsw>

## 2. Praxis

In “How do I Evolve Living-Educational-Theory Praxis in Living-boundaries?” Huxtable (2012) contributes the original idea of a living-theory praxis.

While Jack was familiar with praxis from the readings of literature influenced by Marxist ideas, it is only recently that he has embraced the idea of praxis within his living-educational-theory that includes a culture of inquiry. It was while supervising Huxtable’s doctoral research programme (Huxtable, 2012) that Jack came to appreciate the usefulness of the idea of a living-theory praxis through one of Huxtable’s original contributions to educational knowledge: “Living-Educational-Theory praxis, highlighting the fundamental importance of educators creating ‘values-based explanation of their educational influences in learning’ (Whitehead, 1989), as they research to develop praxis within living-boundaries” (Huxtable, 2012, Abstract).

In the process of writing the AERA paper and then this journal issue, Jackie came to recognize the ontological and epistemological significance of her original contribution of a culture-of-inquiry as a means to enhance teaching and learning and to encourage and support the creation of living theories.

Whilst engaged in the multi-screen SKYPE conversations with Jackie, Liz, Cathy, and Jack we can each see the four of us on the screen together. This visual reflection communicated to us our existence within living boundaries in a culture of inquiry. We can see and hear each one of us expressing values in both creative and critical contributions and responses within the conversations. These moved continuously between issues of practice and theory within the praxis of our living-boundaries.

We are continuing to extend the influence of living-educational-theories within our cultures of inquiry. For example, the educational influences for Jack of working with Jackie, Liz and Cathy, are focused on overcoming a poverty in his educational discourse and practice, related to love and hope. Until Liz and Cathy pointed to Jackie's educational influence in their learning in terms of being "loved into learning" Jack had not recognised a poverty in his own awareness related to the acknowledgement of this quality in his own educational influences.

Since 2000 Jack had recognised the importance of bringing a flow of life-affirming energy with values that carry hope for the future of humanity, into explanatory principles of educational influence. In working with Jackie, Liz identified the relational dynamic and value of 'being loved into learning' as an explanatory principle. In working with Jackie, Liz and Cathy he also began to understand the importance of recognising and responding to expressions of vulnerability in the other.

As we write these words we are aware that our expressions of meaning are impoverished in relation to our experience of our living relationships in which expressions of vulnerability are recognised, accepted and transcended within a culture of inquiry that carries hope for each individual and for the future of humanity.

### **3. Students as co-researchers**

In our relationships with our students we express an educational responsibility that is distinguished by what Buber refers to as the special humility of the educator. The educational relationship with our students is not one of full mutuality as we accept this educational responsibility in a way that is not a requirement of our students' relationship with us. Nevertheless, we see ourselves as co-researchers in the sense that we are continuously learning from and with our students. With Jackie and Jack in their supervisions of postgraduate research programmes, they are learning from the originality of their students and integrating these insights into their own living educational theories. With Cathy and Liz, they are learning about their students in ways that influence their responses to their students in their desire to contribute to their lives of personal flourishing.

### **4. Building trust and respect**

In all of the individual action research projects, the consensus is that trust and respect are essential to building a culture of inquiry in which embodied knowledge is valued and theorizing of practice flourishes. In her study to improve her practice, Jackie learned that in order to create a safe place for students to recognize their values, it was essential for her to reveal her own vulnerability so that a trusting, respectful environment for living and learning was created.

Because of the trust built over time and through many SKYPE conversations with the four of us, on March 31, 2013, Cathy and Liz were enabled to find, within the chaotic writing of the paper, six themes that took our methodological inventiveness into a comprehensible flowing argument. The significance of this transformation can be appreciated by comparing the draft which Jack responded to by saying that he had lost a sense of comprehensibility



(see <http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/aera13/lcjdgcjwaera13dr160313.pdf>) to the present writing in which we are using the 6 themes in ways that we all find comprehensible. We have presented evidence that supports our claim that providing an environment of trust and respect in our classrooms and in our culture of inquiry has enabled our students and ourselves to take risks to improve learning for all involved.

Of the four, the three females identified that they experienced vulnerability that can be addressed through trust and respect. Jack did not experience this need as he was influenced by Fromm's point about making a choice to unite with the world in the spontaneity of love and productive work rather than to seek a kind of security that destroys integrity and freedom. Although we have not focused on a gender issue related to vulnerability, questions and concerns around this topic surfaced many times during our conversations. Due to time and word count restraints we have agreed to investigate this theme at another time for another paper.

## **5. Unveiling embodied knowledge**

In this research, evidence is provided that once we, as teachers, recognize our own embodied knowledge, we are then more open to embracing the work of education research. We internalize the academic knowledge from the perspective of the practitioner theorizing about our own lived experience. As practitioners hoping to improve our practice, we value the voice of our students and recognize that the necessity of including the student voice as we collect data, seek feedback and validation, and revise our practice.

Witnessing how we assist each other in unveiling embodied knowledge (through struggles, resistance and discoveries) and embarking on a journey of uncertainty into the unknown, has transformed each others' knowledge-creation in transcending constraints of poverty in our educational discourse. At times the boundaries become fluid as to the origins of an idea or who influenced whom or what, but this becomes irrelevant as we are energized and inspired by the flow of the moment. There is a distinctive feeling and recognition of being part of a culture of inquiry whose influence is greater than that of an individual. This feeling and recognition has an influence on our day to day practice and lives for contributing to the greater good which holds hope for humanity.

We found that the use of multi-media, such as video clips, visual narratives, poetic language and visual art forms revealed a different way to approach traditional forms of understanding. They helped us to face and transcend the constraints of working alone, without the support of a culture of inquiry in revealing our embodied knowledge. In addition, the multi-media communications enabled us to include expressions of our life-affirming energy which emerged in the use of empathetic resonance in clips of our conversations. We found that these expressions of life-affirming energy could not be captured in the printed word alone. Multi-media allowed us to integrate such flows of energy, with our values, in our explanatory principles and as living standards of judgment in our contributions to educational knowledge. Posting our recorded conversations on a space that could be accessed at a later date enabled us to re-visit the conversations as often as needed. Often, we would review a clip searching for data to support our claims and during these times, we often made other discoveries as we unpacked the living-learning. However,

an unexpected result of the re-engagement with the conversation was a rejuvenation of the life-affirming energy each time the clip was viewed. Not only did this help to sustain us when we were unable to meet in cyberspace but simply viewing clips again often expanded the life-affirming energy (not unlike muscle memory does for athletes) creating an unlimited source of empathetic resonance we could depend on as we faced new challenges.

## 6. The living curriculum

We learned that the living curriculum goes beyond the boundaries of the given curriculum by focusing on the needs of the student first. Relationships in the classroom and the respect and trust created in a culture of inquiry needed to be addressed before teaching the actual given curriculum. We believe that we have explained the improved learning that emerges when students uncover their own questions in a living curriculum as opposed to those prescribed in the given curriculum.

To emphasize the importance of this distinction between a given and a living curriculum, we can use the illustration of the headings provided by AERA for the proposal process and the headings we used that were generated by Liz and Cathy. In the writing of this paper, we needed to transcend the constraints we experienced in simply fitting our writings within the AERA headings. What we have written transcends these headings. We did not follow a prescribed method but our process, our methodological inventiveness, unfolded as we went, as we discussed and as we reflected on what we wrote before.

Because of our experiences, including our struggles, in creating our own living theories, we feel confident in encouraging discussion on individual values in our classrooms. Although dialogue on values is included in the given curriculum, in our experience, discussion of the values of each individual student is not commonplace in educational environments. We have shown that such dialogues can address moral and values-based poverty and poverty in representations of educational practices and discourses.

## 7. Influencing self, others and social formations

From our individual research, we have seen the impact of embracing our embodied knowledge to influence our own growth and understanding. Our confidence in capacities to support our students to improve their learning has grown through our intentions of living according to our own values and holding ourselves publicly accountable for those intentions and actions. Our individual improvement depended on our action research cycles and on the support and encouragement of critical friends in a culture of inquiry.

The active valuing of the embodied knowledge of others has the effect of removing potential hierarchical constraints on influence. Throughout the writing of all four of us, we see the roles of facilitator, guide, teacher, learner, critical friend and validator shifting fluidly back and forth as members of each culture of inquiry express doubt or certainty in their knowing. Taking up the challenge of asking our students to help us to teach them better by modelling the self-evaluation process attests to the validity of engaging students, no matter their age, in their own learning.



Through the process of doing action research within a culture of inquiry, there is a reciprocal influence which results in the emergence of joint values. We have identified many qualities inherent in our Skype culture of inquiry which allow for each of us as individuals to flourish within our own action research projects while remaining open to the influence of the other. First, we allowed each individual to retain their own voice and style of research. Second, we attempted to hold our conversations within a space which is open to possibilities rather than being held to a strict agenda or timeline. Third, we identified, celebrated and examined the pooling of life-affirming energy in conversation (Hutchison, 2012). Finally, we openly discussed our joint values and the nature of our influence on each other and within the writing together.

Finally, as evidenced in the work of Jackie, Liz and Cathy, individuals who are able to expose vulnerability have a catalytic effect in building trust and a sense of safety within a culture of inquiry. This sense of trust and respect is essential to being able to overcome educational environments. Although all three women had spoken of this effect, it wasn't until reading all three papers together that Jack understood the importance of sharing feelings of vulnerability.

## **8. Obstacles and challenges**

### **8.1. In the research process**

Challenges and obstacles exist in all types of research but because of sharing our anxieties, vulnerabilities and stories of ruin, living theory action research presents its own challenges and opportunities. While Jack states that he does not experience vulnerability, Liz, Jackie and Cathy all shared the view that vulnerability played an important role in building relationships and trust within cultures of inquiry. We found that a culture of inquiry depended on the development of relationships founded on trust and respect; when this culture was not found in our schools and school systems, the love in our culture of inquiry provided the support and encouragement that we needed to continue our research.

All of us at some point have had to defend our choice of methodology, Living Educational Theory: Jack as he created his living-educational-theory and defended it repeatedly and vehemently at the American and British Educational Research Associations; Jackie as she chose to create her own living-theory PhD research at the University of Bath; Liz in her PhD courses; Cathy in discussions with administration and peers on data collection.

We have found that time is necessary for the building of trust; it is also a serious issue for practitioner-researchers since it is research on our practice and our practice is our work which in itself demands time. In order to complete this research, we had to carve out time to record the data to provide evidence to support our claims to know. Time is also a challenge because of our living in separate time zones: five hours difference from Ontario to Bath, UK.

Despite our love for the use of multi-media to enhance our understandings of our lives as teacher-learners, technology can be an adversary. The equipment challenges us through breakdowns, accessibility and consistent transmissions. SKYPE, while a wonderful ally, can be slow, irregular, broken up, susceptible to demand and weather and require a large bandwidth. There is also a small charge for the conferencing facility.

This form of research is relentless with the expectation that we continue learning and improving: without a due date or timeline, there is no end in sight: we are always on a path of improvement. This creates an additional challenge when working within a deadline for publication: our learning has no conclusion.

## 8.2. In the writing of the papers for this issue of EJOLTS

This writing process was far from smooth stories of self (MacLure, 1996, p. 283). We frequently struggled with the quality of our contributions, with how the four viewpoints would have holistic meaning and with the strength of our argument. The openness of the SKYPE conversations allowed for more depth in understanding each others' viewpoints and modelled helpful processes. Using Skype, recording the calls and uploading them to YouTube created a space for that transitional time, time to reflect and internalize our thinking, for the next conference.

Cathy writes:

I feel I have come a long way since my initial reluctance to challenge “the professors.” I now take comfort in being able to write what I feel, to try it out in this virtual world knowing I have three amazing critical friends who will, first and foremost, not hesitate to challenge what I am saying, to draw me out and force me to go deeper. At the same time, knowing they are my first audience challenges me to write differently, to consider what I am saying and how I am saying it through their lens. In addition, I try to articulate what I think is missing. I am now more able to trust that my voice is important and there is a space for it in our collaborative writing. I add my perspective in the full knowledge that intertwined with theirs, my voice will resonate and at times provide a dissonance to push us forward. Ultimately, we weave our song together and drive each other forward, intrigued by the patterns we find as our collective song unfolds.

In the December 20 and December 22 YouTube clips, first, to Jackie and then to the whole group, we hear Cathy expressing her concern about feeling uncertain about working with “professors” who she felt knew more than she did within the SKYPE conferences with Jack Whitehead, Liz Campbell and Jackie Delong. For Jack and Jackie, who have been working together for over 16 years, this came as a surprise: a good reminder to never assume that there are common understandings about the nature of the relationships and that a culture of inquiry takes time to be established.

Perhaps our greatest challenge in producing this issue of EJOLTS came from Prof. Moira Laidlaw and Prof. Tim Cain in the open review process when we presented our original publication. Here are their reviews:

Hello Jackie, Cathy, Liz and Jack. I have thoroughly enjoyed reading your paper and I attach it here as I have written extensive comments on details of the text, which I hope you will find useful. I want to make my more general comments here.

The most significant aspect of what I want to say concerns the length of the paper. Although I began with misgivings about the simple word-count, I realised that it was a more substantial issue than this and the distinction gets to the heart of something that could be transformative.

Each part of the paper as it stands, with a section written by each one of you is compelling. I never felt that the length per se was a problem in terms of meanings and significance. (I do think there are problems publishing something over 27,000 words when the journal rubric states that between 6,000 and 12,000 words are the expected length. However, I think this is an editorial point and I don't want to get bogged down in it.)

I would like to make a suggestion for your consideration. I am wondering if it would be worthwhile to have this text constituting the whole of one issue of EJOLTS. Not in its present form, but as six papers - the introduction by all of you, the four individual parts (which I know are not separate, but they are singly authored) and then the conclusion as the final paper of the issue. This would allow for some expansion on the explanation of some terms, which you currently use - see script for details - which might make comprehension for the reader a little easier in places.

I recognise the danger of fragmentation in the dissemination of ideas and values, but I think that if this text were to constitute a whole issue of EJOLTS, this in itself would lend it even greater gravitas. It would also, significantly, underline the idea of transcending the expected, 'normalised' processes of the presentation of ideas, something I believe EJOLTS was formulated for, in fact. I think it would revolutionalise and augment the significance of this very important text. It would also constitute a really intricate sense of holding together the one and the many, which is the art of the dialectician, something that all of you clearly take very seriously.

In its present format I don't think it does itself justice. I think, however, the issues I raise are editorial rather than reviewer-based. I believe this needs to be looked at by the editorial board with the above taken into consideration.

This paper MATTERS. I want to see it published, but I do not feel I can simply say, publish or don't publish. In its present format I have real misgivings because of what I am saying above. With editorial approval, I think this paper could present itself in an even more cogent and brilliant form and I want to see it published.

Please do respond to this in any way you see fit. I welcome corresponding with you individually or as a group.

All the best, Moira ([Laidlaw, 2013](#))

Dear all,

I would like to offer a small critique of the paper and of the living theories approach, if I may. Although I'm going to start with a gripe, I hope you can see it as I do, which is to say an irritation that has potential to be fruitful, if it is worked through.

So to the gripe...

I looked forward to reading "Action research transcends constraints of poverty in elementary, high school and post-graduate settings." I really wanted to know how action research transcends constraints of poverty. It wasn't until I got about half way through that I realised that I wasn't going to find out. The article refers to moral poverty, aesthetic poverty, intellectual poverty, impoverished learning etc. - none of which are defined, explained or evidenced - but there's no reference to poverty as such. (I suppose I could have avoided disappointment by reading the abstract more carefully!)

I've had quite a privileged life really, and haven't experienced a lot of poverty but, as I understand it, poverty is hunger. It's a dull ache that doesn't go away. It's lethargy. It's continual anxiety, every time you wake up. Fear of the bailiff. OK, so it's a shame that print

journals don't contain video; it might be better if they did, but it feels it feels uncomfortable to equate this with poverty. And, whilst I'm in griping mode, exactly who is it that stands accused of 'moral poverty' and on what grounds?

At some point in my reading, I decided that you were probably including the theme of poverty because this was the conference theme. I know that's judgemental and possibly most unfair, but that's how you came across to me. I felt somehow cheated, as though you shouldn't have done this. As if the local vicar (who should know better) had made off with some church funds.

So - and this is where we segue into something that could actually be helpful - why the 'cheated' feeling?

I think it's because, unlike other types of research, the central claim to a Living educational theory is that you are living life more according to your values. Not knowing more, or being a better teacher but living a better life. This is a tough claim to make because it's hard to substantiate and I'm not sure that the fact that your friends agree with you counts as sufficient evidence.

Now, I have actually met and worked with some teachers who just are wonderful human beings (in my view). But I've also worked with brilliant teachers, whose lives are a mess, full of failure and broken relationships. Which makes me wonder if the theory might benefit from being perhaps a little more modest? Is it sufficient to claim that your teaching (rather than your life) is more often, and more fully, congruent with your values?

Also, I wonder if the ontological position of values is sufficiently thought through? I have recently acquired a grand-daughter who has ontological features - eyes, mouth, nose etc. but it would be hard to argue that she has ontological values. No doubt she'll acquire some but I wonder what the process is, for this acquisition. Fortunately, her experience of 'love' is likely to be warmth, cuddles and having her needs met but, for some children, 'love' is sex and abuse and a lot of lesser, but still painful, experiences. (This might why two of the sections in the article define 'love'.) This makes me ponder the status of the word 'love' as descriptive of a value that we can all recognise.

So these are my thoughts on your article. Cutting it into separate articles seems like a good idea and I'm sure it's worth publishing.

Best wishes,

Tim ([Cain, 2013](#))

We accepted the challenges in Laidlaw's review to separate the original submission into six distinct but related pieces and to clarify further our key concepts. We accepted the criticism in Cain's review and shifted the focus away from "poverty" and onto the meanings of a "culture of inquiry." We have also offered further clarification of the meanings of our "ontological values" and their communication through multi-media narratives and their inclusion in explanation principles and as living standards of judgment.

### 8.3. In solely print-based texts

In the continuing evolution of our living-educational-theory, the greatest challenge remains overcoming the poverty of academic discourses in Journals of Education and Educational Research. We are thinking of the poverty of discourses that are restricted to print-based texts that are limited in their capacity to communicate the meanings of

embodied expressions of energy-flowing values as explanatory principles in explanations of educational influence. The challenge is to produce evidence-based explanations of educational influence that include adequate representations of energy-flowing values as explanatory principles. We have responded to this challenge in this multi-media presentation with foci on such embodied expressions of meanings as cultures of inquiry and being loved into learning.

There are many obstacles to be overcome in meeting the challenges of poverty in academic discourses about education. The power of the commercial interests in retaining the profitability of print-based journals and books should not be underestimated. However, there are now moves by some of the major universities to make freely available the publications of members of staff. The increasing familiarity of scholars with digital and visual technologies is also helping to overcome the poverty in academic discourses in education, especially those that eliminate any recognition of the importance of emotion and energy-flowing values in explanatory principles. (Crotty, 2012)

## **9. 9. Scholarly significance**

### **9.1. In the writing process and structure of this issue of EJOLTS**

The potential for this mode of inquiry using SKYPE or a similar type of application (i.e. Google hangout) is of great significance not only for action researchers but for all forms of classroom inquiry and professional development. The quality of the dialogue evident in the clips in this paper bear witness to a transformative learning process in which we are learning to live as fully as we can the values we use to give meaning and purpose to our lives. It is significant that we have lived the action reflection cycles of the action research process in the actual writing of the paper.

In our living research we are making this living inquiry less elusive and more explicit and while the model is important it is not replicable, as is, since individuals bring diverse values and unique lived experiences to the generation of their living theories. The scholarly significance seems particularly important in the classroom research of the elementary and high school teachers. Their voices and the voices of their students are so rich and profound that their conversations transform environments from impoverishment to enrichment for learning and living.

There is something highly original being created through the conversations and writings that can communicate the importance of sustaining and evolving our educational conversations as part of what we are understanding of “a life that is personally flourishing” (Reiss & White, 2013, p. 4). As we do this we are helping each other to live lives that are relationally dynamic with embodied expressions of human flourishing.

### **9.2. In its methodological inventiveness**

This issue of EJOLTS is significant in its approach which values creativity and artistic interpretations rather than fidelity to models, curricula, processes, hierarchies. Jack’s living-educational-theory has been refined through the integration of insights in his understandings of cultures of inquiry. These understandings began with the meaning of

culture of inquiry in Jackie's doctoral thesis (Delong 2002) and deepened and extended with the categories suggested by Liz and Cathy of: Background; Loved into Learning; Praxis; Students as co-researchers; Building Trust and Respect; Unveiling Embodied Knowledge; The Living Curriculum; Influencing Self, Others and Social Formations; Influencing Social Formations Outside the Classroom; Challenges and Obstacles. This integration is particularly significant in relation to Jack's understandings of how to extend the systemic influence of living educational theories. Jackie's culture of inquiry has been refined and improved through the recognition of Cathy and Liz of being loved into learning in educational relationships.

This work is scholarly significant not only because we have taken another interpretation of poverty but also because we have generated our own living theories in action reflection cycles to show how impoverished environments can be transcended. We have interpreted poverty to include impoverished learning environments in which morals or values are imposed or the values of each individual are not allowed to be expressed.

### **9.3. In the capacity of action research to transform lives and learning**

We think that there is something very important in the culture of inquiry we are creating in expressing and evolving our individual responsibilities for living our values as fully as we can in contexts that can be seen to have various forms of poverty. In doing this, the four of us experience hope in being and working together on something we believe is worthwhile.

The scholarly significance is also demonstrated in the knowledge-claims about the capacities and educational influences of action researchers to improve education. These claims include the explanations that show how environments of impoverishment can be transformed in improving education and serving the public good. These explanations include understandings of the constraints and opportunities related to the sociocultural and sociohistorical contexts in which the research is located. In evaluating the validity of these explanations new living standards of judgment are introduced such as the energy-flowing, relational values of action researchers.

In our articles, we have referenced a broadened interpretation of the constraints of poverty being transcended. When we reference poverty we include traditional academic forms of print-based texts which limit the validity of communications of the embodied meanings of the energy-flowing values of professional educators in explanations of their educational influences in learning.

### **9.4. In contributing to the knowledge-base of teaching and learning**

This issue of EJOLTS can be seen as a response to Schön's (1995) call for the development of a new epistemology for the new scholarship in demonstrating how the embodied knowledge of professional educators can be made public. It answers Snow's (2001, p. 9) call for procedures for accumulating such knowledge and making it public and the need for a critical mass of practitioner researchers' studies. It demonstrates the potential of the living educational theories of individuals to fulfil both halves of the AERA mission to advance knowledge about education, to encourage scholarly inquiry related to



education and to promote research to improve education and to serve the public good (Ball and Tyson, 2011).

The writings in this issue of EJOLTS can be related to experiences of “being loved into learning” as a contribution to the culture of inquiry that we are creating. What seems to us to be original in the paper is that we are explicitly bringing “loving kindness” and being “loved into learning” into cultures of inquiry. We think that bringing our pooling of life-affirming energy into a living standard of judgment of a culture of inquiry is scholarly significant.

### **9.5. In the sustainability of our influence**

The scholarly significance resides in evidence to support claims of longitudinal action research that clarify a sustainability of influence, what we’re articulating as a living legacy, from Jack to Jackie to Liz and Cathy to their students in elementary, high school and university classrooms and to their peers. This legacy has transformed lives from impoverished learning environments to places where they are loved into learning.

It demonstrates the potential of Whitehead’s (1989) general idea of Living Educational Theory to effect positive change in the lives of practitioners and those they influence in a spectrum of settings and the nature of the influence that emerges. It stresses the importance of creating and sharing each individual’s living-educational-theory.

It demonstrates the potential of creating a culture of inquiry to encourage and support practitioners to create their own living-theories.

It demonstrates the potential of the transformative power of being loved into learning to transcend constraints of impoverished learning environments.

It is also significant that the authors have addressed the concerns and obstacles to the creation of living theories in cultures of inquiry in classrooms and looked to their next steps in ways to improve and fulfilled the AERA conference purposes through the transformative capacity of educational action research researchers in a broad spectrum of contexts of education.

## **10. Interim conclusion for our ongoing inquiries**

This presentation continues our project of transforming educational knowledge through making explicit the embodied knowledge of educators in generating cultures of inquiry that can both support improvements in practice and make contributions to knowledge. What we are claiming is that the values that carry hope for the future of humanity, and hence are in the public good, are brought more fully into the world as individuals create and share their own living educational theories within such cultures of inquiry. At the heart of these theories are the energy-flowing values that are being used as explanatory principles in explanations of educational influence. The transformation in educational knowledge is occurring as explanatory principles, such as “loving kindness,” and “being loved into learning” are being brought into the Academy as epistemological standards of judgment for evaluating the validity of claims to educational knowledge. At the heart of this transformation is the process of empathetic resonance in which individuals and

groups can recognise and share the meanings of the energy-flowing values as they are clarified in the course of their emergence in practice.

Our AERA presentations provided us with the opportunity of submitting our explanations to peer, critical evaluations, as part of democratic evaluations. By submitting our presentation for publication in EJOLTS and responding to the reviews in the open review process we are continuing to strengthen our contributions to educational knowledge and our educational inquiries. We are hopeful that you will respond to our presentation to help with moving our inquiries forward into improving our educational influences in our work, with the creation of our living educational theories. It may be that you would like to join us in our democratic way of creating together so that we can strengthen the influence of each others' living-educational-theories within cultures of inquiry that are serving to enhance the flow of values that carry hope for the future of humanity.

In creating our living-educational-theories within a continuously evolving culture of inquiry we are ending with an interim conclusion that includes our intentions to contribute to a future that does not exist as yet, but that we are working towards with values that carry, for us, hope for the future of humanity.

Between 11-13 November 2013 Jack led a British Council sponsored workshop in Podgorica, Montenegro on "Using action research with living educational theories to improve practice and to generate knowledge."

You can access the workshop description and programme at: <http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/jack/montenegro11-14-13.pdf>. In the last session of the workshop Jack asked participants to share their intentions. Here is a 3 minute video-clip of Ana Milanović talking about her intentions:



Video 6. Ana Milanović talking about her intentions (<http://youtu.be/uHFu2-IeBOY>)

This video-clip emphasises the role of the intentionality of others in the interim conclusion as they project themselves into creating their own living-educational-theories with action research with a focus on improving practice and generating knowledge. Jack drew the attention of the participants to the living-theory action research of Branko Bogнар and his colleagues in neighbouring Croatia. He emphasized the importance of their publications in EJOLTS and was able to show the participants, through the internet, the following contributions:

- i) Bogнар, B. & Zovko, M. (2008), "Pupils as action researchers: improving something important in our lives. Educational Journal of Living Theories"
- ii) Gavran (2009), "Class journal as a possibility of encouraging pupils' creativity"
- iii) Ibrković & Bogнар (2009), "Creativity in teaching plant productive"
- iv) Bogнар (2013), "Initiating teachers' action research: Empowering teachers' voices. Educational Journal of Living Theories"
- v) Vidović & Kuharić Bučević (2013), "The enhancement of creativity in Technical Education."

On the 9th November 2013 Jacqueline Delong presented her work on "Lesson Improvement and School Reform through Action Research in Canada" at Japan's Women's University in Tokyo. You can access the power-point slides in the presentation from: <http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/japan/jdJWU091113rev.pptx>. Jackie's text in support of the PowerPoint slides can be accessed from: <http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/japan/jdJWUNov313.docx>.

This presentation is evidence in our interim conclusion of our joint desire to spread the influence of the evolution of cultures of inquiry through the generation and sharing of living-educational-theories with action research. This desire is expressed by Jackie at the beginning of her PowerPoint presentation in her location of her presentation in her global, national and local contexts.

Cathy Griffin and Liz Campbell have worked on a proposal for funding to establish a Bluewater Action Research Network (BARN). The proposal has been accepted for funding by the Teacher Learning and Leadership Programme (TLLP) - Provincial Knowledge Exchange (PKE). You can access details of the programme from: <http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/CPD/TLLPPKEOverview.pdf> and details of the programme in file that will open in the EXCEL application at: <http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/BARNprop.xls>. The proposal includes the following commitments:

This proposal is an opportunity to create meaningful, relevant, authentic and sustainable professional development for practitioners that can be directly transferred to the classroom thus creating similar learning opportunities for students. Based on the concepts of action-reflection and data-driven self-directed inquiry in a collaborative community the goals of this proposal align directly with 25 out of 31 of the K-12 School Effectiveness Framework indicators. It also aligns with Bluewater District BIPSA priorities.

Priority #1: To facilitate quality instruction and learning experiences for educators in which as-needed, individualized feedback and support is available through the development of mentor/mentee relationships, small cultures of inquiry and validation groups.

Priority #2: To co-create an equitable and inclusive environment with a common understanding of group values, goals and success criteria with the improvement of student wellbeing and achievement at the core, in which educator learning is deepened through authentic, relevant and meaningful self-directed inquiry, and with measurable improvement in student wellbeing and achievement as an outcome.

Priority #3: To promote and facilitate dialogue across subjects, divisions, levels of the Board and within the community through diverse sustainable growth over time and through the public sharing of our work.

So, our interim conclusion is grounded in our evaluations of our past practices as we make sense of our present practices with our intentions to contribute to the creation of a future that is not yet realised. Our interim conclusion includes future intentions that express our desire to be accountable to each other and yourself in a democratic process of evaluation. In this process of evaluation we are offering our explanations of our educational influences in learning as our living-educational-theories in a continuously evolving and extending culture of inquiry.

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