

**Accepted proposal for A symposium presentation at the April 2021 Conference of the American Educational Research Association on Accepting Responsibility.**

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**Accepting Educational Responsibility: Building Living Theory Cultures of Educational Inquiry in global contexts.**

### **Session abstract.**

The contributors are all exploring the implications for improving their educational practices and contributing to educational knowledge of accepting educational responsibility in building Living Theory Cultures of Educational Inquiry in their local and global contexts. They are participating in a global social movement of educational researchers this is engaged in asking, researching and answering, 'How do I, individually and in cooperation with others, enhance the difference Living Educational Theory research can make in a community concerned with extending human flourishing?' Each researcher is moved by unique constellations of values that are used to explain their educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations that influence their practices and understandings.

#### 1. Objectives of the session

The objectives are focused on explicating the implications of accepting educational responsibilities, as activist researchers and global citizens for building Living Theory cultures of educational inquiry in local and global contexts. The implications include the explication of the meanings of embodied expressions of the unique constellation of values that each researcher uses to give meaning and purpose to their lives in education. These values are used as explanatory principles in explanations of educational influences in learning in the generation of living-educational-theories. The objectives relate to the purpose of the theme of AERA 2021 to signal that 'Our identities as citizens and as scholars will be embraced'.

#### 2. Overview of the presentation

The presentation brings together self-study, Living Educational Theory researchers from India, Nepal, Canada, the UK and the USA, who are engaged in exploring the implications of asking, researching and answering the question, 'How do I, individually or in cooperation with others, enhance the difference Living Educational Theory research can make in a community (and/or an organisation) concerned with extending human flourishing?' Each researcher has a unique constellation of values that they use as explanatory principles in their explanations of their educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations that influence that practice and understandings. They each demonstrate how they are fulfilling their educational responsibility for living the values of human flourishing as fully as possible as they generate their living-educational-theories and support others to do the same. In accepting an educational responsibility, as activist scholars and global citizens they identify the values of human flourishing they use to account to themselves and others for fulfilling this responsibility.

#### 3. Significance

The scholarly significance is focused on a distinction between education research and educational research. Using de Santos' (2014) idea of Epistemicide the influence of education researchers on educational researchers is analysed in terms of the replacement by education researchers of the practical principles used by educational researchers to explain their educational influences in learning. Evidence of this replacement is provided from social pressures in the American and British Educational Research Associations.

The scientific significance is focused on the use of digital visual data and the method of empathetic resonance to clarify and communicate the meanings of the embodied expressions of the values that constitute human flourishing and that are used as explanatory principles in explanations of educational influences in learning.

#### 4. Structure

The structure of the session is designed to be interactive with equal time given to the contributors to present and the participants to interact, question and comment. Ethical permissions will be sought to video the session and to make available through YouTube for further responses and ongoing conversations.

1) Accepting Educational Responsibility: Building Living Theory Cultures of Educational Inquiry in a Canadian/global context. **Jacqueline Delong**

1. Objectives or purposes

The objectives include addressing the question ‘How can we unite with practitioners, with scholars across other academic fields and disciplines, and with other citizens beyond academia to strategically address complex social and educational problems?’ They include, self-study, evidence-based explanations of the educational influences of practitioner-researchers. These show how environments of impoverishment and inequity can be transformed through offering safe, democratic and cultures of inquiry.

2. Perspective(s) or theoretical framework

The main perspective in this presentation is provided by the theme of “Accepting Educational Responsibility” in which educational researchers are activist scholars and global citizens in the places in which scholarship is produced, disseminated, and implemented.

At the heart of the living theory culture of inquiry is Delong’s (2002) perspective that the development of a culture of inquiry rests upon supporting the knowledge-creating capacity in each individual in the system.

3. Methods, techniques, or modes of inquiry

The living truths of self-study educational researchers draw on the perspectives outlined by Tidwell, Heston and Fitzgerald (2009) in their work on research methods. Digital visual technology is used to ‘bridge divides of economic capital through digitally-mediated education that connects rural and urban students to rich educational resources outside the classroom walls’. (Tierney & Renn, 2012, p.2). A method of ‘empathetic resonance’ using digital technology is introduced to clarify the meanings of the expression of embodied values and energy that contribute to the explanatory principles of educational influences in learning.

4. Data sources, evidence, objects, or materials

Data sources include the self-study narratives of researchers who have accepted an educational responsibility for building Living Theory Cultures of Educational Inquiry in global contexts. These can be accessed from <https://www.actionresearch.net/living/living.shtml> and include Briganti’s (2020) ‘My living-theory of International Development’. Evidence is also drawn from publications in Kitchen et al. (2020), Educational Action Research (2020), The Action Learning, Action Research Journal (2020) and the Educational Journal of Living Theories (2020).

5. Results and/or substantiated conclusions or warrants for arguments/point of view

These demonstrate that the author has encouraged and supported the generation of educational knowledge in the form of self-studies that are addressing racial and other inequities in education. The dialogic nature of the self-study shows how loving educational conversations, grounded in values that carry hope for the flourishing of humanity, can

contribute to overcoming the demoralisation and devaluation of economic rationalism in hopeful and loving processes of social transformation.

### 6. Significance

The scholarly significance is in offering self-study, evidence-based explanations of the educational influences of practitioner-researchers to show how environments of impoverishment and inequity can be transformed.

The scientific significance is in its use of digital technology to 'bridge divides of economic capital through digitally-mediated education that connects rural and urban students to rich educational resources outside the classroom walls'. (Tierney & Renn, 2012, p.2)

## 2) Accepting Educational Responsibility: Building Living Theory Cultures of Educational Inquiry in an Indian/global context **Shivani Mishra**

### 1. Objectives or purposes

The objective is to show how a Living Educational Theory research approach to action research can upscale the quality of education in preschool through life skill education in a rural village of Gujarat, India.

### 2. Perspective(s) or theoretical framework

The main perspective is that early childhood is a critical stage of development as it directly influences the social, economic and health of people and society. In early years there is a rapid development of the brain, which duly impacts on health, behaviour, and learning of children. Preschool education in Rural India is imparted through the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS). In this paper, I exemplify my classroom practice and generate a living educational theory as I explore the implications of asking, researching and answering the questions, "How do I improve my practice? How do I improve what I am doing? How I do enhance the process of education with the help of modules of life skill education?"

### 3. Methods, techniques, or modes of inquiry

The methods used are those developed by Rawal (2012; 2020) in life-skills education. Rawal uses a Living Educational Theory research approach to integrate life-skills education, within social work programmes in Higher Education in an Indian Context.

### 4. Data sources, evidence, objects, or materials

The data sources include the Integrated Child Development Scheme- (ICDS) Welfare Service for children in India. This is the world's largest community based program and was launched on 2 October 1975. The research described in this contribution provides evidence on how preschool education in rural India is imparted through ICDS, which has emerged as the most extensive program for early childhood development in India. Whilst ICDS is lagging in imparting quality education to preschool children this presentation provides evidence on how this quality can be improved.

### 5. Results and/or substantiated conclusions or warrants for arguments/point of view

The results include evidence of learning from a 72 hour programme of training in life skills education to understand and to teach it. The results include an evidence-based explanation of how I link my practice with theory and theory with practice. They include an explanation of my learning how to take risk and realising how risk-taking as an important aspect of creative thinking in the generation of a living-educational-theory.

### 6. Significance

The scientific significance is in showing how children's behavior can be transformed from being very submissive, fear to talk, fear to act and reservations in class participation. The transformation is focused on developing a trust relationship with the help of listening, communication and activity-based techniques such as a games, drawing and screening films between my children and me. Children open up and became participative.

The scholarly significance is in showing how two modules of life skill education on emotion and communication can be used to enhance the educational experiences of pre-school students through the medium of games and activity-based learning.

### 3) Accepting Educational Responsibility: Building Living Theory Cultures of Educational Inquiry in a USA/global context **Michelle Vaughn**

#### 1. Objectives or purposes

The objectives include the uncovering and validation of my core values of connection and care with peers and students through the lens of living-educational-theory. They include the generation of my living-educational-theory as I embrace my identity as an activist scholar and global citizen within my educational practices and scholarship within USA Higher Education.

#### 2. Perspective(s) or theoretical framework

The main perspective is that whilst cultures of inquiry can be understood on both on the micro and macro level, dialogical relationships are a necessary component of such cultures. The perspective includes a focus on a mentoring relationship in which both members of the mentoring relationship are valued and 'seen' for their equal contribution to the relationship, in which both members contributes to each others' educational development.

#### 3. Methods, techniques, or modes of inquiry

A method of empathetic resonance is used with digital visual data to clarify and communicate the meanings of nonverbal communication and exchanges of life-affirming energy as explanatory principles in explanations of educational influence. This method is used to clarify and communicate meanings of vulnerability, care and connection as core values of facilitating cultures of inquiry within my global and USA context in Higher Education. Digital visual data is also used to identify living contradictions in practice within cultures of inquiry as I seek to live values of human flourishing as fully as possible.

#### 4. Data sources, evidence, objects, or materials

The data sources include the narratives of the developmental experiences of scholars and others who have accepted their educational responsibility for building living cultures of educational inquiry in global contexts.

Evidence is provided from a longitudinal analysis of student evaluation comments and critical conversations with students and mentors, to clarify and validate core values of connection, vulnerability and caring as well as discovering living contradictions. Materials from action research cycles are provided to create safe places where others can embark on this journey and experience the sense of wholeness and peace that comes with aligning practice to values in a living-educational theory.

#### 5. Results and/or substantiated conclusions or warrants for arguments/point of view

Evidence for a substantiated conclusion is offered to demonstrate that it is only through understanding yourself, your own values, and your own practice that you can begin to see how you can challenge the systems and structures currently in place that are serving to deny the values of human flourishing. Living theory identifies the ways in which you are a living contradiction and provides the clarity to align yourself to use your values in ways that will help you flourish.

## 6. Significance

The scientific significance is in demonstrating the educational influences of dialogical relationship in the generation of a living culture of inquiry within which living-educational-theories are explaining educational influences in learning with values of human flourishing.

The scholarly significance is in clarifying and communicating the values of human flourishing in dialogical communities that can be used as explanatory principles in explanations of educational influences in learning.



#### 4) Accepting Educational Responsibility: Building Living Theory Cultures of Educational Inquiry in a UK/global context. **Jack Whitehead**

##### 1. Objectives or purposes

The purpose is to share an original contribution to educational knowledge made by a self-study practitioner-researcher who identifies himself as a global citizens and activist scholar in the generation of a living-educational-theories.

The aim of this paper is to demonstrate how to generate multidimensional and relationally dynamic forms of knowledge and communication, which contribute to the evolution and influence of a global educational knowledgebase. The weave created through educational conversations between people, using a Living Theory research approach located in different disciplines, cultures, places and times, generates and communicates educational knowledge. This knowledge contributes to a living culture of educational inquiry and to evidence-based political actions.

##### 2. Perspective(s) or theoretical framework

The primary perspective is that a Living Theory research approach, can contribute to the generation of a publicly validated, professional knowledgebase of professional educators in their living-educational-theories, as contributions to the evolution of a global educational knowledge-base. The theoretical tools include insights from understandings of ecology of knowledges and knowledge democracy in creating alternatives to neoliberalism with co-operative economies.

##### 3. Methods, techniques, or modes of inquiry

The methods used in this Living Theory research for enhancing the robustness of the validity and rigor of the explanations, include the use of Habermas' (1976) four criteria of social validity and Winter's (1989) six criteria for enhancing rigor. They include a method of analyzing visual data with visual narratives, to develop a shared understanding of relational values in valid accounts of explanations of educational influences in learning. The modes of inquiry draw insights from the methodologies of auto-ethnography, critical social constructivism, action research, narrative and self-study.

##### 3. Data sources, evidence, objects, or materials

The data sources include over 40 Living Educational Theory doctoral theses that examine the educational influences in learning of self-study researchers who have an educational responsibility for building living theory cultures of educational inquiry in global contexts.

##### 5. Results and/or substantiated conclusions or warrants for arguments/point of view

The results include the generation of a new epistemology for educational knowledge, fulfilling Schon's (1995) call for a new epistemology. They include the explication of a Living Theory research approach for making public the embodied knowledge of professional practitioners and developing educational forms of evaluation and accountability in complex

ecologies. This is consistent with Snow's (2001) call to make public the practical knowledge of educators.

## 6. Significance

The scientific significance is in the evidence-based explanation of a contribution to a living culture of educational inquiry into the question, 'How can we unite with practitioners, with scholars across other academic fields and disciplines, and with other citizens beyond academia to strategically address complex social and educational problems?'

The scholarly significance is in the contribution to a new epistemology of educational practice and in its contribution to the 1<sup>st</sup> International Educational Theory Research Conference with its question 'How do I, individually or in cooperation with others, enhance the difference Living Educational Theory research can make in a community (and/or an organisation) concerned with extending human flourishing?'

## 5) Accepting Educational Responsibility: Breaking hegemony of measurability over mutuality – Nepal. **Parbati Dhungana**

### 1. Purposes

This presentation explores the answer of the question “How can I create a mutual learning environment in my university class?” in collaboration with a senior colleague in Nepal. My responses include the following strategies: participatory pedagogy, collaboration in planning and action, integration of arts in reflection, and peer and group evaluation. They include the twin concepts of ‘care’ and ‘love’- concepts which are little written about by educationists” (Mckernan, 2008, p. 96), this presentation intends to answer the question and share my living-educational-theory that includes my aesthetic values. Aesthetics, “the interconnectedness of perception, thinking, and feeling” (Given, 2008) which interconnects my inner and outer worlds and shows the possibility of breaking the hegemony of measurability over mutuality.

### 2. Theoretical framework

Inspired by ‘living love’ I continued to influence myself, my colleagues, students and the place where I work (Dhungana, 2020). While being conscious of my educational responsibility, I realized the need for a joyful environment that encouraged me to create a living theory culture of inquiry (DeLong, 2013). Knowing one’s own values and living them consciously connects inner and outer worlds. This interconnectedness enhances mutuality.

### 3. Methods and modes of inquiry

The emancipatory participatory action research processes (Kemmis, 2008) is employed in the research and reveals the living values of the researcher and the co-researchers. Roughly dividing each class into reflection, action, observation and reflective planning sessions, I, in collaboration with my senior colleague, conducted this research using action-reflection cycles. The exploration employed “aesthetic-based inquiry” in communicating and engaging with students (Given, 2008) for making a journey of within and without using the Living Theory methodology (Whitehead, 1989).

### 4. Data sources and evidence

Collection of data includes: students’ arts and designs, reflective journal entries, blog writing and reflective articles. They hold the evidences of becoming aware of living values, becoming conscious of their own strengths and weaknesses, connecting with self and the rest, and developing mutual relationships. Evidence is also drawn from comprehensive documentation of the action-reflection cycles of the classes and the strategies: participatory pedagogy, collaboration in planning and action, integration of arts in reflection, and peer and group evaluation.

### 5. Substantiated conclusions

Moving beyond limiting love and care as female attributes, the students appreciated the values like collaboration, love, care and respect as the characteristics of education. Those

values were the hidden curriculum which was an “exceedingly powerful force in what students learn in schools” (Schubert, 1986, p. 29) which could develop mutuality among themselves, and between learners and facilitators.

#### 6. Significance

A joyful environment is advocated as a contextual need in university classes, a support for mutuality and an antidote to measureability. Aesthetics, a synergetic process, and aesthetic-based inquiry is shown to be useful in educational inquiries into complex contexts. Taking educational responsibility is joyful when we continuously live our values influencing self, other and the social formation (Whitehead, 1989) with the aim of fulfilling the common good of citizen-scholars.