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Educational Journal of Living Theories

Foreword

Je Kan Adler-Collins

In the [home page of EJOLTS](http://www.ejolts.net) under the section, commitment and scope, you will find what I believe is the heart of EJOLTS on view for all to see. For it states the following:

The values we are thinking of are ontological in the sense that they are used to give meaning and purpose to the lives of individuals. We are particularly interested in publishing explanations that connect a flow of life-affirming energy with living values such as love, freedom, justice, compassion, courage, care and democratic evaluation. (<http://ejolts.net>)

These words are powerful words, inspiring, challenging and yet within them, they hold a promise to create a space. By space, I mean that EJOLTS strives to bring our differences into collective neighbourhoods of togetherness where the very differences that cause separation are crafted within authentic accounts of enquiry into the questions that give our lives meaning in whatever field we practice in.

Values are subjective by their very nature and filled with emotions that each of us will give a different description to what we mean by “Love” or what we understand as “life affirming energy” or what we see as “freedom” or “social justice”. The written word is not without its problems, for I know what I want to say and the very words I choose to describe my thinking often exclude or never reach in full the values that I placed within them. I have no understanding of the comprehension or the ability of the reader to receive the words with the same values and meanings with which I wrote them.

The accounts in this journal are written from the assumption that knowledge and theorising are in dialectical relationship with the knower, and that individuals both create knowledge and are created by it. In these dynamic encounters with knowledge, practice and theory are transformed. The authors here are themselves the agents of sought-for improvement, rather than studying what constitutes change. In our authors' attempts to enhance what they are doing, they stand in a paradoxical state of both testimony and development.

EJOLTS understands this problem and offers a space for multimedia accounts, images, poems, art or any form or an object that can be used to help us understand the meanings that the author is opening up to us as a reader, viewer or listener. Space creation is not a passive exercise; it has to be held open by all of us in a spirit of co-operation as part of an ongoing process of our own collective knowledge generation. Each of us as contributors to the space share a collective responsibility to maintain the space. We may not be always comfortable with what we are exposed to in the form of the papers submitted or agree with the review process or even the reviewers. However, whatever we feel, the space is still a safe scholastic one grounded in compassion and courage.

All the previous publications in EJOLTS have been examples of such courage and the ability to be transparent in their process of knowledge generation. This edition continues that tradition for each of the four authors has found and identified issues that have filled them with the passion to bring about a change. Each has shown great courage in facing their own personal analysis and growth and transformation, and invite us the reader through their reflections, pictures and media, to step through a window of scholarship as guest in their lives, praxis and knowledge generation. For me this is a privilege to walk alongside a neighbour, not really understanding where I am going but feeling a deep sense of wonder as each layer of the individual story reveals itself and evidences the complexity, richness and staying power of the human spirit.

The first author's paper: *Engaging educators in representing their knowledge in complex ecologies and cultures of inquiry* is by Dr Jacqueline Delong. This scholastic self study is rich in visual evidence through the voices of other in what could only be described as a meeting of different forms of knowing created by the respect the author has for an enquiry and the desire to understand the other. In the text, we are shown some of the inner struggles of her learning as she works with her own understandings and meanings. We are given insights to a journey of transformation that has been over a life-time of teaching and senior positions as an educator and is still taking place. Working as a teacher of a Six Nations student she seeks to understand ways of indigenous forms of knowing. These have been a pivotal point in her ongoing transformation as an educator.

The second paper: *Working towards a symbiotic practice* by Alex Sinclair, is an insightful account where he opens a window into his teaching practices thinking and strategies through critical reflection and enquiry. He transparently examines how his influences are evolved through his exploration and reflection on the symbiotic learning, knowledge generation and relationships that emerge between him and his students sustained over time. He starts his paper from one perception of seeing his relationship with power. He evidences his transformation of his thinking in a clear transparent flow of well referenced text supported by student accounts and his analysis of their experiences of his teaching.

The third paper: *On becoming an Activist: A progress report on a 37 year journey to date* by Phillip Tattersall, is not merely one story but a collection of stories and achievements by a remarkable man which invites us to see how his sense of social justice is rooted in his upbringing and in values that he found in his own sense of being. These have motivated him throughout his life. It is a fast moving paper which shows how family context had influenced the child that grew into a compassionate and active man. It clearly shows how he evolves a sense and understanding of strategy which when linked to passion and applied with insight, fortitude and a great deal of common sense from lessons learned, can empower those whom feel dis-empowered to take on the giants in their lives and cause a change.

The fourth and final paper for this edition is: *The transformative potential of living theory educational research* by Lesley Wood. It is a crisp, compassionate, powerful and hard hitting account of a teacher who feels deeply the divide between the theory that she reads and practice that she sees. She asks some difficult questions of herself, her practice and her system of higher education that open another window into a country that is still evolving its direction in terms of education for all and what that education should be. She questions the value of imported models from other cultures and believes completely in her understanding that educational theory should be generated by those who face solving educational problems as part of their daily practice.

This edition has something for everyone, the novice and the experienced researcher/practitioner. I hope you enjoy it as much as I have.