

# A Lexicon of Vocabulary associated with Living Educational Theory Research

**1 Living Educational Theory** (with upper case) refers to a lexical definition of meaning, which distinguishes it as a unique field of educational research activity.

- 1.1 **Living Educational Theory** incorporates a distinct epistemology that underpins the claims to knowledge made by researchers in the field.
- 1.1.1 As all other epistemologies, Living Educational Theory is distinguished in terms of its **unit of appraisal** (what is being judged), its **standards of judgment** (how judgments are made about the unit of appraisal) and its **logic** (the mode of thinking that is appropriate within the epistemology).
- 1.1.1.1 The **unit of appraisal** within a living-educational-theory account is an individual's explanation of their educational influences in learning.
- 1.1.1.2 The **standards of judgment** are used to test the claims to knowledge of a Living Educational Theory researcher's account; they are also used to test the claims to have educational influence in learning.
- 1.1.1.3 **Logic** can be understood "... as the mode of thought that is appropriate for comprehending the real as rational." (Marcuse<sup>1</sup>)
- 1.1.1.3.1 Arguments about the logic of rationality have waged for 2,500 years between **formal** (propositional) logicians and **dialectical** logicians. The argument focuses on 'contradiction'.
- 1.1.1.3.1.1 Formal logicians argue that contradictions in theories make the theories useless.
- 1.1.1.3.1.2 Dialecticians argue that contradictions are the nucleus and dialectics are at the heart of theories of change.
- 1.1.1.3.2 The rationality of living-educational-theories is established by the **living-logics** of the individual's explanation of their educational influences in their own learning, the learning of others and the learning of the social formations within which the practice is located.
- 1.1.1.3.2.1 Living-logics are relationally dynamic; the rationality of explanations that are structured by living-logics can include insights from both dialectical and formal traditions of inquiry, without denying the rationalities of both traditions.

**2. Living Educational Theory Research** (with upper case) can be conceptualised as the procedure that a practitioner researcher engages in to create their own **living-educational-theory** (with lower case, hyphenated).

- 2.1 **Living Educational Theory Research** is a distinct research **paradigm**.
- 2.1.1 A **paradigm** is a discrete research procedure. Living Educational Theory Research constitutes a paradigm; by comparison, Living Educational Theory is constituted by its **epistemology**.
- 2.2 Living Educational Theory Research uses various research methods such as Action Research, Narrative Inquiry and Auto-ethnography; however, Living Educational Theory Research is distinguishable by the form of **logic**, epistemology, explanations, standards of judgment and units of appraisal that account for claims to have educational influence in learning.
- 2.2.1 A logic is constituted by the rules of reasoning appropriate to the formation of a given paradigm (in this case, Living Educational Theory Research – see 1.1.1.3 above). It forms the structure of an epistemology and allows for its analysis.
- 2.3 Living Educational Theory Research involves **the 'I'** in questions of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing in my educational practice?'.

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<sup>1</sup> Marcuse, H. (1964) One Dimensional Man, London; Routledge and Kegan Paul (p. 105).

- 2.3.1 The 'I' is focused on generating explanations of educational influences in learning; while there may be ontological aspects to the research, it is not focused on 'self-help' or 'personal development' as understood by the general population outside of educational research.

3 A **Living Educational Theory researcher** carries out educational inquiries<sup>2</sup> using a Living Educational Theory Research methodology.

- 3.1 **A Living Educational Theory researcher** produces an account of their inquiry comprising descriptions and explanations, which together constitute an account of their **living-educational-theory**.
- 3.1.1 A living-educational-theory is an educational practitioner's descriptions and explanations of their educational influence in their own learning, the learning of others and the learning of social formations – as they explore questions of the sort "How do I improve what I'm doing in my educational practice?"
- 3.1.2 A researcher's living-educational-theory is described by **explanatory principles** that are informed by the researcher's values as ethical principles and standards of judgment that emerge over time through practice.
- 3.1.3 Any claims to improvements in practice must reveal the researcher's **values as standards of judgment** in their accounts.
- 3.1.4 **Standards of judgment** are central to Living Educational Theory Research; they are derived from the researchers' ontological and social values which develop over time as they are clarified in the course of the research.
- 3.2 Within a living-educational-theory account, values form the ethical and explanatory principles and the standards of judgment.
- 3.2.1 The values relating to standards of judgment are those which contribute to the flourishing of humanity (Whitehead, 1989<sup>3</sup>); values are recognised as living and developmental rather than as conceptual and static (Laidlaw, 1996<sup>4</sup>).
- 3.3 When living true to **values** that are life-affirming / life-enhancing and offer hope for the future of humanity, a Living Educational Theory researcher can claim that they are acting in a **moral** and **ethical** manner.
- 3.3.1 **Ethics** are standards defined by groups and cultures as enduring, long-held beliefs intended to guide not just individuals, but a society as a whole.
- 3.3.2 **Morals** are developed within a culture's ethical code and are an objective description of an individual's personal character, reflecting their sense of right and wrong or what *ought* to be.
- 3.3.3 **Values** are the elements of an individual's principles, standards, or qualities that they identify as significant, worthwhile and desirable for guiding their intentional actions.
- 3.4 Living Educational Theory Research takes place within the researcher's professional practice; a Living Educational Theory researcher's life does not constitute their living-educational-theory as an explanation of their educational influences in learning.
- 3.5 The term *living-educational-theory researcher* is incorrect; it is better expressed as *Living Educational Theory researcher*. Similarly, *living-educational-theory research* should be expressed as *Living Educational Theory Research*.

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<sup>2</sup> *inquiry* denotes an investigation; *enquiry* denotes a question (in the context of Living Educational Theory Research).

<sup>3</sup> Whitehead, J. (1989), –title–, Section 3

<sup>4</sup> Laidlaw, M. (1996), –title–, pp. 541, 560