

**Review of Jen Vickers-Manzin and Jan Johnston's M.Ed. dissertation, 'A Living Educational Theory of Knowledge Translation: Improving Practice, Influencing Learners, and Contributing to the Professional Knowledge Base'.**

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This is an interesting, major research project in that the authors conducted the research and wrote the project collaboratively and received individual degrees for their work. Needless to say, they had to advocate their process with the university for the right to do this. Having worked with them both in the class and in the subsequent writing of the article in this issue of EJOLTS, I can confirm that they work naturally in a collaborative way: while each is living and learning in her own way, in her own job, living her own values as standards of judgment, their collaboration is bigger than the two of them. In their words they describe their process: '... unique collaborative action research approach involved cycles of action, reflection, and revision which used our values as standards of judgment in an effort to practice authentically' (Vickers-Manzin-Johnston, 2013, abstract). In their abstract of their joint journey, they take '... a critical view of Knowledge Translation related to the philosophical inconsistency between what is espoused in the knowledge related to the discipline of nursing and what is done in practice' (op cit., abstract). In their words, 'Our contribution to a culture of inquiry allowed for co-construction of knowledge to reframe our understanding of Knowledge Translation as a holistic, active process which reflects the essence of who we are and what we do' (op cit.).

In Living Theory (Whitehead, 1989), we commit to making the world around us a better place to live. For this to occur, the researcher intends purposefully:



... to live a life for improving humanity by living life-enhancing values that are relational and ontological, in the sense that they give meaning and purpose to the lives of individuals and groups. They are values that carry hope for the future of humanity, such as love, freedom, justice, compassion, courage, care and democracy (EJOLTS, homepage).

Both Jan and Jen are committed not only to influencing their own learning but also the learning of others and social formations, and making improvements in the world around us. On April 8, 2011, Jen reflected on her most inner-core, or mission, by using the core reflection-model. 'In short, my mission is bound to a desire for greater good, I feel morally and ethically bound to make a difference and to understand the purpose of my actions' (Vickers-Manzin, 2011a, p. 5). In exploring her mission on April 8, 2011, Jan writes: 'I realized my mission is to build respectful, collegial relationships – relationships are everything to me. Professionally, I am inspired to make a difference; to build capacity within myself and others and within the profession of nursing' (Johnston, 2011a, p. 13), (Vickers-Manzin & Johnston, 2013).

They understand and practice working to create a culture of inquiry (DeLong, 2002; 2013). They practice inclusion: '... inclusion of others is essential to us, as evident in chapter 3 as well as the theme of culture of inquiry below'. Social justice and democracy are essential to their practice:

Our shared values of social justice and democracy are evident in our critical lens on the dominant hegemonic thinking related to evidence based practice and KT. The theme of co-constructing knowledge and dialogue demonstrates our value of democracy. Our desire and persistence in employing an unorthodox research methodology in an unorthodox way (collaboratively) demonstrates our awareness of social forces and choice to act in opposition to them (Vickers-Manzin & Johnston, 2013, p. 81).

Through demonstrating their vulnerability, they recognize that 'embracing vulnerability requires the practice of humility where we must accept ourselves as fallible knowers. We embrace Thayer-Bacon's (2003) relational epistemology... Practicing humility and embracing the idea of being a fallible knower lead us to feelings of vulnerability' (ibid., 2013, p. 82-83).

We found that the power of functioning within a culture of inquiry and striving to improve our KT has a powerful ripple effect. That is, our relationship and collaboration as critical friends during our research process has evolved to a culture of inquiry that has influenced others (op cit., pp. 99-100).

They ask the question, 'How can we contribute to a culture of inquiry to influence others?' (op cit., p. 91). They then state their intentions:

Also, we would like to further extend a culture of inquiry within our own organization. That is, to encourage others to discover their own living educational theory through action research. We are curious about how this could align with annual learning plans and include the self... (op cit., p. 110)

It's very exciting that they are taking the next steps in the article in this issue that they referred to in the end of their research project. They are bringing the living theory process into their nursing classes at the university and sharing their values with their students (op cit., pp. 109-110).

They use multi-media to explicate their knowledge with ease and have the capacities to create clips that provide evidence to support their claims to know. In the following video-clip, Jan Johnston and Jen Vickers-Manzin, show the value in using multi-media as we see and hear their passion for improving the world of nursing. We see, as well, how naturally collaborative they are: separate individuals learning together. These are two women who are 'passionate about developing democratic ways of creating knowledge for the flourishing of humanity, through conversations about their own and other people's evolving living-theory research and projects' (EJOLTS, community space descriptor). It's been my pleasure to work with them and experience their life-affirming energy as you will see in this short video:



**Video 1:** Video of Jen Vickers-Manzin and Jan Johnston introducing their dissertation (<http://youtu.be/kMcl8XWnvGw>)

## References

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