



## **Foreword**

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First, we dedicate this issue to Paulo Mellett (1979–2014), a young man taken from us too soon, who exemplified the values of the EJOLTS community in his commitment to working together with others in balance to regenerate our world. In this December, 2014 issue of the Educational Journal of Living Theories, you will find an impressive variety of articles from around the world including Canada, Oman, South Africa and United Kingdom. In addition to articles from professionals working in Health and Education, you will also find reviews and videos of our authors' Living Theory research (Whitehead, 1989) Masters dissertations and Doctoral theses with urls to the entire documents (Mark Potts' can be found in the June 2014, accessed at <http://ejolts.net/node/227>) The issue is completed by three book reviews.

In this foreword I provide a brief summary of each of the articles and include some of the responses of the reviewers. This provides evidence of our living culture of inquiry (Delong, 2013) in the EJOLTS community where we encourage and support our authors to strengthen their accounts in several iterations of the articles before publication. To conclude, I reflect on the book reviews and comment on the reviewing process and our valuing of reviewers.

## **Article 1: Our Living Educational Theory of Knowledge Translation: Improving Practice, Influencing Learners, and Contributing to the Professional Knowledge Base of Nursing**

In the group of four Health-related articles we begin with Jen Manzin-Vickers and Jan Johnston, two practising nurses and nursing educators in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada sharing their journey of exploring ways to solve their Knowledge Translation dilemma of using theory in practice and generating theory in practice. They are two voices in shared learning. There appear to be five significant points in this article: the transformational nature of Living Theory research in their lives, the significance of addressing the issue of the theory-practice gap (Knowledge Translation) in their careers in nursing, the collaborative nature of their research, writing and learning, the impact of creating a culture of inquiry in which to be authentic and vulnerable and the on-going nature of their mission to live according to their values as living standards of judgment (Laidlaw, 1996) in their own lives, in those around them and in their home/work environments.

Their understanding of Living Theory research is clear, “We find that knowledge is derived from practice, and practice is informed by knowledge, in an ongoing process.” (p. 18) As Moira Laidlaw wrote in her review, “Loving life so much is a lovely theme that you bring in and show. It's what Whitehead calls, life-affirming energy.” Moira continues:

This is an important paper because it reflects two practitioners' need to go beyond the straitjacket of the top-down approach to change, i.e. theory into practice. Your paper demonstrates very clearly how you travel the more complex, but ultimately more fruitful, journey of practice to theory to practice in a continuing dialectic. The examples of your practice are always telling particularly the Youtube ones, and it is in these, quite rightly, that the paper genuinely lifts off the page and becomes Living Theory.

Another reason I think this is an important paper is because it's about two people educating themselves. I think the stance you both take towards this crucial issue makes this article special because it connects the values you are seeking to embody more fully with the potential to offer others a light by which they may want to guide their own practice and theorising. However, you are not prescribing that influence, and that's also key to Living Theory as I understand it. (personal communication, Oct. 8/14, <http://ejolts.org/mod/forum/discuss.php?d=136>)

In response to reviewer Peter Mellett's concern, “I need a preamble that makes clear to me just who/what constitutes the 'collaborative we' that is addressing me through the text of this paper.” (personal communication, Oct. 8/14, <http://ejolts.org/mod/forum/discuss.php?d=136>), Jen and Jan then added a section that helped us to appreciate the nature of their collaborative writing and learning. The visual data are instrumental, in appreciating the relationship between Jan and Jen and their proficiency in using the technology.

One of the really enjoyable parts of the role of editor of an issue of EJOLTS is that I get the opportunity to live the value of “alongsidedness” (Pound, 2014, p.74) with the authors and reviewers. Moira’s response to this article helped me improve my competence in reviewing. She comments, “We seek not to measure but rather to understand and explain our knowledge translation process.” I really do like this: it's powerful, convincing - because you already convinced me actually - and qualifies your values very clearly indeed. This is you walking the talk. I always look for that in a Living Theory paper: are the authors just writing *about* something, or are they showing it in the practice of writing? And that's what marks this paper out for me as really outstanding: you are who you say you are and you're becoming the nurses/people you want to become. What could be more exciting and laudable than that?”

## **Article 2: Transcending colonising influences across cultural boundaries: A continuing journey of lifelong learning.**

In the second health-related article, Je Kan Adler-Collins, an international nurse educator, provides us with a window into his world through his narrative and visual presentations. Despite obstacles to making change, he finds a new lease on life in his nursing consultancy in a young and progressive country, Oman. The article narrates Je Kan’s challenges and learning gained from living his values as they evolve through his praxis in several countries, focused primarily on Oman. A multi-dimensional and multi-cultural account, it integrates different data stories and shares the art, science and craft of nursing in an educational and skills process that is not driven by power, is not colonising, and generates new collaborative forms of knowledge.

He writes, “Working and researching in the UK, Japan, Thailand, China and Oman, I am aware of the importance of focusing and sustaining educational conversations on transcending colonising influences across cultural boundaries for improving professional practice and generating educational knowledge. A core value that I hold closely is never to willingly become an instrument for colonization.” (p. 33)

Je Kan shows that the complexities of an Arabic culture that he navigates daily require an openness to dissolving boundaries of nursing scholarship and practice across borders and offers a glimpse of the dynamics of living-global-citizenship (Coombs, Potts, Whitehead, 2014) that are above the concepts of individual or nation. To connect to the theme of living-global-citizenship and Mark Potts’ article later in the issue, Mark writes, “Adler Collins (2014) emphasises cultural differences as a living boundary which enables him to be creative in holding the tension between his own Buddhist teaching and the teaching of the Koran as he lives and works in Oman teaching in the medical profession. This creative tension gives rise to him living out the value of cultural-empathy as he seeks to overcome *cultural blindspots* and have a decolonising influence.” (Potts, 2014, p.115)

As part of an on-going conversation about multi-media, we living theorists often debate whether visual images can stand on their own and tell their own story or do they

require some explanation from the author so that the reader can fully comprehend their meaning? In light of this, Peter Mellett, another reviewer, suggested that the images needed some explanation. In response, Je Kan wrote: “I would like these images to speak for themselves but I understand that perhaps some guidance for interpretation is needed. These images show the multi-dimensions of my *lifelong learning*, what I’ve learned and how it has influenced my practice” (p. 36). His brief descriptions for each of the images seem to me to enhance their meaning.

As one reviewer, Jacqui Scholes-Rhodes, says in her review, “I have such a sense of your lifetime's learning journey, and the tensions you wrestle with now... As a *narrative* of learning it is immensely rich; and this is how you share your intent for writing the paper, the concept of 'living narrative' occurring throughout.” (personal communication, Dec. 12/14, <http://ejolts.org/mod/forum/discuss.php?d=149>).

### **Article 3: Looking over the conceptual horizon: a living theory of practice**

Our third health-related article written by Liz Wolvaardt, Professor at the School of Health Systems and Public Health at the University of Pretoria, is, in the words of our reviewer Pip Bruce Ferguson, an “external call to shift from complacency to revisit, rethink and transform our thinking around public health in the undergraduate medical curriculum, although reflective of personal desire, is a source of tension. But this tension is only one tension, the most fundamental tension is a historical one.” (personal communication, Oct. 25/14 , <http://ejolts.org/mod/forum/discuss.php?d=138>). Liz describes her research as “the living theory of my practice of facilitating learning of public health in the undergraduate medical curriculum in an African context and in particular my living theory of the context of that practice” (p. 55) and captures an authentic representation of public health and views of public health as being seen through a kaleidoscope rather than a lens.

She tells us that the impetus for her inquiry was three-fold: “to live my professional values of agency and care in my educational practice more fully; to transform my educational practice; and to make public my personal understanding of educational practice in facilitating the learning of public health in the medical curriculum.” (p. 55) With the lack of clarity about the nature of public health both within and outside the medical field, she says that “this construct of a multiple concurrent understanding of public health is the most complex conceptual horizon in this inquiry and is the foundation for every other interpretation or understanding of practice.” (p. 68) Liz found that to make change in her context, “...we have released a positive life-giving energy to our practice (Whitehead, 2012, p.3)... This energy has wrought changes not only in our practice but in the practice of others with visible positive engagement with not only the block chairs and the organizational structures that steward developments in the medical curriculum. (p. 69)

In her review of the article, Liz Campbell says to Liz, “Even though my background is in education, I found myself engrossed in the process and intrigued by the content. The details of your work in regard to values and relationships are universal and like your study,

have the power to be transformative for many readers... Your obvious dedication and commitment is making a significant and much needed contribution to the flourishing of humanity on a global scale (personal communication, Nov. 16/14, <http://ejolts.org/mod/forum/discuss.php?d=138>).

#### **Article 4: *Moving on Up!* Therapeutic movement for postnatal anxiety and depression: Finding significance through alongsidedness, enquiring collaboratively and living theory action research in health visiting.**

In our fourth health-related article, Robyn Pound, a health-visitor in Bath, UK, shares her value of alongsidedness as expressed in this impressive *Moving On Up* project. In the abstract she describes the program, “*Moving on Up!* is a multi-agency project to develop therapeutic movement for mothers with postnatal depression and promote physical activity in families.” The project is clearly a collaborative effort to improve the world of mothers and babies. As a reviewer, I shared some of my experience with Moms and babies, “I believe strongly that improving the world economically, socially, politically and philosophically will come from focusing on the very young and their brain development. Dr. Fraser Mustard's work has influenced me greatly <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2528649/>.”

The other reviewer, Moira Laidlaw, wrote that the article “should be celebrated for the heartfelt, rigorous, academic, yet always deeply human response to the people around you and the work you do... I found myself thinking, if only countries could behave like this to each other, then we would make rapid progress as a species! Moira goes on to encourage Robyn to see “how your insights into alongsidedness are changing and developing, that your value of alongsidedness is itself alive as you and your groups are alive. And more than that. I think you're clarifying your own logic, i.e. through your own experiences with your past, current and potential research, you are showing how you come to conclusions about validity, truth and significance.” (personal communication, Dec. 2/14, <http://ejolts.org/mod/forum/discuss.php?d=151>).

In her abstract, Robyn describes alongsidedness as a methodology, an epistemology and a means to encourage self-belief, “Participants consider their uniqueness within a collective sense of community and begin to recognise their own significance as a state of mental wellbeing. (p. 74). In my review I wrote, “Conducting research collaboratively, 'Enquire collaboratively', is a complex process in which more than one person engages in the research and writing. Robyn addressed this complexity by recognizing all of the voices democratically and yet not losing the individual's contribution. The mothers engaged in the activities and research as they felt comfortable.” (personal communication, Dec. 6/14, <http://ejolts.org/mod/forum/discuss.php?d=151>)

In order to present the Living Theory methodology as less threatening to these mothers as practitioner-researchers, she used gentler language. She says, “Maybe enquiring collaboratively is another way of saying ‘person-centred practice’. (p. 90) However, she

ensured the rigour of the research, “Person-centred practice, enquiring collaboratively and alonsideness require evidence of efficacy. This highlights the added value of Living Theory research which requires practitioners to produce evidence that we actually do as we claim.”(p. 90)

Through this collaborative research, we learn that “ Therapeutic movement and empathic responsiveness supports mothers’ progress from containment towards recovery and, for some, collaboration with the enquiry itself.” (abstract) The videos were seminal to understanding her meaning of ‘therapeutic movement and empathic responsiveness’ as we watch the mothers engage in this freeing and supportive activity.

Now I move into a new area of research articles, global citizenship.

### **Article: Living Global Citizenship: A New Pedagogy for Citizenship Education.**

In the final article in this issue, Mark Potts, Independent Educational Consultant in the United Kingdom, shares his experiences, research and transferable protocols initiated in building partnerships between schools in the UK and South Africa. Reviewer Jerry Allender writes, “The article by Mark Potts is an exciting exploration into the biggest issue facing humankind. In essence, how are we going to learn to get along - those near to us all the way to those who are farthest away. Living Global Citizenship and the projects it envisions is extraordinarily helpful as a foundation for thinking about how to begin and continue as we get more involved. Not only is this a theory-based exploration but also the perspective of two contrasting educational programs are in the mix, helping us to stay focused on the practical issues that are involved. The author's first-hand knowledge of educational programs in South Africa and the UK and the differences they illuminate enliven the story as it unfolds.” (personal communication, Nov. 12/14, <http://ejolts.org/mod/forum/discuss.php?d=145>).

Jerry continues, “We learn about the roles of mutual negotiation, living citizenship, and the meaning of deep appreciation that can come about through the critical engagement of participants. Potts’ thinking and experience provide the reader with opportunities to imagine cross-cultural engagement within one's own culture and that of others. The recognition of the value of the “touching of hearts” is brought to the foreground - a term so unfamiliar in the context of scholarly studies. Yet here, we can clearly see how it is missing.” With reviewer, Pip Bruce Ferguson’s encouragement, Mark strengthened his claims to know by providing more examples and she responded to the changes, “I greatly appreciate the instant and sensitive changes you have made, which to my mind immensely strengthen what was already a very good paper. It's really helpful to be able to read specific examples of your work with the folk in South Africa.” (personal communication, Nov. 12/14, <http://ejolts.org/mod/forum/discuss.php?d=145>).

As Je Kan Adler-Collins emphasized in the earlier article, colonization is a significant issue in this kind of work. Mark explains “why it is significant for those involved in

international development work to engage in self-studies of their own influence in enquiries of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing?' in ways that avoid colonisation, but enable mutual negotiation and agreement of common values." (abstract) Jerry Allender wrote, "Here we see ethics in the face of cultural devastation creatively addressed: where both despair and hope entwine as they do in this article." Recognizing that in projects of this kind sustainability is a challenge, Mark ensures the longevity of the progress by creating a joint business scheme to support the township community and a bursary system to pay for students from the township school to attend University in South Africa.

In this multi-media account, the words convey important messages but the videos bring the work and the people to life in a very personal way. Mark writes, "In this video interview that I conducted with Siyabonga, he expresses the hopes and dreams that the pupils have and we discuss some of the constraints that they face in realising their hopes and dreams. He talks about the desire of the students to get a good education and a good job so that they can escape the poverty and AIDs that are holding back their community. It was the stories of pupils like Siyabonga that made me want to improve my practice by developing the partnership between our schools." (p. 104) Individuals interested in committing to similar projects will appreciate the transferable protocols that Mark has shared, "These transferable pedagogical protocols both define and enable participants to live out their values more fully as active citizens and they can be applied to other international educational partnerships implying a new socio-ethical blueprint for planning and implementing international education development projects." (p. 110)

A more comprehensive coverage of this topic of living-global-citizenship and examples from around the globe can be accessed in Mark's thesis (review, video and url are included in the last issue - <http://ejolts.net/node/227>) and in his new book with Stephen Coombs and Jack Whitehead, *International Educational Development and Learning through Sustainable Partnerships: Living Global Citizenship*. (Coombs, S., Potts, M., Whitehead, J., 2014).

## Book Reviews

We share three book reviews in this issue of EJOLTS, all of whom relate to our Living - Theory research and writing.

*Professional Learning in Higher Education and Communities: towards a new vision of action research*: Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt, Margaret Fletcher and Judith Kearney (2015). To be published by Palgrave-Macmillan, UK, around February 2015. In her review of this new book on models and applications of action research, Pip Bruce Ferguson connects to one of our themes of challenging social injustices and aiming for environmental sustainability. Pip writes, "I believe that the open, self-critical approach of these authors and their clear articulation of the values to which they hold themselves accountable make this a book well worth promoting in this Educational Journal of Living Theories, whose emphasis is so strongly on these values and skills."



*Thinking, Fast and Slow*: Daniel Kahneman (2013); Anchor Canada. ISBN 978-0-385-67653-3. In this book the author describes the workings of our thinking systems and gives numerous examples of lazy and faulty thinking and why they occur. As I (Jacqueline Delong) write in the review, "Given my firm belief in embodied knowing and in validation of claims to know, Daniel Kahneman reminds me to continue in these beliefs but reaffirms the importance of rigour to challenge unsubstantiated claims: a reminder that we don't know what we don't know. There's the challenge."

*International Educational Development and Learning through Sustainable Partnerships – Living Global Citizenship*: Steven Coombs, Mark Potts and Jack Whitehead; Palgrave Macmillan 2014. ISBN 978–1–137–34997–2. This last book reviewed by Peter Mellett provides more information on our topic of Global Citizenship and, in particular, a more comprehensive discussion of Living Global Citizenship by one of our authors, Mark Potts. Peter writes, "Living legacies result as individuals live out their lives as global citizens who contribute to making a difference to the lives of others – and citizenship education is recast into a complete new form and with a greatly expanded significance."

## Final Comments

I want to conclude by commending our authors who have committed to share their knowledge and accepted with grace the suggestions for improvement from the reviewers often making several iterations of their writing. Further, I commend the reviewers who give freely of their time, knowledge and experience to provide our authors with encouragement and support in order to strengthen their articles. I am grateful to be part of this community of living theorists and have learned much from you.

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