

Editorial Foreword

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This editorial of December 2021 is written at a time when the world continues to reel from the effects of COVID-19. In my contribution to the foreword of issue 13(2) of December 2020 I wrote optimistically that, “it is likely to be well into 2021 before the beneficial influences of vaccines will be felt through the world”. Whilst these influences are being felt the omicron mutation of the virus is spreading and the pandemic continues. There is still much to be done is establishing an equitable sharing of vaccines throughout the world.

Working and researching in global contexts affected by the pandemic, Living Educational Theory Researchers continue to contribute their educational knowledge to the professional knowledgebase of education as they ask, research and answer questions of the kind, ‘How do we improve our practice as global citizens as our individual and collective contributions to bringing into being a world of human flourishing?’.

The sites of practice of contributors to issue 13(2) highlighted the international reach of Living Educational Theory Researchers with papers from researchers in New Zealand, India, Pakistan, Canada and Bangladesh. The sites of practice of contributors to issue 14(2) include Bangladesh, the Bahamas and Nepal. The two books reviewed are those of Suresh Nanwani researching in the Philippines and Robert Maxwell in the UK.

The first paper in this issue is that of Mohammed Hafizur Rahman, Trine Lund, Mohammed Alamin, Abdullah bin Mujib bin Abdul Khalid and Erling Krogh focus on developing a transformative, cooperative living-educational-theory research with children and youth in the EDS (Education for Development and Sustainability) community of practice in Bangladesh. The main assumption of this paper is that the new generation is key to reaching the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The main claim of the authors is that systemic changes are needed to develop new ways of learning and knowing, as well as developing capabilities to act. It is a collaboration across the international boundaries of Norway and Bangladesh. In solving complex, global challenges and creating sustainable development the authors describe how a community of practice in Bangladesh called EDS (Education for Development and Sustainability) was established. In EDS vulnerable children and youth were mentored to become change agents, teachers, and leaders who, in turn, mentor younger children and youth. The key questions explored in the research are: 'How can we mentor for transformative learning?' and 'How can we explain the related inner change?'. The paper contributes insights into transformative, cooperative living-educational-theory research in Bangladesh. This account is focused on the transformative journey of the EDS teacher Abdullah bin Mujib bin Abdul Khalid. It includes reflections on the values behind the mentoring in contributing to Living Educational Theory Research. The authors also acknowledge the influence of Sigrid Gjøtterud and Erling Krogh, from their Norwegian base, in contributing substantially to the professional reflections and to the development of their living-educational-theory.

The second paper by Javier Gonzalez, Jill Farrell and Stephanie Auguste is focused on 'A portrait of becoming: Transformative teacher education through an offshore location in the Bahamas'. This study of professional learning developed through generating, researching and answering the question, 'How is my/our professional learning impacted as we collaboratively construct curricular experiences for fellow educators in an international context, which focused on the social, cultural, and historical context of our actions in this professional learning relationship?' It involved the co-construction of a curriculum for students enrolled in a master's program in the Bahamas. It included the explication of the dynamics of the individual and collaborative experiences of living-educational-theory research as a process.

The inquiry revealed the emergence of four primary themes: i) embracing culture; ii) openness/academic freedom vs. control/authority; iii) mentoring and collegial coaching; and iv) becoming/transformation/self-actualization.

This inquiry is particularly significant for EJOLTs as it builds on an earlier contribution by Farrell et al (2012) to this journal. This serves to emphasise the importance of a life-time commitment to a Living Educational Theory Research approach to continuing professional development. It illustrates the implications of engaging over years in Living Educational Theory Research as continuing professional development.

In the third paper Bhawana Shrestha focuses on 'Working on failures and vulnerabilities: Improving my practice leading an educational initiative concerned with Emotional Intelligence in Nepal'. Shrestha engages in Living Educational Theory Research to answer her question, 'How can I improve my practice as the founder and educator of an education initiative to foster emotional intelligence for the transformation in self and others?'. Shrestha interacts with three different orders of reality: the natural, the practical,

and the discursive, as she develops her human emotionality concerning failures and vulnerabilities. She investigates and documents her journey developing social engagement, acknowledging and working on her failures and vulnerabilities. Because of my own interest in the development of research methods by those engaged in Living Educational Theory Research Shrestha's use of a multi-media narrative approach and other research methods to generate her personal and professional knowledge from five years of critical reflection caught my attention. I identified with what Shrestha said in her abstract:

I take this article as the documentation of the beginning of my continuous evolution of working on my living value that is accepting my vulnerabilities and failures and working on it as a living-educational-theory researcher for whom the flourishing of humanity is through her work as an educator who has been improving her practices while trying to enable transformation in others. (p. 5)

In the first of my two reviews in this issue I focus on Suresh Nanwani's book on 'Organization and Education Development: Reflecting and Transforming in a Self-Discovery Journey' from his work in the Philippines and beyond. Many Living Educational Theory Researchers acknowledge the importance of spiritual values in their explanations of educational influences. Some acknowledge a religious grounding for their spiritual values. Others, like myself, acknowledge a humanistic grounding for their spiritual values. Here is quote from my review that highlights its focus on values of human flourishing and hence its significance for Living Educational Theory Research:

I was particularly attracted to the way in which Suresh integrated spirituality into his life's journey. For Suresh spirituality is the state of believing that there is more to the world than the material world. It includes attending to mental and emotional states to gain self-knowledge; having a healthy work-life balance; and valuing and practicing virtues, such as being compassionate, empathetic, and openhearted. Suresh expresses himself with a life-affirming energy that I associate with spirituality. He demonstrates a respect for the spirituality that is expressed through Buddhism, Hinduism and Christianity. Suresh's spirituality is profoundly humanistic in the sense that his life-affirming energy embraces and expresses values of human flourishing. (Whitehead, 2021, p.81)

In the second of my reviews I focus on Nicholas Maxwell's book, *'The World in Crisis – and what to do about it: A revolution for thought and action.'* Maxwell lists many world crises and distinguishes between what he calls 'knowledge-inquiry' and 'wisdom-inquiry' in two great problems in learning. He believes knowledge-inquiry has been successful in learning about the universe, and about ourselves and others forms of life as a part of the universe. However, he contends that knowledge-inquiry has failed in learning how to create a genuinely civilized, enlightened, wise world. He offers wisdom-inquiry as a way of solving the second great problem of learning.

Wisdom-inquiry seeks to clarify a profound misunderstanding concerning the nature of reason. For Maxwell this includes a distinction between what he calls the 'Traditional Enlightenment' and the 'Profound Enlightenment'. He describes three blunders he believes

were made in the Traditional Enlightenment and explains how these blunders might be overcome using wisdom-inquiry. In Traditional Enlightenment knowledge, he says, is acquired and once acquired, can be applied to help solve social problems and promote human welfare. Maxwell acknowledges the immense successes and benefits of the Traditional Enlightenment. However, Maxwell says he believes these immense successes and benefits have been achieved by putting into practice an idea that he considers is very seriously defective and is influential in contributing to the world in crisis. He argues that The Traditional Enlightenment may contain the solution to the first great problem of learning it does not contain the solution to the second one. Maxwell presents 'wisdom-inquiry' to address what he identifies as the 'great defect'; the idea that, by means of modern science and technology, we can achieve health and happiness

Reference

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