

Huxtable, Marie ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1808-0670> and Whitehead, Jack ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9644-0785> (2023) Researching scholarship of teaching and learning in diverse cultural contexts with Living Educational Theory Research. In: ISSOTL23 Conference: Context Matters, 8-11 November 2023, Railway Museum, Utrecht, The Netherlands. (Unpublished)

Downloaded from: <http://insight.cumbria.ac.uk/id/eprint/7474/>

***Usage of any items from the University of Cumbria's institutional repository 'Insight' must conform to the following fair usage guidelines.***

Any item and its associated metadata held in the University of Cumbria's institutional repository Insight (unless stated otherwise on the metadata record) may be copied, displayed or performed, and stored in line with the JISC fair dealing guidelines (available [here](#)) for educational and not-for-profit activities

**provided that**

- the authors, title and full bibliographic details of the item are cited clearly when any part of the work is referred to verbally or in the written form
  - a hyperlink/URL to the original Insight record of that item is included in any citations of the work
- the content is not changed in any way
- all files required for usage of the item are kept together with the main item file.

**You may not**

- sell any part of an item
- refer to any part of an item without citation
- amend any item or contextualise it in a way that will impugn the creator's reputation
- remove or alter the copyright statement on an item.

The full policy can be found [here](#).

Alternatively contact the University of Cumbria Repository Editor by emailing [insight@cumbria.ac.uk](mailto:insight@cumbria.ac.uk).

# Researching scholarship of teaching and learning in diverse cultural contexts with Living Educational Theory Research

Marie Huxtable & Jack Whitehead

Presented at ISSOTL23 Conference: Context matters

Utrecht, The Netherlands, 8–11 November 2023.

Slides to support presentation at:

<http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/jack/mhjwISSOTLslides021123.pdf>

## **Abstract**

This paper assumes that practitioner-researchers are knowledge-creators, as well as users of the research of others. As professionals researching our own practice, in order to improve it and to generate and share their knowledge, we cannot avoid the inclusion of our own 'I's, within questions of the kind, 'How do I improve my professional practice with values of human flourishing?'. Our perspective on researching scholarship of teaching and learning in diverse cultural contexts, with Living Educational Theory Research, includes a necessary condition. This is the condition of generating and sharing explanations of educational influences in one's own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social contexts within which the practice is located.

## **Introduction**

This paper was prepared to present at the ISSOTL23 Conference, with the overarching theme, "context matters":

With this theme, we want to address the importance of context for teaching and learning, as well as for SoTL as activity, and stress the importance of SoTL in generating context-specific knowledge.

Context not only influences SoTL as activity and the context-specific knowledge generated. We will show how the context-specific knowledge created by professional practitioners researching their educational pedagogical practice through Living Educational Theory Research is contributing to the growth of global educational knowledge and practice with values of human flourishing.

A professional practice includes developing knowledge and expertise in a field and discipline of a practice, and a commitment to realising responsibilities as a global citizen. A global citizen has a responsibility not only to contribute to their own ability to flourish and the ability of the local social formations they are part of to flourish. They also have a responsibility to contribute to Humanity learning to flourish in and of the complex, multidimensional, relationally dynamic ecologies. Humanity here is taken to mean a global social formation, which transcends place and time.

Whitehead (1989) coined the term 'living-educational-theory' for a valid, values-based explanation created by a practitioner researcher for their educational influence in their own learning, the learning of others and in the learning of social

formations, which forms the context of their practice. Living Educational Theory Research is a form of professional practitioner educational research. Practitioners engage in Living Educational Theory Research to realise their responsibilities as professionals and global citizens to research their practice to understand and improve it and generate a valid, values-laden explanation for their educational influence in learning as a contribution to the growth of global educational, values-laden knowledge.

In this presentation we will provide practical examples of how participants can produce and share living-posters at <https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/posters/homepage2021.pdf> and generate and share their living-educational-theories at <https://www.actionresearch.net/living/living.shtml>. We will provide evidence, from a range of international, educational contexts, to explain how the scholarship of teaching and learning in higher education has been mobilised to generate and legitimate living-educational-theories. We will focus on asking, researching and answering questions of the kind, 'How do I improve educational influences in learning within my context of teaching and learning with values of human flourishing?' We will demonstrate how the meanings of these values, which are embodied in professional educational practice, can be clarified and communicated with digital visual data of educational practice, through the use of a method of empathetic resonance. These values are used by practitioner-researchers, as explanatory principles, in explanations of their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations within which the practice is located. We will provide evidence to explain how the validity and rigour of the explanations of educational influence in learning can be enhanced, through the use of validation groups. This is done by applying criteria of validation (Habermas 1976) and rigour (Winters 1989) to the explanations. We will share examples of how we have developed our living-educational-theories in practice and how this has impacted our students. We will include evidence on the importance of community-based Living Educational Theory Research in improving teaching and learning in a range of global contexts. Participants will be encouraged to engage with others who are aiming to improve their teaching and learning practices. Participants will be provided with access to web-based resources to start the generation of their living-educational-theories and to communities of Living Educational Theory Researchers who will support the generation and sharing of living-educational-theories.

Conference Pedagogy: The presentation will be guided by the pedagogy of a Living Educational Theory Research framework (Huxtable & Whitehead, 2021) for higher education. It will include interaction with participants in making explicit the meanings of the embodied values we use to improve and research our educational practices. Drawing attention to over 50 living-educational-theories at <https://www.actionresearch.net/living/living.shtml> we will demonstrate how context influences the scholarship of teaching and learning in the nature of the explanations of educational influence in learning. The pedagogy includes an emphasis on the importance of integrating insights from the disciplines of education into explanations of educational influences in learning.

The complex multidimensional and relationally dynamic ecologies, which form the context of our lives and work, both influence and are influenced by what we think and do. So it is with the four contexts identified by the conference organisers; Teaching and learning; Disciplinary; Institutional; and Geographical, language and political. We recognise they are distinct but not discrete (thanks to Alan Rayner for that phrase). With that caveat we use them to organise the evidence we present to support our argument that researching scholarship of teaching and learning in diverse cultural contexts with Living Educational Theory Research is contributing to the growth of global educational knowledge and practice with values of human flourishing. The evidence of the consequences of professional practitioners engaging in Living Educational Theory Research leads us to our conclusions and urge scholars of teaching and learning, wherever they live and work, to create and make public, accounts of their Living Educational Theory Research and living-educational-theories, and help others to do so too.

The paper is organised as follows:

1. Contexts of creation and influence of Living Educational Theory Research and living-educational-theories
2. Teaching and Learning; acting locally with global intent to develop SoTL with values of human flourishing
3. Disciplines and fields of practice; contexts of use and influence of Living Educational Theory Research and living-educational-theories
4. Institutional contexts of use and local and global influence of Living Educational Theory Research and living-educational-theories
5. Geographical, language and political contexts of Living Educational Theory Research
6. In conclusion...

### ***1. Context of creation and influence of Living Educational Theory Research and living-educational-theories:***

The authors both live in England and work with professional practitioners, educators and students who live and work in diverse cultures and contexts around the world.

The following extracts from a draft of the monograph, *Living Educational Theory Research as an Epistemology for Practice: The Role of Values in Practitioners' Professional Development* (Whitehead & Huxtable, 2024) provides an overview of Living Educational Theory Research and the contexts of its creation and use.

Jack Whitehead is the progenitor of Living Educational Theory Research. Born in Britain during 1944 he grew up in a post-war world where there was a global need, desire and determination for Humanity to change the world for the better, as expressed in the preamble to the Charter of the United Nations (1945). Representatives from the signatory nations spent many hours to

agree the words that communicated their values-driven purpose. The signatory nations state their determination to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. They reaffirm their faith in fundamental human rights in establishing conditions under which justice in international commitments can be maintained. They state their commitment to practice tolerance and peaceful co-existence with a unity of purpose to maintain international peace and security. They express their commitment to employ international machinery for the promotion of economic and social advancement of all peoples.

At a local level, this found expression in post-war Britain, with the birth and growth of social and public services, the nationalisation of key industries, and the evolving political and academic, intellectual and scholarly discourses to realise these ideals. This continued for nearly two decades during which time Whitehead completed his formal education in school and a university first degree.

Having completed a science degree Whitehead started earning his living as a laboratory-based scientist. Reflecting one sunny day on the meaning of his existence and the educational purpose of education, he had a moment of epiphany. He realised the school and university he had attended had focussed primarily on providing him with knowledge and skills considered to be of value by the government and that would equip him for employment. It dawned on him these educational institutions were not giving equal importance to realising the educational purposes of education.

The common thread that emerges from the writings of people living in various cultures, contexts and eras and communicating through different languages, is that education is more than providing training and instruction for earning a living. Education is *also* a life-long, life-wide, values-laden process of human beings learning to create and offer knowledge of the world and of themselves in and of the world for their own benefit and the benefit of others. As a consequence of Whitehead's epiphany, about the educational purpose of education, he decided his vocation lay in the direction of earning his living as a professional educator. So, he left his career as a laboratory-based scientist and embarked on a course to qualify him as a secondary school science teacher.

By this time, the end of the 1960s, there was a growing international resurgence of ideologies such as free-market capitalism, nationalism, individualism and meritocracy. It was in this changing political, social and cultural landscape of Britain that Whitehead began to find and pursue his vocation in education by qualifying to teach in English secondary schools.

During his initial teacher education course at the University of Newcastle (1966-67) Whitehead became interested in what constituted professional practice as a teacher and began exploring questions such as, 'How do I develop my professionalism as a values-laden practice?'. He immersed himself in associated literature, such as that of Fromm (1942, 1947, 1956),

Dewey (1918), Buber (1937, 1947) and Peters (1966). Whitehead summarised where his thinking had got to as he entered the ranks of schoolteachers in his special study (Whitehead, 1967) *'The way to professionalism in education'*. His introduction begins:

The aim of this dissertation is to present the view that this country is in need of a professional body of educationalists. This conclusion has been reached from a study of the two major factors, which affect our citizens, economics and ethics (p.1).

A great deal of what Whitehead wrote still has resonance today. He summarised four empirical criteria for the practice of teaching in schools and higher education to be recognised as a profession:

1. A long period of specialised training.
2. A broad range of autonomy for both the individual practitioner and for the occupational group as a whole.
3. An acceptance by the practitioners of broad personal responsibility for judgements made and acts performed within the scope of professional autonomy.
4. A comprehensive self-governing organization of practitioners. (Fischer and Thomas, 1965, p. 325)

These are still seen as relevant to what constitutes a profession in 2023. It is perhaps noteworthy that teachers in England, at this time, have yet to sustain the establishment of a professional body of teaching that meets even these four criteria. What was beyond Whitehead's vision in the 1960s was a notion of what it was to *be* a professional practitioner as distinct from being a member of a profession. That developed during the gestation and subsequent development of Living Educational Theory Research as a form of professional practitioner educational research – and as a form of professional development that particularly addresses what is implied in the third criteria listed, a practitioner accepting personal responsibility for their decisions about their practice with respect to the effectiveness and educational value of what they do.

While employed in an East London (UK) secondary school, teaching science to less than enthusiastic young people, Whitehead took responsibility for his development as a professional practitioner by studying for an Academic Diploma and then a Master's Degree at the Institute of Education to improve the effectiveness and educational value of his practice as a classroom teacher.

In 1972 Whitehead's understandings of educational research methods and methodology were grounded in what was called 'the disciplines approach to educational theory'. For example, in his MA dissertation (Whitehead, 1972), 'A preliminary investigation of the processes through which adolescents

acquire scientific understanding', he used the methodology which had become increasingly dominant in the social sciences and which he was familiar with as a physical scientist. He used a controlled experimental design and methods from the psychology of education in test construct. During this research he began to question the validity of his methodology, as he could not derive a valid explanation for his educational influences in his pupils' learning from any of the disciplines taken individually or in any combination. Taking from his understandings as a physical scientist, explanations were understood as sets of determinate relations between sets of variables in terms of which a fairly extensive set of empirically verifiable regularities could be explained. The explanations were causal in the sense of 'if this was done, then that would happen'. Controlled experimental designs were used to explicate the determinate effects of one variable on another.

As his studies progressed, Whitehead began to see that he needed to transform his understandings of explanations for educational influences in learning. A transformation was needed if he was to improve not only the effectiveness of his pedagogy, with respect to improving his students' scientific knowledge and understanding. He also needed to transform his understandings with respect to the educational value of the influence he was having on their learning to, as White (2007) neatly puts it, lead a flourishing life and helping others to learn to do so too. The transformation began from a phenomenological base as he started to try to generate a valid explanation for his educational influences in learning from his experience of the phenomenon he was attempting to explain. That is, from within his experience of asking, researching and answering his question, 'How do I improve my practice as a school-based science teacher?'

From this phenomenological grounding, he developed a dialectical form of explanation for educational influences in learning. By this Whitehead means that he could see, with the help of video data he collected of his classroom practice, the 'I' in his question existed as a living-contradiction (Ilyenkov, 1977, p. 313). 'I' held together the experience of holding certain values together with their negation. Contradiction is the nucleus of dialectics. A dialectical explanation for educational influences in learning (Whitehead, 1991) later formed the bases of his doctoral thesis (Whitehead, 1999a).

During his MA studies and the empirical work for his dissertation, Whitehead came to the conclusion that the theories generated through the *disciplines* of education, such as psychology, sociology, philosophy and history could not explain his effectiveness and the educational value of his *educational* practice. This insight led Whitehead to making a career change to better pursue his vocation as an educator, academic, scholar and researcher. He took employment in 1973 as a lecturer in education at the University of Bath for two inter-related reasons:

- i) To help create a Discipline of Education comprising valid accounts of the knowledge, professional educational practitioners create in the

process of researching their practice to understand, improve and explain their educational influences in their own learning, the learning of others and the learning of the social formations which form the context of their practice and;

- ii) To create an educational theory that included both the educational, values-laden, explanations of practitioners and insights from knowledge created within the disciplines of education. The disciplines approach eliminated the explanations of practitioners and replaced these with the conceptual frameworks and methods of validation of the disciplines. Whitehead wanted an understanding of educational theory that included both.

To put this in the social, cultural and political context of Britain at the time; Margaret Thatcher was appointed as Secretary of State for Education and Science in the Conservative 1970 – 1974 government. In 1975, she became Leader of the Opposition; the first woman to lead a major political party in the United Kingdom and the first woman Prime Minister after the Conservative Party won the majority of seats in the 1979 general election. Political philosophies and economic policies, such as hers, have increasingly led to deregulation (particularly of the financial sector), the privatisation of public services, the reduction of the power and influence of trade unions and increasing jingoistic, self-serving rhetoric in Britain and many other countries.

A great deal has changed since the 1970's. Britain has become more socially, culturally, ethnically diverse. The students we work with have more diverse study years, prior knowledge and socio-economic backgrounds. Technology has opened a virtual world where we can work daily with students and educators living and working in diverse cultures and contexts locally and globally. In the physical world technology and knowledge being created to destroy our planet and life forms we share it with. At the same time, they are being put to use to enable Humanity to unite to tackle global problems such as the pandemic that swept the world this decade and the cause and consequences of climate change.

Local and global contexts are increasingly dominated by individualistic, self-serving, inward looking, free market capitalist ideologies. So, while there is more opportunity for developing SoTL educational pedagogy in local and global contexts, and contributing to individuals, and communities learning to flourish and helping others to do so too, there is, at the same time, greater tension experienced by all committed to contributing to the learning of Humanity to flourish and realise its responsibility to be a benevolent presence in the world.

To summarise what constitutes Living Educational Theory Research and living-educational-theories and the purpose it serves. It is an internationally well-established form of professional practitioner educational research. Whitehead (1989) coined the term 'living-educational-theory' for a valid, values-based explanation created by a practitioner researcher for their educational influence in their own learning, the learning of others and in the learning of social formations,



which forms the context of their practice. Living Educational Theory Research is used by practitioners to realise their responsibilities as professionals and global citizens to hold themselves to account for their practice and the implications of what they do, with values of human flourishing, and to contribute to the global growth of educational, values-laden knowledge. Accounts which illustrate how professional practitioners have generated and shared their living-educational-theories are freely accessible from the website of Jack Whitehead <https://actionresearch.net/> and the website of the Educational Journal of Living Theories <https://ejolts.net/>.

In developing our Living Educational Theory Research approach to Professional Development, we are attracted to Mounter's (2023) idea of 'Living Professionalism'. This idea integrates a Living Educational Theory Research approach within a professional's practice as they continuously seek to improve their educational influences in the learning of their students.

In the next section we show how professional educators, engage in Living Educational Theory Research to work productively with the local and global tensions they experience in their local contexts. They do so to help individuals and communities learn to flourish and help others learn to do so too. They contribute the educational knowledge they create in the process to the global growth the scholarship of teaching and learning with values of human flourishing.

## ***2. Teaching and Learning; acting locally with global intent to develop SoTL with values of human flourishing***

Context-specific knowledge created by professional practitioners researching their educational pedagogical practice through Living Educational Theory Research is contributing to improving local and global teaching and learning contexts with values of human flourishing. Evidence is provided by the doctorates and masters free to access from <https://actionresearch.net/>. These have been legitimated by universities worldwide and illustrate of how professional educational practitioners have developed their living-educational-theories and impacted on their students, colleagues, SoTL communities and other social formations, which are the context of the practice.

We draw on the work of Arianna Briganti and Swaroop Rawal to illustrate how the context-specific knowledge, created by professional practitioners researching their educational pedagogical practice through Living Educational Theory Research, is contributing to improving the scholarship of teaching and learning, with values of human flourishing, in diverse contexts

Arianna Briganti's doctoral research focussed on understanding and improving her practice as a professional international development practitioner and generating a valid explanation of her educational influence in her own learning, the learning of those she worked with and in the social formations which were the context of her practice at that time. She has worked and lived in many diverse contexts, such as Afghanistan, Albania, Austria, Ethiopia, Georgia, Germany, India, Italy, Kenya, Kosovo, Maldives, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Somaliland, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, UK.

The abstract of her thesis (Briganti, 2020), *My living-theory of International Development*, summarises the context-specific knowledge with global implications she created through Living Educational Theory Research. Arianna has been made a Dame of the Order of the Italian Republic; in recognition of the contribution her work is making to bring into being a world with values of human flourishing.

Abstract - My thesis is focused on the relationally dynamic values of empathy, social and gender justice, outrage, responsibility, love for and faith in humanity and dignity. The originality lies in their use as explanatory principles in my explanation of my educational influence in my own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations that affect my practice as a development professional. My other original contribution to knowledge is to relate the threefold nature of Living Theory methodology – a self-reflexive action-led research, a way of life, and a social movement - with my practice in International Development, which provides an example of how limitations in this sector might be overcome.

My self-reflexive research conceptualizes International Development as a global responsibility. It offers instances of how to work with others at micro (community) level, meso (organizational) level and shows my developing understanding of my potential systemic influence at a political (macro) level.

By drawing insights mainly from self-study and narrative enquiry methodologies, my living-theory of International Development is presented as an alternative to the neoliberal approach and rests on the idea that Development means having a chance to contribute to a good change (Chambers, 1997, p.1743). My stories derive from the experiences of my own life and that of the people I work with. I use the South African concept of Ubuntu and its transformative growth into I~we~us relationships. Whilst exploring commonalities between Living Theory and International Development, I show they can reinforce each other and combine in the practical realization of a commitment to a fairer world. A generative form of development emerges that includes a gendered epistemology. I discuss how my own pursuit of gender justice has improved the quality of my work as a female development economist and practitioner, living in a capitalistic era. (Briganti, 2020, <https://www.actionresearch.net/living/ABrigantiphd.pdf>)

Swaroop Rawal's doctoral research (Rawal, 2006) focussed on understanding and improving her practice as a professional educator. The abstract of her thesis *The Role Of Drama In Enhancing Life Skills In Children With Specific Learning Difficulties In A Mumbai School: My Reflective Account*, summarises the context-specific knowledge with global implications she created through Living Educational Theory Research in India.

Abstract

This thesis is a reflective account of an action research project set in a drama classroom. It is a multi-voiced patchwork text which is created and built imaginatively to re-present my students and my experience in the drama

classroom.

On one level it deals with the question 'How can drama be used to enhance life skills in children with specific learning disabilities studying in a school in Mumbai?' On the second level it is related to the question 'How can I improve my practice?'

This research is concerned with a teacher's capacity to recognise and realise the opportunity of an alternate reality in teaching. The reality of loving and caring for the students. The reality of an empathetic, compassionate, just and democratic classroom.

The foundation of this study was laid when I saw the children in need suffer due to insensitive teaching practices and uncooperative peers and family. I was concerned with the trauma faced by students in the prevalent educational setting in India. I believe that what I do in education should help make changes for the better in our society. Life skills enhancement, in my understanding, was a way to alleviate the stress the children experienced seeing that life skill education promotes mental well-being in young people and behavioural preparedness.

As a drama teacher I see drama as tool for education. It is a natural vehicle for explorative and experiential learning. The aim of my thesis is to describe and reflect on the learning process and the context in which it occurs. I present the critical points with close analysis of the choices made by me as I taught my pupils using drama as a learning medium.

Additionally, this study investigates the influences of action research on my practice and the impact of engaging in the stages of action research which provided me with a methodical structure for implementing and analyzing the teaching and the learning process. This defined structure guided me through systematic and conscious data collection, data analysis, and reflection. The data is composed of classroom observations and transcripts, a collection of the students and my work and interviews with their schoolteachers and parents.

The main objective of this research was to enable a gain in positive behavioural intentions and improved psychosocial competence in children. This was accomplished through augmentation of creativity, emotional understanding and development, improved self-esteem and a notion of the joy of autonomy to enable the students to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life.

Since completing her doctorate Swaroop has developed her knowledge, understanding and practice of Living Educational Theory Research to enable her to improve her practice as an educator and her contribution to the growth of global knowledge of the scholarship of teaching and learning with values of human

flourishing. She was chosen as one of the top ten teachers of the world for the Global Teacher Prize, 2019. She is currently working with children and teachers in local schools and universities, with members of national and international committees and working parties developing India's school and teacher education curricula and is publishing numerous papers and books. The global significance of her work has been recognised by the award of an honorary DLitt by the University of Worcester in 2018.

We are also drawing attention to publications in the Educational Journal of Living Theories that focus on the living-educational-theories of practitioner-researchers who are acting locally with global intent to develop SoTL with values of human flourishing (Noor, 2023; Dhungana, 2023)

### ***3. Disciplines and fields of practice; contexts of use and influence of Living Educational Theory Research and living-educational-theories***

Professional practitioners critically and creatively engage with knowledge created in a variety of disciplinary and practice contexts to which their Living Educational Theory Research and living-educational-theories contribute. For example: Wolvaardt, researched her practice as an educator in public health in South Africa, (2013) *Over the conceptual horizon of public Health: a living theory of teaching undergraduate medical students*. Her PhD thesis, was awarded by the University of Pretoria (access from <https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/wolvaardtphd/Wolvaardtphd2013.pdf>).

#### Abstract

The health needs of society extend beyond the treatment of the individual and the ill. These needs are at the core of public health which addresses health at a population-level. Regulations dictate that public health must be included in the South African medical curriculum, but healthy populations hold little interest for medical students. As a result public health remains over the conceptual horizon of medical students.

At the University of Pretoria the responsibility for the inclusion of public health is the responsibility of the School of Health Systems and Public Health. Participation in the medical curriculum is a minor but important part of my educational practice. But two of my professional values – care and agency – have been denied in that practice. The central purpose of the research was to construct the meaning of my educational practice with the aim of progressive realisation of my values.

The study explored how public health is conceptualised as a subject in the medical curriculum at the University of Pretoria, the intended educational achievements of public health in the curriculum and the optimal strategies for its inclusion.

An action research living theory design made use of a concurrent embedded mixed-methods approach. Data was gathered primarily from external experts, the academic staff of the School of Medicine and the SHSPH, key academic documents and the medical students.

A constructivist grounded theory approach was employed to construct meaning from the findings. The findings revealed the effect of the historical decision to split public health and medicine and the resulting increasing distance between the disciplines. Resting on this fractured foundation is the understanding of what public health is. The understanding of public health suggests a multiple concurrent understanding that is constructed by diverse and seemingly conflicting perspectives while the discipline remains identifiable as public health.

The curricular intentions of including public health in the medical curriculum at the University of Pretoria are characterised by a varied topography that includes externally and internally imposed educational tensions, constraints and intractable contradictions. Curricular intentions revolve around ontological aspirations. The medical students' perspectives of their educational experience in public health are surprisingly similar to those of students in other countries.

The current and imagined strategies to include public health formed the basis for the scepticism of educational orthodoxy and suggested the exploration of the dual uncontested spaces – social media and the elective experience in the medical curriculum. The findings from my innovative practice in using the elective experience challenge the notion that public health is over the conceptual horizon of medical students. A theme that runs through the narrative suggests, instead, that other conceptual horizons obscure meaningful engagement with medical students around public health.

This research is a rich account of my complex context and my connected practice and through action research I claim to live my values of care and agency. My living theory of practice as a form of meaning making could help others to look over their own conceptual horizons in search of wholeness.

Potts (2012), researched his practice as a schoolteacher in England worked with South African educators for his doctoral research, *How can I Reconceptualise International Educational Partnerships as a Form of 'Living Citizenship'?*

<https://www.actionresearch.net/living/markpotts.shtm>.

#### Abstract

This PhD research project is about developing pedagogy for citizenship education through the establishment of an international partnership. Whilst there is a clear national curriculum framework in England for the delivery of citizenship education as originally established by the QCA (see note), it became apparent to the researcher that the pedagogical framework for the

delivery of global citizenship education is only partially formed. The project looks at how over a ten year period the partnership activities between Salisbury High School and Nqabakazulu School in the black township of Kwamashu in Durban, South Africa have influenced the education of the participants.

Through a series of reciprocal visits, some funded by the British Council, and through curriculum activities, fundraising activities and personal contacts the partnership has developed to become a powerful influence on the lives of the participants. As it has developed certain underpinning values have emerged. These values have been articulated as social justice, equal opportunities and the African notion of Ubuntu, or humanity. The partnership between the schools has enabled the teaching of these values in a meaningful context.

The research methodology is a participatory action research approach with the use of video, pictures and commentary to show the educational influence on the lives of the people in these communities. This has enabled the author to reflect on how the activities of the partnership have influenced the education of himself and his fellow participants. As a result of this study there will be three original contributions to knowledge:

1. The development of a transferable method for systematically analysing the large amount of qualitative data.
2. A range of transferable pedagogical protocols for citizenship education that can be derived from school international partnerships together with recommendations for government policy on how best to extend educational partnerships and implement international CPD between UK and South African schools.
3. An examination of the notion of 'Living Citizenship' and exemplification of it in practice through engagement in the activities of an international educational partnership.

Note - QCA has since been replaced and superseded by the QCDA, which has now been discontinued by the Government.

Potts continued to research his practice and extending the context of his contribution to developing a scholarship of teaching and learning with values of human flourishing as illustrated by the his paper (Potts, 2014), *Living Global Citizenship: A New Pedagogy for Citizenship Education*. <https://ejolts.net/node/235>

This multi-media account is based on the ideas in the book: *International Educational Development and Learning through Sustainable Partnerships* (Coombs, Potts & Whitehead, 2014). It traces the origins of Living Global Citizenship in a sustained international partnership between two schools and how this represents an academic leap from the concept of living educational theory. A set of pedagogical protocols are proposed as a practical guide for

the development of Living Global Citizenship projects as a means of fulfilling the goal of providing meaningful citizenship education. I also explain why it is significant for those involved in international development work to engage in self-studies of their own influence in enquiries of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing?' in ways that avoid colonisation, but enable mutual negotiation and agreement of common values. Finally, I call for others to use living-global-citizenship as a standard of judgment to help to critically evaluate and strengthen this contribution to authentic knowledge.

Delong (2002) researched her practice as a superintendent of schools in Canada. *How can I improve my practice as a superintendent of schools and create my own living educational theory?* (access from <https://www.actionresearch.net/living/delong.shtml>)

#### Abstract

One of the basic tenets of my philosophy is that the development of a culture for improving learning rests upon supporting the knowledge-creating capacity in each individual in the system. Thus, I start with my own. This thesis sets out a claim to know my own learning in my educational inquiry, 'How can I improve my practice as a superintendent of schools?'

Out of this philosophy emerges my belief that the professional development of each teacher rests in their own knowledge-creating capacities as they examine their own practice in helping their students to improve their learning. In creating my own educational theory and supporting teachers in creating theirs, we engage with and use insights from the theories of others in the process of improving student learning.

The originality of the contribution of this thesis to the academic and professional knowledge-base of education is in the systematic way I transform my embodied educational values into educational standards of practice and judgement in the creation of my living educational theory. In the thesis I demonstrate how these values and standards can be used critically both to test the validity of my knowledge-claims and to be a powerful motivator in my living educational inquiry.

The values and standards are defined in terms of valuing the other in my professional practice, building a culture of inquiry, reflection and scholarship and creating knowledge.

Since retiring Delong has developed her practice and contribution to developing a scholarship of teaching and learning with values of human flourishing as an

international mentor working with educators in diverse settings, such as USA, Holland and Nepal.

Rather than 'finding a gap in the literature' each of these professional practitioners, working in various contexts and fields of practice has critically and creatively engaged with knowledge created in diverse disciplines to improve their practice and strengthen their research.

The work of philosophers, psychologists and sociologists is commonly drawn on in Living Educational Theory Research. For example, the work of the sociologist Habermas (1976) is drawn on by Living Educational Theory Research validation groups to strengthen professional educators research and its contribution to the scholarship of teaching and learning (see Cycle Three on rigour and validity <https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/jack/cycle3.pdf>).

#### ***4. Institutional context: use and local and global influence of Living Educational Theory Research and living-educational-theories***

The importance of institutions developing approaches to realising their values-laden *raison d'être* and contributing to local and global knowledge of enhancing educational influences in learning, is illustrated by the increasing number of universities become signatories to the Magna Charta Universitatum (<https://www.magna-charta.org/>) and the countries working together to realise a better future, encapsulated in the GE2050 European Declaration on *Global Education to 2050* (<https://www.gene.eu/ge2050-congress>)

The context-specific knowledge created by professional practitioners researching their educational pedagogical practice through Living Educational Theory Research is contributing to enhancing institutional contexts with values of human flourishing.

For example,

The context-specific knowledge created by professional practitioners researching their educational pedagogical practice through Living Educational Theory Research is contributing to institutional contexts realising their values-laden *raison d'être*. For example, Jack Whitehead contributed to bringing into being an AERA self-study SIG, S-STEP, which continues to flourish. His work has caused numerous universities to change their regulations so doctoral researchers can include 'I' in their title and include multimedia narratives.

Nalini Chiterand in Durban University of Technology, South Africa, has developed an academic induction programme. Participants create their living-posters as a basis for researching their practice, which they present at the end of the course. (<https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/posters/dut23.pdf>). Some have gone on to create a presentation with her as a contribution to the annual Learning & Teaching Imbizo, 2023. (<https://www.dut.ac.za/2023-annual-learning-and-teaching-imbizo>) This in turn contributes to university's Envision2030 Living Values Framework (<https://www.dut.ac.za/envision2030-living-values-framework/>).



## ***5. Geographical, language and political contexts of Living Educational Theory Research***

All the work that has been drawn on also illustrates the diverse Geographical, language and political contexts of Living Educational Theory Research. In this section we offer examples, which illustrate this more clearly how the context-specific knowledge created by professional practitioners researching their educational pedagogical practice through Living Educational Theory Research is contributing to the growth of global educational knowledge and practice with values of human flourishing.

During the first decade of this century Anat Geller, was researching in very complex and challenging geographical, language and political contexts as a doctoral researcher, to produce her this, *Within dialogue and without: how has 'being in the unknown' become a value in my developing as a better dialogical educator?* (Geller, 2010).

### ABSTRACT

This is an autobiographical study using a Living Theory Action Research methodology supported strongly by storytelling and visual data as a means of analysing, illustrating and generating a living educational theory concerning the attributes 'good enough' (Winnicott, 1965:140-152) dialogical educators might strive for in light of the Buberian 'I – Thou' dialogical encounters (Buber, 1955).

This thesis is concerned with 'I' as an early childhood pedagogy instructor, an Israeli Jew from a Hebrew-speaking culture, working mainly in three educational frameworks in three cultures: an Israeli-Arab college which is predominately Muslim; secondly, as director of a course for Druze care-givers on the occupied Golan Heights and, thirdly, as pedagogy instructor in an academic Teachers' Training College that is affiliated with the Zionist Kibbutz movement, servicing the multicultural and multinational sectors of the Israeli society.

The originality of the thesis lies in the process of synthesising and acknowledging instances of 'being in the unknown'; in revealing the values that enabled me to recognise and see beyond the socially constructed discourse, values, ethics and morals in varied cultural contextual and educational settings and move beyond their limitations, enhancing my ability to be a better dialogical educator.

Although the issues of 'Dialogue' and 'Thou' have been elaborately discussed, the process of revealing the 'I' and the resultant attributes one has to possess in order to be in dialogue with the 'Thou' is not explicit (Buber, 1955). I assert that the process of unveiling one's core self (Rogers, 1969) - the 'I' is a necessary component or phase in the process of becoming a 'good enough'

dialogical educator. This assertion is examined in the light of fundamental literature on dialogue mainly from Buber, Freire, Rogers and Korczak.

In the second decade Kathmandu University, Nepal, has been working on Transformative Education Research & Sustainable Development (TERSD) with various partners. They have run three international conferences in Nepal. Over the years they have engaged scholars, academics and professional educators from a variety of geographical, language and political contexts. As a consequence a committee will run the fourth international conference in Jakarta, 2024 with members from across Indonesia.

(<https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/posters/indonesiangp23.pdf>). They have asked us to work with them to develop their contributions using Living Educational Theory Research and helping others to do so too.

Members of The North-West University, South Africa has been developing Community-Based Educational Research (COMBER), to “not only on generating theoretical knowledge about the issue, but also on **bringing about change** on personal, institutional and community levels. As such, we can call it research as social change as the process has educational, political and emancipatory intent.”  
<https://education.nwu.ac.za/comber>

In Ireland Glenn, O’Sullivan, O’Donagh and Roche, have been working together since graduating from Limerick University with their living-educational-theory theses. Their “findings about our pupils’ and our own learning offer new conceptualisations about the capacity of pupils to learn in their own ways” They established the Network for Educational Action Research Ireland (NEARI) <http://www.eari.ie> /. This is now a thriving international community with in-person and online meetings to support the development of educational pedagogy and scholarship of teaching and learning with values of human flourishing in diverse geographical, language and political contexts.

Finally, the international, academic, peer reviewed journal, Educational Journal of Living Theories (EJOLTs), started in 2008, is now reaching places not previously reached. It continues to be free for practitioners to publish and access. When authors can provide translations it now is able to make those accessible along with the English version. Hopefully with the improvement in free online translations papers will be opening up possibilities for people who do not read or write English to engage and contribute to the development of the scholarship of teaching and learning with values of human flourishing.

## **6. In conclusion**

“What is the goal of education?” he would ask, “When all is said and done, we want [...] to grow up to be decent human beings, a ‘mensch’, a person with compassion, commitment, and caring.” (Ginnot, 1972, p.10)

Engaging in Living Educational Theory Research can enable professional practitioners to realise such a goal of education and help other individuals and social formations (such as a university, employing organisation) to do so too. So, we encourage professional practitioners to engage with others to create Living Educational Theory Research Communities of Practice, submit accounts of Living Educational Theory Research to journals such as EJOLTs, and contribute to growth of a global movement by sending individual and group living-posters to add to those on <https://actionresearch.net> and – and helping others do so too.

## References

- Briganti, A. (2020) *My living-theory of International Development*. PhD Thesis, University of Lancaster. Retrieved from <https://www.actionresearch.net/living/ABrigantiphd.pdf>
- Buber, M. (1937) *I and Thou*. T & T Clark. London; Bloomsbury.
- Buber, M. (1947) *Between Man and Man*. London; Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd.
- Delong, J. (2002) *How can I improve my practice as a superintendent of schools and create my own living educational theory?* PhD Thesis, University of Bath. Retrieved from <https://www.actionresearch.net/living/delong.shtml>
- Dewey, J. (1918) *Democracy and Education*. New York, Macmillan.
- Dhungana, P. (2023) Ways of enhancing joyful teaching and learning in a graduate class of Nepal. *Educational Journal of Living Theories*, 16(1); 28-48. Retrieved from <https://ejolts.net/node/397>
- Fischer, L. & Thomas, D. R. (1965) *Social Foundations of Educational Decisions*. Belmont, California; Wadsworth Publishing Company, Inc.
- Fromm, E. (1942) *Fear of Freedom*. London; Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Fromm, E. (1947) *Man for Himself: An Inquiry into the Psychology of Ethics*. New York; Rhinehart.
- Fromm, E. (1956) *The Art of Loving*, New York; Harper & Row.
- Peters. R. S. (1966) *Ethics and Education*. London; Allen and Unwin.
- Geller, A. (2010) *Within Dialogue and Without: How has 'Being in the Unkown' become a value in my developing as a better dialogical educator?* Ed.D. Thesis University of Bath. Retrieved from <https://www.actionresearch.net/living/geller/anatgelleredd.pdf>

Ginott, H., 1972. *Teacher and Child*. New York: Macmillan.

Habermas J. (1976) *Communication and the Evolution of Society*. London; Heinemann.

Huxtable, M. & Whitehead, J. (2021) Enhancing Research Literacy for Educators: A Living Educational Theory Research Approach, in Boyd, P., Szplit, A. & Zbrog, Z. (2021) *Developing Teachers' Research Literacy: International Perspective*. Wydawnictwo LIBRON - Filip Lohner. Retrieved from <https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/mhjwboyd150221.pdf>

Ilyenkov, E. (1977) *Dialectical Logic*. Moscow; Progress Publishers.

Mounter, J. (2023) Living Professionalism, in a 2023 draft of Mounter's PhD thesis on *How am I contributing to enhancing the professional development of educational practitioners accepting educational responsibility for their Living Professionalism? A Living Educational Theory Research approach to continuing professional development in education*. In preparation for submission to the University of Cumbria.

Noor, S. M. (2023) How can I improve my practice as a science teacher through the development of my pedagogical 'inquiry' skills? *Educational Journal of Living Theories*, 16(1); 1-27. Retrieved from <https://ejolts.net/node/396>

Potts, M. (2012), *How can I Reconceptualise International Educational Partnerships as a Form of 'Living Citizenship'*? PhD Thesis, Bath Spa University. Retrieved from <https://www.actionresearch.net/living/markpotts.shtm>.

Potts, M. (2014), Living Global Citizenship: A New Pedagogy for Citizenship Education. *Educational Journal of Living Theories*, 7(2); 102-118. Retrieved from <https://ejolts.net/node/235>

Rawal, S. (2006) *The Role Of Drama In Enhancing Life Skills In Children With Specific Learning Difficulties In A Mumbai School: My Reflective Account*. PhD Thesis, University of Bath. Retrieved from <https://www.actionresearch.net/living/rawal.shtml>

White, J., 2007. *What schools are for and why*. Impact No. 14. Published by the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain.

Whitehead, J. (1967) *The Way to Professionalism in Education? A special study on the Diploma of Education programme at the University of Newcastle, Department of Education*. Retrieved from <https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/jack/jackstudy1967all.pdf>

Whitehead, J. (1972) *A preliminary investigation of the process through which adolescents acquire scientific understanding*. Unpublished MA Dissertation, University of London.

Whitehead, J. (1989) Creating a living educational theory from questions of the kind, 'How do I improve my practice?'. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 19(1); 41-52.  
Retrieved from <https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/livtheory.html>

Whitehead, J. (1991) *A dialectical analysis of an individual's educational development and a basis for socially orientated action research*, in Proceedings of the First World Congress on Action Learning, Action Research and Process Management. Colins, J.C. & Chippendale, P.J. (Ed.), Vol. 1, 1991, Brisbane, Acorn Press.

Whitehead, J. (1999) *How do I improve my practice? Creating a New Discipline of Educational Enquiry*. Vol.2 - including Vol.1, PhD Thesis, University of Bath.  
Retrieved from <https://www.actionresearch.net/living/jackwhitehead2.shtml>

Whitehead, J. & Huxtable, M. (2024) *Living Educational Theory Research as an Epistemology for Practice: The Role of Values in Practitioners' Professional Development*. London; Routledge (in press)

Winters, R. (1989) *Learning from Experience*. London; Falmer.

Wolvaardt, E. (2013) *Over the conceptual horizon of public Health: a living theory of teaching undergraduate medical students*. PhD Thesis, University of Pretoria.  
Retrieved from <https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/wolvaardtphd/Wolvaardtphd2013.pdf>).