

## Editorial Foreword

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I believe that readers and contributors to EJOLTS share my passion for generating and contributing knowledge to a global educational practitioner researcher knowledgebase with the hope that, in doing so, we add to the possibility of bringing into being a world where humanity flourishes. By that I mean a world where what flourishes is the humanity of us individually and together, living and learning as distinct yet indivisible parts of a complex relationally dynamic ecology of local and global social formations. I also mean a world where Humanity, as a species, flourishes in a world that evolves in dynamic tensions with all that comprise it. The papers in this edition each show the contribution that Living Theory research as 'process', and living-educational-theories as 'product', have made to enhancing the lives and learning of individuals and local and global communities with hope for the flourishing of humanity.

Whitehead's purpose for writing his paper, *Creating a living-educational-theory from questions of the kind, 'how do I improve my practice?'* 30 years on with Living Theory research, is to share his present understanding of the tenets of Living Theory research and the present focus of his work, which is supporting the generation of living-educational-theories by those working in communities.

In 1973 Whitehead moved from teaching science in school to an appointment as university lecturer in order to create a new discipline of educational enquiry that would bring the validated, embodied knowledge of educational practitioners into the academy for academic legitimisation for the award of Masters and PhD degrees. In 1988 Whitehead was elected president of BERA (British Educational Research Association), which was an

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acknowledgment by his peers of the contribution his work on Living Theory research was making to the knowledgebase of practice in Education. Since then Masters and Doctoral degrees have been awarded by universities around the world for valid accounts of living-educational-theory, which contribute to international, intellectual and scholarly discourses in many fields of professional practice, for instance, in Health, Industry, the Police, and most recently in International Development.

In 1989 Whitehead produced a paper, [\*Creating a living-educational-theory from questions of the kind, 'how do I improve my practice?'\*](#) which has become a seminal Living Theory research text. There he laid out the core tenets of Living Theory research, as he understood them at the time. The paper is still recommended as introductory reading for those who want to ask, research and answer questions of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing?' and contribute to the knowledgebase of their field of practice *and* generate and contribute valid explanations of their educational influences in their own learning to an educational knowledgebase.

30 years on, Whitehead extends the understanding of the tenets of Living Theory research and has produced another excellent text in this issue of EJOLTs for those new to Living Theory research as well as those with many years of experience creating their living-educational-theories. Although I have to wait for the test of time I am confident that this will prove to be another seminal Living Theory research text.

In this paper, [\*Creating a living-educational-theory from questions of the kind, 'how do I improve my practice?' 30 years on with Living Theory research\*](#), Whitehead shows how practice and understanding of Living Theory research has matured. For instance, Living Theory researchers now draw insights from a range of methodologies, using Dadds' and Hart's (2001, p. 166) idea of methodological inventiveness. The values that form the practitioner researcher's explanatory principles and standards of judgment have been recognised as 'living' and relationally dynamic. The form of logic, which distinguishes the rationality of living-educational-theory accounts, now includes propositional, dialectical and living logics. Living Theory research is being used by practitioner working in many fields of practice for instance, Education, Health, Industry, the Police, and most recently International Development, to understand and improve their field and educational practice and create valid knowledge, which contributes to the intellectual and scholarly discourses of their field of practice *and* to a global educational knowledgebase.

As technology has developed Whitehead has used it to develop new forms of data generation, such as digital video recording, and new forms of analysis, such as 'empathetic resonance', to understand and communicate the relationally dynamic nature of the practitioner researcher's values. He has also helped to bring about changes in university regulations to permit the submission of multimedia narratives, which make use of the latest technology, for the award of Masters and Doctoral degrees. It is just recently that academic journals are beginning to follow the precedent set by EJOLTs of publishing multimedia narrative accounts.

Whitehead 'updates' his 1989 paper with his current understandings of the tenets of Living Theory research and shows how Living Theory research is now contributing knowledge to diverse fields of professional practice. He also shows the latest use of Living Theory research by those engaged in new fields of practice, not currently 'recognised' as

professional practice, such as the practice of global citizenship, which are contributing to the development of the intellectual and scholarly discourse that form knowledgebases. These practices are often engaged in without remuneration and are often not recognised or researched. For instance, the practice of a global citizen, which Mark Potts is researching, is not currently recognised as a 'professional' practice. His living-educational-theory accounts contribute to the creation of a knowledgebase of global citizenship and to a global educational knowledgebase. Whitehead shows the influence of Pott's research on his learning and life, as he now identifies his own practice he is researching as that of a global citizen.

Mark Potts has been engaged in Living Theory action research for many years. As a professional educator teaching in a school Potts created his living-educational-theory doctoral thesis, *How can I Reconceptualise International Educational Partnerships as a Form of 'Living Citizenship'* (Potts, 2012). Since leaving teaching he has continued to engage in Living Theory research, researching his practice as a living-global-citizen in his local community to understand and improve it and create valid accounts of his living-educational-theory. In his paper, [How can I live my life as a living-global-citizen? From action research to political activism](#) he narrates his postdoctoral journey seeking to live his values in his practice without the support of an academic environment.

Potts describes 'a living-global-citizen', a term he coined with Coombs and Whitehead (Coombs, Potts & Whitehead, 2014), as an individual who seeks to live values of 'cultural empathy, humanity, democracy and togetherness'. In 2016 there was a referendum in the UK, which resulted in a majority of those eligible to vote, voting to leave the European Union. The process and outcome shook Potts' belief in democracy and was a catalyst for him to become more active in politics, and he began researching his practice of living-global-citizenship in his local community with a question of the form, "How can I enhance the democratic process through forms of deliberative democracy?" As a consequence he became involved in the development of a Democracy Cafe and a Citizen's Jury in his hometown of Salisbury, UK. Through that work he discovered 'deliberative democracy' and became, "... a political activist seeking to influence others in seeing the benefits of deliberative forms of democracy and seeking to influence social formations through the establishment of, and participation in, deliberative democratic processes."

I have been increasingly puzzled as to why I have been so insistent that attention is paid to the fact that Living Theory research, as a form of educational practitioner self-study research is, by definition, formed by, and contributes to, intellectual and scholarly discourses. Potts has offered me an insight into one reason where he writes:

"In addition, Warren (1996) argues that democracy works poorly when individuals hold preferences and make judgements in isolation from one another, as they often do in today's liberal democracies. When individuals lack the opportunities, incentives, and necessities to test, articulate, defend, and ultimately act on their judgements, they will also be lacking in empathy for others, poor in information, and unlikely to have the critical skills necessary to articulate, defend, and revise their views."

And

“... the principle that all citizens are entitled to participate in the process of political dialogue and have an equal right to introduce and question claims, to put forward reasons, to express and challenge needs, values and interests.’

However, I go further than Potts and assert that we are not just *entitled* to participate or *have equal rights*, we each have *a responsibility to actively participate* in the process of political dialogue. This participation includes the introduction and questioning of claims, to put forward reasons, to express and challenge needs, values and interests, so that humanity can flourish. In order to realise their responsibility each person needs to continually try, throughout their lives, to develop the skills and knowledge that are needed to engage in intellectual and scholarly discourse. I am thinking of discourses that contribute to improving the local contexts within which they live, learn and practice. What happens locally contributes to national, international and intercultural discourses, which affect us all, and expressions of the flourishing of our individual and collective humanity.

Potts gives two examples of how he is working to make such discourses happen in his local community. He is doing this by contributing to the establishment of a Democracy Café and pursuing a Citizens' Jury. In his paper he illustrates how he has drawn on the talents he has developed in other fields of practice, such as teaching, to understand and improve his practice locally as a living-global-citizen. He evidences and explains the educational influence he has had in his own learning, the learning and lives of those who have participated in the Democracy Café and beyond.

With different lenses something new is noticed, so it is with reading. I have read Potts' paper through one lens. I urge you to read his paper with the lenses of your interests, passions and intentions to understand and improve your practice, learning and life in a way that contributes to the flourishing of humanity. I also recommend you read the review of Potts' thesis (Whitehead, 2019 - <http://ejolts.net/drupal/node/350>) and watch the three minute video of Potts introducing his thesis.

Potts is writing as an experienced and knowledgeable Living Theory researcher. Giulia Carozzi is writing as someone new to Living Theory research but comes to it with a well-developed ability and desire to create knowledge that contributes to a realm of intellectual and scholarly discourse. She is also different to most new to Living Theory research in that she has not identified a practice she wants to research to understand and improve. Carozzi gives me an insight into the influence developing understanding of Living Theory research can have in someone's learning and life. I have not seen a paper that makes such a contribution to EJOLTs before.

I am reading Carozzi's paper as a reader focused on understanding what her account can contribute to my own research, practice, learning and life. What I took from Whitehead's paper provided me with the lens with which to read Potts. Potts' paper gives me new thoughts of how engaging intellectual and scholarly discourses can enhance people's ability to realise their responsibility as global citizens. What I learn from Carozzi's paper takes me another step further in developing my understanding of Living Theory research and the influence engaging in Living Theory research has on practice, learning and life.

Carozzi's paper, [A self-enquiry: towards the development of my living-educational-theory research](#), is an account of her educational journey that led her from being, as she

describes herself, a passive learner to become the researcher of her own learning processes, and beginning to identify practice she wants to research as a doctoral researcher. For knowledge to make a contribution to academic discourse it has to be located within a field of intellectual and scholarly discourse, otherwise it cannot be understood as making a contribution. Through Living Theory research, knowledge generated contributes both to a global educational knowledgebase and to the knowledge base of a practice, such as that of global citizenship. As Carozzi drafts and redrafts her doctoral proposal she is becoming clearer about her practice that she wants to research.

Learning is as much an emotional as an intellectual journey, even more so when the nature of the learning concerns, as is the case with Living Theory research, creating, not just acquiring, knowledge of the world, self, and self in and of the world to generate a valid living-educational-theory account. Carozzi's paper gives an insight into her learning journey as an intellectual and scholar, a mother and a woman who loves and cares for others. For instance, she draws insights from what she learned on an online Development Management Masters programme and her experiences and relationships in Tanzania. She draws on what her children are helping her to learn as a parent and parent-educator and is exploring what she is learning as she drafts and redrafts a doctoral research proposal. Curiously, I find now having read Carozzi's paper, mediated by my own agenda, I feel I can respond to the question she posed to me:

"I would like my potential readers to engage in the following question: "Do you see hope and responsibility taking shape in this article?". I wish not only to be held accountable on those two values but also to be tested on the validity and clarity of my own claims in relation to my two ontological values."

Yes Giulia, I am clearer about the meaning you give to 'hope and responsibility'. I see evidence of you being accountable to express them in your practice, currently creating a doctoral proposal to enable you to register at a university. You will need a supervisory team that has the interests and knowledge that will help you create and successfully submit a doctoral thesis. I am thinking of a thesis that will contribute knowledge to a global educational knowledgebase and to the knowledgebase of the field of practice you decide to research (which sounds to me like you want to contribute to a knowledgebase such as that of global citizenship practice).

Carozzi's paper gives me an insight, into the emotional journey with the tensions of struggling to understand the knowledge being created, and to communicate that understanding to others, which I very much relate to. Michelle Vaughan's and Jacqueline Delong's paper, *Cultures of inquiry: a transformative method of creating living-theories*, gives me insights into a different emotional journey. In their paper they show, through the process of writing together and communicating, their dialogic ways of knowing. They retain their individual voices when necessary to highlight their individual contribution and thinking as they answer their questions:

"How does Living Theory research and living, loving, and working in a way which embodies our values, influence ourselves, others and the world?" As we approach the question, "How do I improve my practice?" we are simultaneously working towards, "How do I make the world a better place and invite others to do the same?"

Vaughan was a school-teacher and is now an American academic. As her academic work began to include a significant number of doctoral advisees she began to try to understand how this role impacted her practice and to improve it. When she joined a workshop run by Jacqueline with two other Living Theory researchers. Vaughan said:

“The nature of the workshop had allowed me to connect with others who had similar beliefs about the importance of allowing your core values as a human permeate your pedagogy in an effort to support student learning.”

She was, “... shocked and thrilled that [Delong] had read my words and was reaching out for further dialogue” and from their interest and understanding of Living Theory research grew her relationship with Delong. Delong is a very experienced and knowledgeable Living Theory researcher whose practices include that of an international consultant and mentor and coach of practitioner researchers creating their living-educational-theory accounts.

Through their paper, [\*Cultures of inquiry: a transformative method of creating living-theories\*](#), Vaughan and Delong show the profound effect the methodology and community of Living Theory researchers has had on their lives and the way in which they navigate the world and influenced their aspirations and practice.

As they approach the question, “How do I improve my practice?” they are simultaneously working towards, “How do I make the world a better place and invite others to do the same?” This article documents the nature of their influence on themselves, and those around them, using the methodology of Living Theory research and creating cultures of inquiry in a myriad of contexts that can serve as intentional spaces for personal exploration of values as living standards of judgment and explanatory principles. A culture of inquiry is a safe, supportive space wherein practitioner-researchers are enabled to share their vulnerabilities, to make explicit their values, and to hold themselves accountable for living according to those values.

They argue that creating cultures of inquiry through personal and professional interactions, and embodying key values that are embedded within them, can contribute meaningfully to the growth of the field of Living Theory research. By inviting others into the world of Living Theory research, they are actively working towards creating and sustaining Living Theory research as a social movement with our current community and intentionally inviting others to join.

One of the purposes of they had in writing their paper is to communicate so a reader:

“... can see and indeed feel our passion, commitment and life-affirming energy for encouraging and supporting others through the transformative experience of creating their own living-theories in cultures of inquiry with loving educational conversations.”

Their paper evokes in me a sense of the passion, commitment and life-affirming energy they created between them in ‘a culture of inquiry with loving educational conversations’, and the nature of their learning when they say:

“We have learned that:

- It is important to speak with our own voices even as we collaborate.
- Our research and writing improved because we had loving educational conversations and wrote collaboratively.
- Visual data is seminal to our understanding of our learning and influence.
- The Zoom technology enabled us to create our culture of inquiry in order to write the paper.
- We have further clarified the nature and forms of cultures of inquiry.”

I have engaged with Vaughan’s and DeLong’s exciting paper, with my own aspirations to improve my practice and learning, to create and offer valid knowledge to the world of practitioner research. My intention is to contribute to a world within which my own humanity and that of others can flourish and we as a species can flourish. I urge you to engage with their paper through your own lens of interest and concerns, as you will notice what is of relevance to you with your own particular intention of enhancing your practice, learning and life.

Reading these four papers has extended my understanding and practice of Living Theory research and my cognitive range and concern. I hope reading them will stimulate your imagination as to how you might improve what you are doing and give you a glimpse of the rich, complex nature of the contribution Living Theory research will make in the future to a social movement that carries hope for the flourishing of humanity. I hope that you will read each paper many times. Each time you may extract something new that will help you to create and share your valid living-educational-theory. In this way you will be able to contribute to a global educational knowledgebase and to contribute your living-educational-theory of your practice to the knowledgebase of your field of practice. In doing so I believe that we can each, individually and collectively, spread knowledge and practice of Living Theory research. As we do this we can encourage and support people to enhance their ability to engage in intellectual and scholarly discourses that can contribute to a world within which humanity and Humanity can flourish.

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