Generating educational knowledge through Living Theory research
in a Culture of Inquiry

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Abstract

In this paper, I describe and explain the relational qualities that I have always stressed in terms of a new educational epistemology bringing in those explanatory principles or standards of judgment that are relational and dynamic. What distinguishes the new epistemology are the unit of appraisal, living standards of judgment and living logics in an individual's explanation of educational influence in learning that are generated in a culture-of-inquiry using the Living-Theory methodology. While still evolving, with this iteration of the nature of a culture-of-inquiry, my understanding of its tenets of vulnerability, democracy, loving kindness and loved into learning deepen and expand.

The unit of appraisal is the individual's explanation. The new standards of judgment used by the researcher can be used to explain, evaluate and validate contributions to knowledge in the creation of living-theories.

In the sense of a living logic, I show myself living (as much as I am able) according to my values in a relationally dynamic awareness of space and boundaries and with an intention of leaving a living legacy.

A. Introduction

The data to support the claims to know in this paper reside in the papers that I have written from 1996 to the present available on the web: this is my website: http://www.spanglefish.com/ActionResearchCanada; this is Jack Whitehead's: http://www.actionresearch.net and this is the Educational Journal of Living Theories: http://www.ejolts.net

I have written and presented in the past about other action research groups with whom I have worked since 1996 (Whitehead & Delong, 1997; Delong, 2002; Delong, Black and Wideman, 2005; Delong & Whitehead, 2011, 2012; Campbell, Delong, Whitehead, Griffin, 2013). In them, I have described and explained the evolution of the idea of a culture of inquiry to provide the safe space necessary for the creation of living-theories (Whitehead, 1989). This evolution emerged as I worked with groups: they helped me refine its facets, explain the nature of my influence and provided data as evidence of its effectiveness and validity. In this paper I add new understandings to the definition Culture of Inquiry from our 2013 AERA paper (Campbell et al, 2013) and my EJOLTS publication (Delong, 2013):

> ...the creation of a safe, supportive space where students and teachers are enabled to make explicit their values and make themselves accountable for living according to those values. They learn to recognize when they are not living according to their espoused values and are what Jack Whitehead calls "living contradictions". Action-reflection cycles based on asking questions like 'How can I improve my teaching of these children?' become as natural as breathing. Experiencing values such as 'loving kindness' and 'loved into learning' in this democratic, non-hierarchical environment and recognition of their embodied knowledge, encourage students and teachers to take responsibility for their own learning (2013. p. 26).

Following the headings, Introduction and Background, I will use these headings, each a living standard of judgment, (note that in reflecting again on these aspects, I have added "loved into learning and loving kindness" to the second heading and "democratic" to the third heading) to frame the first part of the paper:

C. Creating a safe and supportive space
D. Building relationships based on love, loved into learning and loving kindness
E. Creating a democratic environment that supports self-determined learning
F. Embracing, modeling and supporting vulnerability
G. Valuing and unveiling embodied knowledge
H. Expressing life-affirming energy and inviting people to join and pool their own.

Each of the headings is important in the evolution of my understanding of my standards of judgment and of the nature of a culture of inquiry that has evolved through supporting groups creating their living-theories, through dialogue with my colleagues, Cathy Griffin, Liz Campbell and Jack Whitehead, in writing papers and making presentations. In our own culture-of-inquiry, Cathy (left), Jack (middle), Liz (right) and I in the image below meet on a regular basis on SKYPE to share our research, to help each other with validating our findings and to refine our understandings of ideas like life-affirming energy. From our 2013 AERA paper:
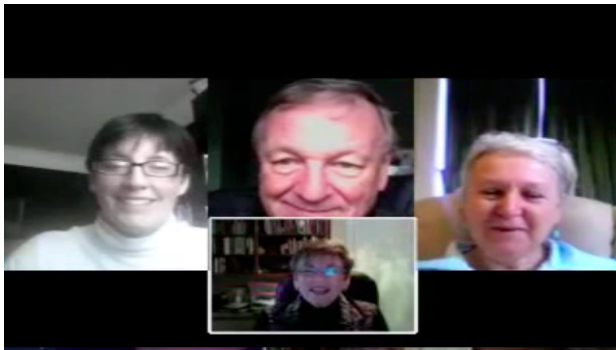
Clip 1 - 0:6 seconds into the 12:22 minute clip from the 09/12/12 at

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pRs3O_2Kmeo&feature=youtu.be

> For example if you move the cursor around .06 seconds of Clip 1 below, Jackie (bottom image) opens the conversation with a greeting that expresses Jackie's pleasure in a flow of life-affirming energy that evokes the expression of our own (from left to right, Cathy Griffin, Jack Whitehead and Liz Campbell). When we include flows of life-affirming energy with values that carry hope for the future of humanity, these are the kind of expressions we are meaning by our embodied expressions of energy-flowing values.

> The clip above shows that we are unmistakably different; yet at the same time we are affirming that we are pooling our expressions of life-affirming energy in a way that shows that we recognize shared meanings of such embodied expressions. You will see the use of visual narratives and empathetic resonance (Huxtable, 2009) integrated into the data analysis of difference sections below especially in relation to a culture of inquiry (Campbell, Delong, Whitehead, Griffin, 2013).

I will then add some draft conclusions to complete the paper under the heading:

I. Draft Conclusion and Scholarly Significance: The epistemological nature of my influence on myself, on others and on social formations.

It is my intention in this paper through the past research on the above websites and the most current work with presentations at the Ontario Teachers' Federation/Ontario Association of Deans of Education (OTF/OADE) Conference and the Canadian Journal of Action Research Conference (CJAR), my continuing work with nurses who are former masters students, Jan Vickers-Manzin and Jan Johnston and my consulting work with the Bluewater Action Research Network (BARN) to make more explicit the significance of the relational qualities that I've always stressed as seminal to the nature

of my influence on myself, on others and on social formations. When I lose sight of the significance of my ontology, my critical friend, Jack Whitehead, reminds me:

> "You've always had this quality. What was very powerful for me with both Liz and Cathy was the way in which you've actually influenced their educational growth and development and actually, literally, know something about the nature of your influence because they responded to you with that thing that surprised us both, the being loved into learning." (Whitehead, August, 2014 SKYPE chat) .

The relationships that I created in a culture of inquiry with Cathy Griffin and Liz Campbell in the Brock University Master of Education classroom in 2009-2011were the ones that were transferred in their own way into their classrooms and into our 2013-14 venture, the Bluewater Action Research Network (BARN). To build those relationships, to support the creation of living-theories and to encourage democratic evaluation, it was necessary for me to expose my own vulnerabilities and to support others to do the same.

The idea of a 'living-legacy' comes from Catherine Forester and 'Living Legacies' provided a title for a text edited by Andrew Henon (2012), a socially engaged artist, on 'APEX Living Legacies: Stories creating futures':

> A 'living legacy' is the unique testimony of an individual practitioner providing a positive bridge between the past and the future. As I see it, within each one of us, is realised the sum of our past academic, professional and personal knowledge (pp. 4-5). (http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/apex/livinglegacies2012.pdf)

Instead of thinking that "beauty belongs somewhere else, an elusive and expensive frill preserved in museums and glorified on Hollywood's screens and pursued in elusive vacations" (Allemang, J. p. L6), I'm thinking of the beauty in the work of living-theorists. I will share that beauty with you in celebrating the embodied knowledge of the practitioner-researchers as they ask the question, 'How do I improve my practice?' (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006).

B. Background

Data is drawn from 1996 to 2014 in my years as a superintendent of schools in a school district of 30,000 students in Ontario, Canada, from which I retired in 2007 and my continuing post doctoral inquiry from 2002 until the present. By supporting teachers in the Grand Erie District School Board and publishing their research in the eight volumes of Passion in Professional Practice (2000-2007http://schools.gedsb.net/ar/passion/), I learned how to support practitioners to create their own living-educational-theories. During much of this inquiry, I was an adjunct professor at Brock University and

researched my educational influence as a supervisor of master's degree programmes with teachers in primary and secondary schools as well as an educational consultant working within a rural school district in Ontario, Canada.

I brought my research and learning in Grand Erie to my teaching as professor as I taught the masters group from 2009-2011 in Bluewater, which included Cathy and Liz and then into my consulting work in the Bluewater Action Research Network. By stimulating their interest and creativity, then Cathy and Liz brought themselves and their originality into that process and with me as consultant, and the Bluewater Action Research Network (BARN) was created, implemented and recorded on YouTube and Mentoring Moments. That process of moving from leader to advisor involved some significant learning on my part. A proposal for a second year of funding for this network has been submitted to the Ontario Government with a response expected in November, 2014.

In the spirit of "alongsidedness" (Pound, 2003), Cathy, Liz and I worked with three other teachers to describe and explain the school-based action research group that Cathy led with support from Liz and I in 2013 and shared this research at the OTF/OADE conference at York University on February 22, 2014. In the first minute you will hear Cathy sharing with the audience our intentions for the presentation and our focus on values:

http://youtu.be/__wccIbPRxo

Then based on a proposal that Cathy submitted to the Teacher Leadership Learning Project (TLLP) and Professional Knowledge Exchange (PKE) branches in the Ontario Ministry of Education, funding was granted to extend the school-based group that Cathy had led in 2012-13 to a system-wide Bluewater Action Research Network (BARN) in 2013-14. The process to getting that funding is described in the following video by Cathy in the wrap-up session in which the practitioner-researchers in the Bluewater District School Board shared their knowledge:

0:43-5:05
http://youtu.be/5ZkeYNpeXgA?list=PLj7Kbzs74R-uPK8OTkuN0g3S6WVs2KZ9I

The documentation for this whole process including the writing and reflections of the group was created by Cathy Griffin on Mentoring Moments, a publicly accessible website http://mentoringmoments.ning.com/group/bluewater-action-research-network/forum/topic/show?id=6486509%3ATopic%3A21865&xg_source=msg

In terms of the methodology used in my research and that of my colleagues, I intend to focus on the idea of my living-educational-theory as my explanation of my educational influence in my own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations that influence my practice and my writings. From the basis of asking and answering the question, How can I improve my practice? Living Theory follows a process that is methodologically inventive (Dadds & Hart, 1996). This methodology is explained in the following videos in the voices of three living theorists, Jack, Liz and Melissa Juniper. First on the home page of Ejolts (www.ejolts.net), Jack Whitehead:

http://youtu.be/VoCwS89m1jo

Second, Liz Campbell describes the Living Theory process to the Sharing Session for the BARN group on May 15, 2014:

Third, in the words of Melissa Juniper presenting on May 15, 2014 at the BARN Sharing Session from 2:17 to 2:23, "This kind of research does not run in a sequential line but turns in multi-directions." It is relational and dynamic and this has implications for the nature of the living logic that distinguishes the rationality of the explanations:

In this paper, video clips of classroom practice, email communications, presentations, reflective dialogue and validation meetings are used to explicate the educational values of 'loving kindness', 'being loved into learning' and 'vulnerability" to which I hold myself accountable. The values are clarified in the course of their emergence in practice with other practitioner-researchers as I research co-operatively to explain how my living-theory in a culture of inquiry transforms learning in elementary, high school and post-graduate and medical settings to create my living legacy.

The technique for strengthening the validity of research accounts involves validation groups using Habermas' (1976, pp. 2-3) four criteria of comprehensibility, rightness, truth and authenticity. I have asked for feedback on this paper in order to validate my claims to know. In addition to Jack Whitehead, Cathy Griffin and Liz Campbell, Krystal Damm, one of the members of the Bluewater Action Research Network (BARN), has read and responded and I include her words in the paper.

Now, let's examine the nature of a safe, supportive environment for learning, creating and sharing.

C. Creating a safe and supportive space

A safe and supportive space goes beyond comfortable surroundings to form a democratic culture without hierarchy where all ideas, emotions and mistakes are embraced without judgment, no matter the individual's age, position, experience, or knowledge. Individuals feel unrestrained in expressing their thinking and experiences because of the support for examining and sharing their values they have come to expect as fundamental to their learning. We need to counteract what Biesta (2004) says has become an economic rationalist process by regarding students as co-learners with embodied knowledge:

> The main problem with the new language of learning is that it has facilitated a redescription of the process of education in terms of an economic transaction, that is, a transaction in which (1) the learner is the (potential) consumer, the one who has certain "needs", in which (2) the teacher, the educator, or the educational institution is seen as the provider, that is, the one who is there to meet the needs of the learner, and where (3) education itself becomes a commodity – a "thing" – to be provided or delivered by the teacher or educational institution and to be consumed by the learner (pp. 19, 20).

In addition to building trusting and loving relationships, I find that it is necessary to address issues of comfort directly as you can see me doing in this video from a master's class in 2009. As I did in every session, you hear me asking if there are any issues troubling them and Lori asks about how you know when you have collected sufficient data to support your claim to know.

http://youtu.be/d6AT8vqJDz8

While I have worked at creating this culture of inquiry where people feel safe enough to share their values in all the groups that I have worked with, I will focus on two of the situations: my Masters cohort classroom in the Bluewater DSB in 2010 and the

Bluewater Action Research Network (BARN) in 2013-14. In the next section, you will hear Liz Campbell say that I told the Bluewater Master of Education group that I loved them, making myself vulnerable in that I could not know how they would receive that: "I recall with much delight the day Jackie Delong told us all that she loved us" (Campbell, 2011). It was from this environment of trust, safety and support that we are willing to expose our vulnerabilities.

As she read through this paper, Krystal journaled, "The paper is resonating deeply. I am recalling my own Action Research experiences as I read through the paper. Recalling and appreciating the love, time and safety the facilitators provided. I am unsure if someone who has not experienced Action Research would understand. It is truly something that must be lived to be understood fully. Even things that I didn't know the name of - like life-affirming energy- I immediately understood when I heard it because I had experienced it first-hand" (Damm, K, email September 8, 2014).

In the BARN Sharing Session clip, below, Kelly McDougall highlights the power of language to create a safe environment by saying she prefers the words "challenge or difficulty" instead of weakness in feedback to students. She feels that "challenge or difficulty" are words that suggest less permanency than "weakness". Here she shows her love for her students and her desire to make them comfortable and safe. Kelly's full research paper is "How do I improve the resiliency and self-worth of my students through my professional practice, conscious teaching strategies and self-reflective learning? (Creating%2

0Resiliency%20and%20Self-Worth%20by%20Kelly%20McDougall.docx)

Kelly part oneBarnSharingourknowledgemay122014

at Video 5/12/2014 Part 2 1:20-1:38 http://youtu.be/e0Y7aqXgE-I

(http://mentoringmoments.ning.com/group/bluewater-action-research-network/forum/topics/creating-resiliency-and-self-worth-through-action-research)

In a safe and supportive environment, collaboration and trust thrive to encourage us to live our values more fully, as Jen and Jan say in their 2014 EJOLTS article:

> It is through a collaborative relationship that we created a culture of inquiry where through dialogue and reflection we decrease our perceptual barriers and live our values more fully to enhance our authentic Knowledge Translation (Vickers-Manzin & Johnston, p.33).

Next, we examine the building of loving relationships, absolutely essential to a culture of inquiry.

D. Building relationships based on love, loving kindness and loved into learning

This kind of research requires the recognition that research is about our examining own work through our own eyes, our own self-study (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2004). Putting the "I" in the question is essential and often difficult to accept when many of us have had our initial research experiences in the quantitative paradigm where the expectation is of objectivity, with subjectivity to be avoided at all costs. This process involves emotion: in Knudtson, P. & Suzuki, D. (1992), we are reminded of Bateson's words:

> Scientific truths, suggests Bateson, are by their very nature incomplete. To rely too exclusively upon such dispassionate thought, he suggests, is to court a numbing spiritual dissociation. *It is the attempt to separate intellect from emotion that is monstrous –and dangerous-to attempt to separate the external mind from the internal. Or to separate mind from body* (p. 183).

The relationships that we develop with our students, our community, in our culture of inquiry provide the foundation for deeper learning and responsive teaching. I wanted to create an environment for researchers where love could thrive. When I took a risk and told my students in the Bluewater cohort group that I loved them, some felt some discomfort in my emotion but others flourished in it. One of those who flourished was Liz Campbell (2011) as she expresses in her Master of Education Major Research Project:

> As a classroom teacher, I was experiencing great difficulty getting on with my own cultural evolution and often felt that much of what I was doing contributed to the devolution of my students—this was my living contradiction (Whitehead, 1989) and one of many inspirations to pursue a Master of Education Degree. I met Dr. Jackie Delong and was introduced to Jack Whitehead's Living Educational Theory, and more importantly, this is where I experienced being loved into learning—where I felt a true sense of belonging.

I recall with much delight the day Jackie Delong told us all that she loved us. Many might consider this inappropriate or simply strange; however, it made perfect sense to me and was exactly what I needed to hear, feel and experience. I heard it because it was said; I felt it because of the personal interactions (Jackie listened with her heart and she created a space and time for everyone always); I experienced it because Jackie created a community of inquiry based on trust, respect and hope. There was one particular presentation by a student who shared a very difficult traumatic experience that moved me beyond words. Her story was heart-wrenching but it was her courage and willingness to trust and be vulnerable that created a gateway for all of us to become a loving community where we could discover and share our stories. Through my relationship with Jackie and through witnessing and experiencing the courage and love of my peers, I discovered my authentic voice. It was because of this transformative experience that I requested a return to the classroom from the system job I currently held. I had moved from a construct of loving wisdom to the wisdom of love and believed I was now more prepared to meet the learners in my care. (p.)

Liz brought to my attention my values of loving kindness, being loved into learning and the concept of the wisdom of love. In terms of the definition of philosophy, the 'love of wisdom' (http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/philosophy), a researcher is required to generate knowledge but not necessarily to be a lover of wisdom. As Liz did, I also "had moved from a construct of loving wisdom to the wisdom of love and believed I was now more prepared to meet the learners in my care" through her influence. While I recognize these values in myself, this language has since become part of my understanding of my ontology. Cathy affirmed that she experienced my loving kindness and being loved into learning. When we are describing what we mean by energy-flowing values and empathetic resonance in our relationships, we are reminded of Sardello's (2008) description of "inner bodily joy and absence of strain, and we feel an immediate presence, a flow of subtle current between our self and the other person." (p. 51)

We move now to examine the significance of a non-hierarchical environment for supporting self-directed, self-determined learning and the generation of living theories.

E. Creating a democratic environment that supports self-determined learning

In the Bluewater Action Research Network research, Cathy, Liz and I created a space where most of the members of the group moved from reluctant participants to comfortable and confident users of digital technology in a very short period of time. The significance of using multi-media lies in the process of the researcher viewing and reviewing her work and seeing for herself her energy-flowing values.

Practitioner-researchers use the multi-media narratives for clarifying, communicating and evolving energy-flowing values as explanatory principles and inclusive standards of judgment for judging the validity of claims to educational knowledge. Once they were comfortable (and that always takes time) and competent in using the video technology, they are able to gather data on their teaching and learning in the classroom to provide evidence of improvement. The following is a video of Cathy and I where she becomes more aware of the significance of using video to understand our values as standards of judgment followed by her explanation of this new knowledge and "the shift from spectator truth to power of lived experience". Her explanation of the shift follows the clip.

This clip also helped me see the nature of my influence in advocating the use of video in Living Theory research:

http://youtu.be/DoDB3Dam2uY

Published on Mar 18, 2012
That clip, in which I discuss my Masters Research Project with Professor Jackie Delong, really was a turning point for me in understanding the power of video. I realized I had been talking on and on about my project but that it was not until the end that there was any energy or passion in my voice. Having Jackie Delong point it out to me, with the video camera right there, made me aware of the difference -- I finally realized what I was looking for. I was looking for those moments which came alive, the moments when I connected to an 'other'. In retrospect, what I was actually saying in that spontaneous moment was the key to my project. I said that my students relate to me more when my guard is down, when the façade is removed and I am being authentic -- this ended up being the theme of my whole Masters Research Project and there it was right from the beginning. I did not watch this video again until this month (almost two years later) but I knew what it represented, I remembered the moment without having to see it again. I did not watch it because I didn't need to. I just needed to open up, let my guard down and write or talk to my validation group (with the video

running) in order to capture evidence of my values. At that moment in the interview I realized that it was not my writing or my plan that was important it was me and my passion that interested Jackie and would interest any audience. I can't express the magnitude of this shift. For me it represents the shift from third person report writing to first person narrative. It was the shift from objective to subjective. It was the shift from spectator truth to power of lived experience. I finally understood the point of using the video camera.

Throughout the video I can see how nervous I am, how worried that am not on the right track. And then there is the moment of spontaneous joy. I now look for those moments with my students. Moments in which I say something they relate to, that draws them out and enables them to respond honestly and with passion. When I respond to them. I have always, of course, looked to develop a rapport with my students but I am now analyzing these moments on a different level, from a different perspective. I now consider whether I am being true to my values, if I am being loving, trusting and authentic in my approach. I am also evaluating the values and perspectives of my students. I am evaluating how I can change my practice to maximize these moments in which there is a true connection, there is deep understanding when my students truly express themselves and articulate their beliefs and passions.

Furthermore, I try to use video when I can because, unlike in this clip, I am not always aware in the moment of interactions. And as with this clip, I may miss the significance of what I or others have said (the importance of authenticity in connecting to students). Or I may misinterpret what I or others say in real time. But our body language captured on video often tells a different story.

When Krystal watched this video in this paper and Cathy's response, she said, "I also related to what Cathy said about looking for moments of "spontaneous joy" in video documentation. I found myself doing that today when selecting clips for our upcoming presentation at the Annual Values and Leadership Conference" (Damm, K., email September 8, 2014).

As part of our intention to create a non-hierarchical environment, as facilitators, we show videos and talk about our imperfections, our living contradictions and our vulnerabilities. You see this in the presentations at OTF/OADE above and at CJAR/CATE below and in the Sharing Session on May 15, 2014 where Liz explains how we have transcended hierarchy and learn together collaboratively:

(5:05-6:23)
http://youtu.be/5ZkeYNpeXgA?list=PLj7Kbzs74R-uPK8OTkuN0g3S6WVs2KZ9I

In order to create an environment where embodied knowledge is valued, teacher-learner relationships need to become more democratic. The challenge is not only to give over power to the learner, it is also to trust in the capacity of the learner no matter their age or experience to pose and answer their own questions. We are all on a path to improvement and each has his/her own embodied knowledge and the capacity to validate the work of the other.

In my doctoral thesis, I described my intentions as superintendent of education of creating an environment where inquiry and interdependence could thrive. Here you will see that despite my good intentions, I was a living contradiction (Whitehead, 1989). Having audiotaped the meetings with principals and transcribed them, I found that I talked too much and reduced their opportunities to share their knowledge and inquire into their improvement:

> I devoted a great deal of time to supporting principals and teachers and to planning effective family of schools' meetings. I truly enjoyed those monthly meetings and often had my friend and colleague, Curriculum Coordinator Diane Morgan, working with them. The principals knew that I was researching my practice and five of them from my family and two from another were also engaged in action research. I was always asking for assessment on how I was doing and for the last two of the three years that I was responsible for that family of schools, all of the meetings were taped and transcribed and many photos taken. **I was able to review the meetings to see if I was accomplishing what I intended in the development of the relationships that I believed were essential to building a community of learners.** I also asked one of the veteran principals to conduct a survey of my performance (Berry, 1996-98). In 1996, one piece of feedback from the family of schools' monthly meetings was that I talked too much at the meetings. This was completely contrary to my intention in that I wanted to create a community of learners based on interdependence (Covey,

14

1992), not dependence on me. With the transcript of taped meeting minutes, I was able to analyze the minutes and sure enough it was true. I worked on correcting that over the following meetings and have now incorporated that knowledge and skill into my practice. In addition, I would meet with principals like Greg Buckles individually to get input on my work (transcript of conversation with Greg - February 1999, p. 1). (http://schools.gedsb.net/ar/theses/jackie/chap2.html#24)

Sharing this knowledge of my learning from being a living contradiction with my masters students in each of the cohorts encouraged some of them to share their own vulnerabilities in order to create more democratic environments for teaching and learning. In our joint presentation at Canadian Journal of Action Research (CJAR)/Canadian Association of Teachers of English (CATE) conference in Toronto on May 15, you hear Cathy explaining that because I had asked the masters class for help in improving my practice, she did the same with her students:

http://youtu.be/iw3okdn0Gfg from 2:30-3:22

Cathy: Jackie said, "These are my intentions in teaching you. How am I doing? How can I improve my practice?" Once she did that, I did it with my own students.

Krystal's Damm's paper in BARN was, "Can I improve student engagement using open questions in my mathematics classroom?" (http://mentoringmoments.ning.com/group/bluewater-action-research-network/forum/topics/action-research-symposium-reflection-open-questions-in-secondary).

From that paper, she shares: "Because the students worked in small groups and then shared their knowledge with the class as a whole, they were able to shape the course of the lesson. This made the lesson student-led and teacher facilitated...The sharing of this knowledge from many voices, instead of one (the teacher's) voice, led to a more holistic

discussion of measurement." She is creating a democratic environment that supports self-determined learning by honouring their knowledge.

http://youtu.be/2lBJetX611Y

At 20 seconds she says, "I am trying to make this math class better for you and the one kid says, 'Well it's working'. She asks, "Well, tell me why and he explains that he is more engaged and quotes a line from an advertizing jingle: 'You can taste the difference quality makes'".

In the following clip from the Sharing Session on May 15, 2014, Liz explains to the group that you can indeed break down the hierarchy:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bGuKMYOLfcg&feature=youtu.be

Barn Symposium Intro May 12, 2014 50 sec

From the video and text analysis that the group of Liz, Cathy, Melissa, Krystal and Brad from Bluewater, conducted on August 28, 2014
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Ykh2KS76Nz5Xz34h2iJYWIWSDGMaqyrMh7QGZdEkW4g/edit#gid=0

in order to increase the rigour of the data analysis and to further validate claims to have created a culture of inquiry and supported the creation of Living Theories, Liz explains to the BARN how our mentors Jack and Jackie learn from us:

> Liz: And we know that. We know that happens in the classroom and it happens everywhere. But so often we lean towards this hierarchy because that's what we've been exposed to. We're sort of breaking down some of those boundaries as well in the work that we're doing."

> Cathy: I smile back at Liz while I watch her because I am one who tends to lean hard into the hierarchy. It took me a while to gain the courage to be a critical friend to Jack and Jackie - to trust in our democratic culture of inquiry. Liz gently encourages me to question my assumptions and to trust in myself rather than perceived hierarchy. (http://mentoringmoments.ning.com/group/bluewater-action-research-network/forum/topics/barn-sharing-our-knowledge-symposium-may-12-2014)

Next, we deal with a difficult subject, vulnerability.

F. Embracing, modeling and supporting vulnerability

While democratic evaluation may be a difficult process for some and not undertaken lightly, one of my means to embrace vulnerability is through a process where I ask and receive feedback on my performance from my students. This is not an exercise in "group approval" but one of listening to them for the purpose of improving my practice:

> Sometimes we have to forego group approval and even accept rejection, if it should happen, in order to follow what the ancients called "scientia cordis," the science of the heart, which gives the inner strength to put truth, flowing from experience, over the need for approval. The science of the heart permits us to be vulnerable with others, not to fear them but to listen to them, to see their beauty and value, to understand them in all their fears, needs and hopes, even to challenge them if need be (Vanier, 1998, p. 88).

One transformative learning into the nature and improvement of my life as a superintendent and later as university professor was that quality relationships can be deepened and strengthened through a willingness to let others into my world and let down the walls of protection to expose my vulnerabilities. As I mentioned earlier, sustained trust is at the heart of my educational relationships and essential to the creating of a culture of inquiry where human flourishing can thrive.

As part of trust building, it has been my practice, as superintendent and as professor to videotape my practice and to ask for evaluation to elicit critical feedback on how I might improve. In 2010, I asked the masters cohort group of 19 to provide an evaluation of my teaching. I sat in the middle of the circle with the video camera on me and they provided me with some very concrete suggestions for improvement.

It was a difficult process to experience but I had spent time preparing myself as much as I could. Being able to absorb the suggestions afterward by reviewing the videotape of the event was essential to retaining all of the information and making significant changes in my practice. I was modelling a process that I hoped might be adopted in their own way by the members of the group.

With all of these clips, I feel the pleasure of being in this culture of inquiry in a community of shared learning and while there is some tension associated with the process of democratic evaluation; nonetheless, I love these individuals and they have articulated that they feel that love coming from me. I want to improve my learning as well as theirs. I trust that they will be respectful in the articulation of their concerns.

I shared my AERA paper with Liz and we recorded our SKYPE conversation where she asked for Critical Evaluation of her paper that she had just submitted and I asked for the same about my paper and her part in it. She articulated that I had indeed been the influence in her taking that public step to be held accountable for her values.

Jackie: *I'm wondering if you can explain the educational influences that enable you, Liz, to form and make public your values of Love and Joy in your electronic signature and to which you hold yourself accountable for living as fully as you can. Was the Critical Evaluation session a help? I want to strengthen my validation.*
Liz: *Yes*
Jackie: *That's it –yes? Could you say more?*
Liz: *No. (Much laughter)*
Jackie: *Can you tell me why?*
Liz: *I saw you model it which made me less fearful of doing it. I saw you ask for critical feedback and I saw you get it. And I saw that some people were uncomfortable and it made me more sensitive. I have more understanding and respect so that when I do ask for critical feedback I know how to ask because you modeled it.*

In response to this modeling of Democratic Evaluation (above), Cathy says:

> Watching you invite our criticism of your practice with the intention of improving your own practice was a transformative experience for me. This was the first step towards me realizing that vulnerability is strength and pretending to be perfect is a weakness. …Taking part in your democratic evaluation and then watching you publicly make changes to your practice and continue to ask for feedback has had more impact on the way I live my life (and teach) than any other professional or personal development to date. (Griffin, C., email, August 16, 2013)

After I engaged the masters class in democratic evaluation of my practice as described in my 2010 paper with Jack Whitehead (Delong & Whitehead, **2010**?), Cathy asked her students for feedback on how she might teach them better, her students learned to self-evaluate and use an action research process to take charge of their learning and plan for improvement. Cathy shared her process:

> *As we continued to speak openly about our personal action research projects, our students became our partners. Their feedback informed our practice. Hattie (2008) describes the power of student to teacher feedback:*

When teachers seek, or are at least open to, feedback from students as to what students know, what they understand, where they make errors, when they have misconceptions, when they are engaged - then teaching and learning can be synchronized and powerful. (p. 173)

*By authentically engaging students in evaluating our practice, allowing them to see us as imperfect individuals trying to improve **our** practice as teachers **and** learners in our action reflection cycles, by inviting their feedback and acting on it, we make it safe for them to reflect on themselves as learners. To get to this point I had to struggle with my habit of giving feedback to students (Griffin, 2013). The Grade 6 students in the following clip demonstrate metacognition, the ability to set goals and to create an action plan for achieving these goals.*

Video 4: Grade 6 Action Researchers
http://youtu.be/rz2sSUeZlno

It's interesting to note that while I thought the most significant value as standard of judgment that I shared at the symposium at Japan Women's University in Tokyo on November 09, 2013 (Delong, 2013a) was that of Cathy's young students taking responsibility for their own learning, they were most impressed by my submitting myself to democratic evaluation.

At the BARN Sharing on May 12, 2014 in the final Roundtable discussion, I said, "There is never an end point: everyday is a challenge not to be a living contradiction. Quoting from Beth, a workshop participant: self-care is not being selfish; it is modelling for students so they can develop resiliency for life. We are all imperfect. Session Part 1 4:20 5/12/2014 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJFgHp1p5zY&feature=youtu.be-

It is becoming clearer for me that from my modeling of vulnerability to Cathy and Liz and their willingness to confess that as Cathy says, "I am imperfect" to the BARN researchers, that living legacy lies in my influence on my own learning, on others like Cathy and Liz and on social formations like BARN. As consultant, my role changed significantly as my influence was through Cathy and Liz and not directly to the

participants. It took me a while to be comfortable with that indirect influence. The deep relationships that developed were with Liz and Cathy and not with the whole group.

We hear that indirect influence in Leslie Turcotte's personal reflections in her research paper of her presentation which mirror the students' reflections. Both she and the students perceive themselves as having increased value:

> Taking risks and exposing my own vulnerability, showing the students that I'm not perfect and that I haven't totally figured everything out (my journal to the students) helps my students feel more comfortable sharing and see that I care about them (Turcotte, 28/3/2014).

This kind of vulnerability speaks to the quality relationships that she has built with them. In her video, Leslie shares her learning and learning process with the support of critical friends after a classroom lesson that literally fell apart:

5/12/2014VideoLesliePart 2: http://youtu.be/S9NwMY5pvOE9:25

> So that is a change I noticed in myself. So what I decided, after talking to these guys, was that I would write my own journal reflection on what I thought happened and allow them to comment on that. So, some of what we talked about in this action research was leaving - being vulnerable and putting yourself out there and to get feedback from others. So what writing a reflection did was to allow others to either reflect on what I had said or it opened the door for them to share what they thought about this situation...a lot of them identified that things had changed since that day... the room was calmer and people were kinder.

As evidence that the vulnerability that we as leaders shared with the BARN group and encouraged within the meetings, in an email to Cathy Griffin on September 7, 2014, Krystal says:

PS I think I am being more vulnerable with my students this year already! :) BARN sure is effective!

After Krystal read this quote in the paper, she wrote in an email to me:

> After reading my quote about being more vulnerable with students I thought I
> should tell you my example (evidence for my claim). A student shared with the
> class during discussion that a teacher she had previously had called her stupid.
> After saying I was sorry that happened to her, I shared my own similar story. I
> shared that I had failed an exam in university and when I spoke with the
> professor he laughed at what I had done on the exam. Although I have shared
> this story with individual or small groups of students before I don't recall telling
> a whole class and I had definitely never told that story on the second day of class
> (email September 8, 2014).

In their EJOLtS article, Jen Vickers-Manzin and Jan Johnston, nurses who were masters
students who graduated in 2013 share the following:

> The following clip is an example of data that informed the development of this
> theme. In our discussion with our critical friend Jackie Delong on May 7, 2014,
> Jen gives voice to the initial impact of feeling vulnerable.

http://youtu.be/bSdHoKC6IYY Jen says, "Me putting myself out there as a vulnerable learner
in front of them, changed everything."

In this next section, I deal with a beautiful area of research: the embodied knowledge of
practitioners.

G. Valuing and unveiling embodied knowledge

In this section, I am reflecting on the unveiling of embodied knowledge in the sense of
the living logic in explaining the educational influences in multiple relationships. While
it seems that relationships may be difficult to explain, in these examples we see that they
can indeed be explained in a rational manner in terms of the learning that is taking place.

In the first place, it is essential that the practitioners 'own' the process and product of their research on their practice. As Melissa says in the OTF/OADE presentation February 22, 2014 at York University, "This is by far the most meaningful PD (Professional Development) that we have participated in and it's because it wasn't that top-down, imposed ..this was based on my values. It was ours.":

http://youtu.be/A6mw9gbSwO0

From experiences of the presenters in this symposium, we know that the only way you can really conceptualize this form of research is from the ground of your embodied practice and if you do it yourself. Trying to teach others 'about' Living Theory and trying to understand it solely from the theory is unlikely to be effective in my experience.

Krystal responded to this paragraph with: "When I got to page 17 paragraph 2 I laughed. See my previous comment about living the action research experience. We get it!"

For practitioners to comprehend and appreciate their embodied knowledge encompasses the need for much affirmation that a vast body of knowledge is embodied (Hocking, B., Haskell, J., & Linds, W., 2001) in the practitioner-researcher. And in the video Critical Evaluation, Part Two you hear me affirming the students' embodied knowledge:

It's not my research. I can only make suggestions as an outsider. I don't know what you know. You are the knowledgeable person in this research. You have a knowledge that no

one else has. How could they?... I cannot know what you know. The knowledge in this room is absolutely staggering. And I think you don't believe in it. Your embodied knowledge is fabulous!

In a March 5, 2011 SKYPE-recorded conversation with the master's group in the Bluewater District School Board in Ontario, Canada and Jack Whitehead in Bath, UK, you hear that expressed need in the voices of the students and Whitehead's affirmation of their knowledge in the video:

Liz: B*ack to my first question of getting over the vanity piece. I was thinking also of looking at video for doing something right. There's me demonstrating me demonstrating loving… That's where I feel uncomfortable.*

Jack: *We need to get over saying to someone, 'This is the quality of relationship that I really feel I have established with this particular child or colleague which is having a difference, having an influence on who they are and what they're learning. This is where I think I am actually doing a fantastic job.'*
I'm really asking you to work to get over the sense of vanity that doesn't allow you to acknowledge how good you are. Can I make that a plea to you that you do have that explanatory principle that some of you will be passionate about fairness, a passion for social justice and you'll see yourselves in a particular context living these values. Freedom is another. I'll guarantee that if your freedom is constrained, you will work very hard to overcome that constraint.
So these are the explanatory principles that I think you use in terms of explaining your influence with the other in the context in which you are living. So you are right, Liz.

Liz. *This is one of the most difficult things to get over. You know there is a shyness sometimes about saying how good we are.*

After we as researchers get beyond this "shyness" and trust our embodied knowledge, it is then a matter of strengthening our accounts with the voices of others, a Validation Group and visual data. While we support and encourage the inclusion of the literature in the researcher's discipline and in the works of other qualitative and quantitative researchers in the writing, the danger is that we will look for checklists and typologies to see if we are living according to their values, not our own. Often we find in the literature the language to explicate the nature of our influence. The questions of improvement and living according to one's values must be judged using those values as standards, asking the questions, "What are my values?" "How do I know?" "How can I live my values more fully in my practice?"

This clip of Kelly finding validation of what she believed to be true in the literature as she reflects on Hattie's quote about student to teacher feedback is most powerful. "This is what I have been thinking for years, and thank you someone for saying this...It supported the idea that I need to continue to create more opportunities for that kind of feedback and that dialogue."

Kelly part oneBarnSharingourknowledgemay122014

Kelly Pt 2 12:45-13:22: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e0Y7aqXgE-I&feature=em-share_video_user

Sharing our knowledge as a community of learners and valuing embodied knowledge means also learning from each other as practitioners in a culture of inquiry. Not that we can adopt another's research or practice but we can learn from their processes. Krystal says:

> I also found myself adopting techniques and values of other BARN members this week. I took time to talk about Leslie's theme of empathy and used her class idea of asking the students to think about what might have been going on in a strangers life to make them behave badly to a student in my class, I used Kelly's attribute cards to ask students or reflect on their strengths, and am trying to embody a more democratic classroom by co-creating student rights and responsibilities in the classroom as Liz does. I am also prepared to say no to an extra-curricular activity for the fall (Beth's influence) because I know I am currently overwhelmed with three new preps and trying to sell our house in the next two months. I must practice self-care (Damm,K., email September 8, 2014).

Sixth, we move to the significance of life-affirming energy in relationships.

H. Expressing life-affirming energy and inviting people to join and pool their own.

For this life-affirming energy aspect of Living-Theory (Whitehead, 2013) to emerge and thrive, I believe that a Culture-Of-Inquiry is essential. The safe and supportive

environment that supports vulnerability also reveals and encourages the expression of life-affirming energy and empathetic resonance. "For Sardello, *empathetic resonance*, is the resonance of the individual soul coming into resonance with the Soul of the World (p. 13). I am using *empathetic resonance* to communicate a feeling of the immediate presence of the other in communicating the living values that the other experiences as giving meaning and purpose to their life" (Whitehead, ****).

Cathy Griffin's expertise in creating short video clips from long tapings to demonstrate evidence of life-affirming energy and empathetic resonance is described in the following excerpt from our AERA 2013 paper (Campbell, Delong, Whitehead & Griffin, 2013):

> To analyse video, Cathy scanned the video at high speed for:
>
> a) Life Affirming Energy (Whitehead, 2002): increased movement, gestures or dialogue that indicate passion and values. Changes in body language or dynamics between group members: tension, conflict, support, celebration, etc.
> b) Empathetic Resonance: "moments when we recognise the energy flowing values of the other, the activity of the participants is increased, or there is evidence of tension." (p. 8)
>
> Identified sections of video were transcribed, watched and analyzed by the group to determine what was important during our process and as evidence of our deepening culture of inquiry. This video demonstrates how this process works:

Video 1. Video Analysis Process http://youtu.be/Pvea2SfEovw

The invitational nature of a culture of inquiry comes from the valuing of each person's embodied knowledge and the absence of hierarchies to allow for the free flow of ideas in a space filled with loving kindness. The concept of "pooling of energy" from Sonia Hutchison (Hutchison, http://www.spanglefish.com/soniahutchison/news.asp?intent=viewstory&newsid=37737) creatively describes the idea of collaborating or joining together in values-laden inquiry in order to contribute to the knowledge base of teaching and learning:

My lived experience has been that by coming together we can enhance a flow of life-enhancing energy that influences well-being. My research will explore the pooling of energy by engaging in collaborative research with carers and their families, my staff and other colleagues (home page).

In the work of two Canadian nurses, Jan Johnston (2013) and Jennifer Vickers-Manzin (2013), the nature of a culture of inquiry and the nature of collaboration and "alongsidedness" (Pound, 20013) to create living-theories is clearly evident. The understanding of life-affirming energy is evidenced in narrative and visuals as I cite here in Jan and Jen's EJOLTS article where they describe their 'joie de vivre':

Jen's personal journal on July 7, 2012 reveals her experience of collaborative reflective dialogue:
There is often a tug and pull in our discourse related to clarifying our meaning. It is this tug and pull, the clarification that I find so stimulating ... it is so much more than just contextualizing the knowledge. The discourse leads to an extension of the knowledge by bending it around specific experiences and linking it to other key literature—or identifying a need or desire to explore further.

It is through shared reflective dialogue that we are able to identify 'joie de vivre' across all clinical settings and nursing experiences as helping to develop and improve with others. Loosely translated, joie de vivre means joy of life or joy of living. It is when one is loving life so much, it shows in everything they do. The following image taken on March 24, 2011 captures our joy of living:

Figure 1: Jan and Jen dialoging around the kitchen table

Finally, I draw together the threads of the paper in a draft conclusion. As you may know, this values-based inquiry is relentless and give no rest.

Draft Conclusion and Scholarly Significance: The epistemological nature of my influence on myself, on others and on social formations.

In this paper, I have explained the epistemological nature of my influence on myself, on others and on social formations. What distinguishes the new epistemology are the unit of appraisal, living standards of judgment and living logics in an individual's explanation of educational influence in learning that are generated in a culture-of-inquiry. While still evolving, with this iteration of the nature of a culture-of-inquiry through dialogue with my colleagues, my understanding of its tenets of vulnerability, democracy, loving kindness, loved into learning, pooling life-affirming energies deepen and expand.

In the sense of a living logic, I show myself living (as much as I can) according to my values in a relationally dynamic awareness of space and boundaries (Whitehead & Rayner, 2009) with an intention of leaving a living legacy. My living logic includes my explanations, conveyed as rationally as I can, of an on-going struggle of becoming, recognizing that I am never 'arrived' in terms of living my values. I can say that I am more aware of my living contradictions, yet still struggling, as well as my growth and improvement. As Krystal says, "I am at a new starting point." (**reference**) I am always at a new starting point as evidenced in this new role that I have assumed as consultant, advisor to local leaders Cathy Griffin and Liz Campbell as they facilitated the living theory action research group in their school district, the Bluewater District School Board. It is through them and those that they influence that my legacy is emerging. It was a very different role for me and I realize as Krystal says:

> I thought your clips of Cathy and Liz beautifully demonstrated your effect. In fact, there is very little video of you- just video of your Action Research ripple effect. Cathy, Liz, Melissa, and other BARN participants say everything you want to say for you. It helps validate your claim that you influence others (Damm, K., email September 8, 2014).

By stimulating their interest and creativity, my colleagues Cathy and Liz brought themselves and their originality into that process and with me as consultant, and the Bluewater Action Research Network (BARN) was created, implemented and recorded on YouTube and Mentoring Moments. That process of moving from leader to advisor involved some significant learning on my part. Being in a secondary role with the group members meant that my influence was in the ways that I influenced others. This meant that I did not experience as close a relationship with the members of the group as I was accustomed and that took some time to accept. That learning may continue this coming year, 2014-15, if a proposal by Cathy to the Ontario Ministry of Education is accepted for the continuation of BARN and me as consultant.

Through a particular meaning of the art of living and living legacies, I focus on the idea that giving form to life itself is a form of art - the art of living. I mean this in the sense that individuals can evaluate their lives in terms of leading lives that are personally flourishing and helping others to do so, too (Reiss & White, 2013, p. 4). The art of living I have in mind includes the African idea of Ubuntu in the sense that 'I am because we are' and includes Marie Huxtable's, 'We are because I am'. (Huxtable, 2014). At the heart of the social significance of my understandings of a culture of inquiry is an awareness of Mark Potts' "living citizenship" (Potts, 2011) which has been extended to global living citizenship (Coombs et al 2014) and my imperative to contribute to making a more democratic society. I also include human flourishing (Reiss & White, 2013) within my meanings of a culture of inquiry which includes more depth in the explanation of my values of Loved into Learning, Loving Kindness and Vulnerability. The way I choose to live my life is influenced by my desire to look back at what I have accomplished with the feeling and understanding that I am living a worthwhile life.

I have given voice in this paper to many of the living theorists that I have worked with as they describe and explain their lives as inquiry (Marshall, 1999) and their values as standards of judgment in asking how they might improve. As Beth asks of her student, "I want to hear how I can do my job better. I want to hear what did I do that I can change. I need you to give me an honest answer" (Consortium for the Study of Leadership and Ethics in Education (CSLEE) video). In making herself vulnerable, not only has she created a culture of inquiry that is safe, democratic, life-affirming and loving, but also she is trusting her student to share her own embodied knowledge:
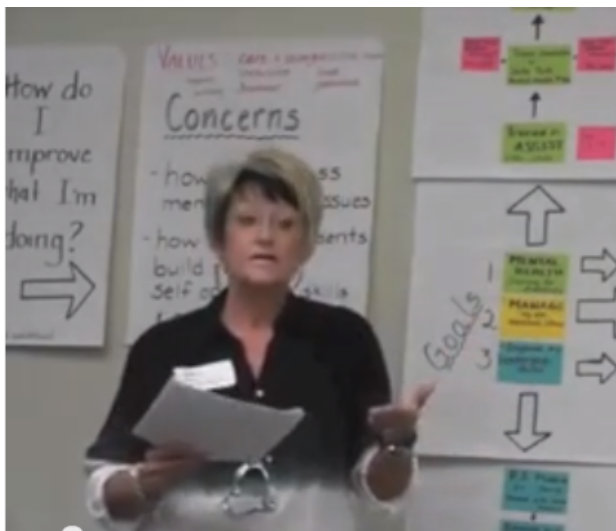
http://youtu.be/uGIVbFS_wYE?list=PLj7Kbzs74R-uPK8OTkuN0g3S6WVs2KZ9I
1:30-1:35

From their 2014 EJOLTS paper (in press), Jan Johnston and Jen Vickers-Manzin, two nurses, express their living-theory perspective in explanations of their educational influence in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations that influence their practice and the writings:

> We find it is a culture of inquiry that stimulates knowledge co-construction and has reframed our understanding of KT (Knowledge Translation) as a holistic, active process which reflects the essence of who we are and what we do. We believe we contribute to the knowledge base in an epistemologically significant way through the discovery of our lived experience of translating knowledge in a collaborative holistic way that is rooted in our values. We endeavour to continue in our day-to-day journey of improvement through our collaborative relationship within our living educational theory (Vickers-Manzin & Johnston, 2014, p. 43).

My living standards of judgment include the energy-flowing values that give meaning and purpose to our lives and that carry hope for the flourishing of humanity. When Krystal offered to give me feedback on this paper, I was very pleased that she found herself in the story and in concluding her comments she says, "As you can tell I was very engaged while reading your paper Jackie. I think in part because it is my story, but really it isn't. It is every action researcher's story. You have captured the essence of the process beautifully" (Damm, K, email September 8, 2014).

Picking up on her use of the word beautifully, I quote Allemang (2014): "Because beauty isn't just a frill, whatever that means. It gives pleasure, provides civic pride that binds a community, raises us up out of the ordinary and creates a state of happiness that extreme fiscal prudence just can't touch" (p. L7). In our work as living theorists, we live with the intent to pool our energies to make improvements in our own lives and in the lives around us. In this work, there is beauty in the transformation in individuals: in their confidence, in their faith in their own embodied knowledge, in their ways of knowing as they are loved into learning.

I intend that my living legacy be a unique testimony of an individual practitioner providing a positive bridge between the past and the future (Henon, 2013).

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