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**Original Article**

## **Developing, Sustaining and Thriving Transformative Living Educational Theory Research and Practice in Challenging Times and Contexts**

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### **Abstract**

Our intention here is to contribute to envisioning and realising a paradigm shift for empowering the future of research and education to bring into being a more harmonious, peaceful world where individuals and communities can learn to flourish and help others do so too. Humans have faced challenges from time immemorial. Some challenges are common, others are particular to a time and context. Challenges particular to a 21st century world include those presented by: a global pandemic; climate change; the hegemony of technical rationality and; global spread of individualistic, populist and neoliberal ideologies. This presents us each with a personal challenge to accept responsibility to pose, create and offer valid answers to questions such as, 'How can I, as a researcher, practitioner and citizen, contribute to the development of local, national and global policies and practices which hold a hope of bringing into being a world with values of human flourishing, and help others do so too?' We illustrate how practitioners worldwide have been engaging for decades in Living Educational Theory Research to generate answers to such questions. In the process they have critically and creatively engaged with various knowledges and united with researchers, practitioners and citizens across multiple academic fields and disciplines to: improve their research and pedagogical practices for the benefit of all; transform education and research to enhance sustainable educational, values-led, development of individuals and communities locally and globally and; contribute valid accounts of the knowledge they generate to the growth of a global educational knowledgebase.

**Keywords:** *Transformative Practice. Values of Human Flourishing. Professional Development. Living Educational Theory Research.*

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## Background

In this brief introduction we have selected background details to give some context to our research into ‘sustaining and thriving transformative Living Educational Theory Research and practice in challenging times and contexts.’ Our questions, such as, ‘How do I improve what I am doing?’ gave rise to the development of Living Educational Theory Research (Whitehead, 1989) as a distinct form of professional practitioner, educational, values-driven, research. The development arose from stipulating a necessary condition of Living Educational Theory Research being the generation by a practitioner of their living-educational-theory. This is a valid, values-laden, explanation of their educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations within which the practice is located. There is no necessity to generate these explanations within Action Research, Auto-ethnographical Research, Narrative Inquiry or any other form of practitioner or educational research. We draw a clear distinction between Living Educational Theory Research and a living-educational-theory.

Whitehead (1989) is the progenitor of Living Educational Theory Research. This was recognised in the citation for the award of D. Litt. Degree by the University of Worcester (Whitehead, 2023):

In 1967 Jack began his professional engagement in education, as a science teacher in a London Comprehensive Secondary School. In 1973 he went on to take up the post of Lecturer at the University of Bath where he remained until 2009. It was during the 1980s that Jack formulated the idea that individuals could generate their own living-educational-theories, as explanations for their educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and also in the learning of the wider social formations. Between 1995 and 2000 Jack studied for his own PhD, adopting an action research approach, further developing the understanding of Living Educational Theory. During his time at the University of Bath, Jack supervised to successful completion some 32 Living Educational Theory doctorates. (Whitehead, 2023)

Living Educational Theory Research refers to the conceptual understanding of the research paradigm. A living-educational-theory is the unique explanation generated by a practitioner-researcher to explain their educational influences in learning. The distinction is important because it emphasises that a living-educational-theory cannot be derived from Living Educational Theory Research. Unlike traditional research where an explanation is derived from the conceptual framework of a theory, a living-educational-theory is generated by an individual in their explanatory of their educational influences in learning.

In the course of researching into their practice to understand and improve it and to generate a valid, values and evidence-based explanation of educational influences in learning, it is necessary for the practitioner to research their practice and, as they do so, clarify the values that explain why they are doing what they are doing. This brief account by Huxtable illustrates the transformative implications of engaging in Living Educational Theory Research for a practitioner and global citizen accepting their professional responsibilities.

When employed as an educational psychologist by an English Local Authority Huxtable asked and sought to answer a fundamental question concerning her practice, which was her livelihood:

Why do I do what I do? I want children to grow as people who are comfortable in their own skin, knowing themselves, liking themselves, at peace with themselves, knowing

what they want to work on, to improve, and to have the courage to change and accept their own stumbling and that of other people as part of the journey.

I believe that an individual learns what they see themselves capable of learning and what is of value to them. The striving for excellence seems to carry with it a hope of personal fulfilment and when that personal ambition coincides with the needs of others, carries with it a hope for the progression of all of us and ‘twice affirmation’ for the individual.

I believe people (young and old) grow their understandings and create valued knowledge through dialogue with themselves and others ‘How can I contribute to the flourishing of humanity as I live a loving life that is satisfying, productive and worthwhile?’

In the process of creating an answer, other questions emerged, such as, ‘what are the implications for improving what I am doing?’ Huxtable developed her knowledge, understanding and practice of Living Educational Theory Research as a means for affecting informed change. Engaging in Living Educational Theory Research entailed her moving outside her comfort zones to challenge her own thinking and practice and that of the hegemonic power dominating local and national educational processes and systems of the time. De Santos (2016) offers a description of this hegemonic power:

Is it possible to see the subaltern regardless of the relation of subalternity? Could it be possible that the countries considered less developed are more developed in fields that escape the hegemonic terms of the dichotomy? In sum, is conceiving in an empowering way only possible on the other side of the line? (p. 172)

Huxtable realised her professional responsibilities to: i) rigorously test the validity of the knowledge created in the process and; ii) contribute to the growth of a global educational knowledgebase, by creating a scholarly narrative about her transformative educational research and pedagogical practices, and successfully submitting it for examination as a doctoral thesis. The abstract illustrates the implication of engaging in Living Educational Theory Research for the development by a practitioner of the epistemological, psychological, pedagogical, and political dimensions of professional practice in the nexus between contexts that form the complex, relationally dynamic and multidimensional ecologies we inhabit and are each part of:

My educational practice is concerned with enhancing children and young persons’ abilities to learn to live a loving, satisfying, productive and worthwhile life, for themselves and others. This thesis offers an original contribution to knowledge as a multimedia narrative. It communicates my ontological values of a loving recognition, respectful connectedness and educational responsibility, and social values of an inclusive, emancipating and egalitarian society. I clarify meanings of my values, as they emerge within living-boundaries through the evolution of my living-theory praxis, to form explanatory principles and living standards of judgment in my claim to know my practice.

Working as a senior educational psychologist responsible for implementing policy on high ability learning, I experienced the following concerns: Practice, theory and research often appeared to lose connection with the purpose of education; Theory and practice appeared to be developed independently, and without explanation or evaluation

related to values of education; Those involved with education appeared to be in discrete worlds, each vying to exert their hegemony over the totalising development of educational theory, practice and provision.

An influential example of this hegemony was in the imposition of the disciplines approach to Educational Theory in programmes of professional development of teachers. This approach eliminated the explanations of educational influence in learning created by teachers on the grounds that they were at best " ...pragmatic maxims having a first crude and superficial justification in practice" (Hirst, 1983):

In many characterisations of educational theory, my own included, principles justified in this way have until recently been regarded as at best pragmatic maxims having a first crude and superficial justification in practice that in any rationally developed theory would be replaced by principles with more fundamental, theoretical justification. That now seems to me to be a mistake. Rationally defensible practical principles, I suggest, must of their nature stand up to such practical tests and without that are necessarily inadequate. (p. 18)

Emerging from her doctoral research, Huxtable offered four original ideas:

1) **Living-Educational-Theory praxis**, highlighting the fundamental importance of educators creating ‘values-based explanation of their educational influences in learning’ (Whitehead, 1989a), as they research to develop praxis within living-boundaries.

2) **Living-boundaries** as co-creative space within which energy-flowing values can be clarified and communicated.

3) **Inclusive gifted and talented education developed from an educational perspective**, which enables each learner to develop and offer talents, expertise and knowledge as life-affirming and life-enhancing gifts. The knowledge is that created of the world, of self, and self in and of the world.

4) **Living-Theory TASC**, a relationally dynamic and multidimensional approach to research and developing praxis, which integrates Living-Theory with Thinking Actively in a Social Context (TASC)

In 1993, Whitehead described and analysed the growth of his educational knowledge in the creation of his own living-educational-theory. This focused on the challenges and practices as an educator, researcher and academic in developing, sustaining and thriving transformative Living Educational Theory and Practice. The analysis is focussed on Whitehead’s experience of being a living-contradiction (see below) in facing the hegemonic power of colonising influences in what counted as educational knowledge. In relation to transformative praxis, the analysis documents, in the sections 1, 3, 5, 7, 8 & 10 below, his expanding, enhanced awareness, of his situatedness in the world through a critical understanding of himself and the communities in which he worked as he responds to his experiences of being a living contradiction in sections, 2, 4, 6 & 9. The following list of reports is represented below in a table that shows the results of an analysis:

- 1 1977 *Improving learning in Schools - an in-service problem.*  
<http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/bk93/1ins77.pdf>
- 2 1976 *Living contradictions - I am a University Academic. I am not.*  
<http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/bk93/2ten.pdf>
- 3 1980 *In-service Education, The Knowledge-Base of Education*  
<http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/bk93/3ins80.pdf>
- 4 1980 *Living contradictions - I am a creative academic. I am not a creative academic. I can question the judgements of examiners. I cannot question.*  
<http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/bk93/4PhD.pdf>
- 5 1985 *An analysis of an individual's educational development - the basis for personally orientated action research* <http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/bk93/5anal.pdf>
- 6 1987 *Living contradictions - My writings are consistent with my duties as a University Academic. No they are not.*  
<http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/bk93/6disc.pdf>
- 7 1989 *Creating living educational theories from questions of the kind, 'How do I improve my practice?'* <http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/bk93/7livth.pdf>
- 8 1990 *How do I improve my Professional Practice as an Academic and Educational Manager? A dialectical analysis of an individual's educational development and a basis for socially orientated action research*  
<http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/bk93/8wc90.pdf>
- 9 1991 *The actions of a Senate Working Party on a Matter of Academic Freedom.*  
<http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/bk93/9senwp.pdf>
- 10 1992 *How can my philosophy of action research transform and improve my professional practice and produce a good social order? A response to Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt.* <https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/bk93/10wc92.pdf>

The Table 1 below on the next page represents the application of four (Kosok, 1976; Medawar, 1969; Mitroff & Kilman, 1978; Popper, 1972) analytic frameworks to the reports and which indicates the creation of a new methodology that is outside the Mitroff and Kilman (1978) four-fold classification of methodologies for the social sciences (Whitehead, 1985)

**Table 1: Analysis of Research Reports***The Form of Life of a Living Contradiction*

Report	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9/10
Medawar's phase of scientific enquiry	critical	creative	critical	creative	critical	creative	critical	creative	critical
The Popperian schema	s <sub>1</sub>	—	s <sub>2</sub>	—	s <sub>3</sub>	—	s <sub>4</sub>	—	s <sub>5</sub>
Mitroff's and Kilman's methodological approach	analytic scientist	—	conceptual theorist	—	conceptual humanist	—	particular humanist	—	—
Kosok's self-linearizing form	A non-linear dialectic process depicted as a self-linearizing form which reveals transition structures (in the schemas and critical phases) as nodal points of self-reflection								

Both Whitehead and Huxtable (2006) focused on the importance of relationally dynamic values in community-based educational research in the question, 'How do i-we contribute to bringing into being a world where humanity flourishes?' More recently we have focused on developing Living Educational Theory Research as community-based educational research in South Africa Higher Education (Whitehead & Huxtable, 2022). This includes staff at North-West University, Durban University of Technology and Nelson Mandela University. The living-posters of some of the participants can be accessed from <https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/posters/homepage2021.pdf>.

### Purpose of this Article

To contribute to:

- Co-joint envisioning and realisation of a paradigm shift from one dominated by the hegemony of technical rationality, to one which is empowering the future of research and education, to bring into being a more harmonious, peaceful world where individuals and communities can learn to flourish and help others do so too.
- Expanding awareness of situatedness and the creation of harmonious spaces, by strengthening and enlarging international communities of transformative practitioners with values of human flourishing.
- Promoting responsibility, equity, empowerment and enhanced meaningfulness in educational research and practice.
- Cultivating a vision of greater openness.

### Literature

We draw insights from the literature to strengthen the contribution this paper makes to envisioning and realising a paradigm shift in educational research (Whitehead, 1989, 1993). The intention behind this shift is to empower the future of research and education to bring into being a more harmonious, peaceful world where individuals and communities can learn to flourish and help others do so too.

We draw insights from diverse knowledges, for example: MacIntyre's (1988, p. 403) claims about the vindication of rival claims to truth, rationality, knowledge and power; Foucault's (Rabinow, 1991, p. 55) distinction between battles on behalf of 'truth' and the rules that determine what counts as truth; Santos' (2016) awareness of the dangers of the colonising influences of epistemologies in what he calls 'epistemicide' and; Jakubik's (2022) analysis of 'The Role of Higher Education in Solving Global Problems', with her assertion that the world's global problems need urgent and sustainable solutions and actions in seeking to create answers to questions such as, 'How can higher education develop authentic and responsible citizens who will be able to act and solve global problems?'

The literature we draw on also includes Living Educational Theory Doctorates legitimated by Universities worldwide (access from <https://www.actionresearch.net/living/living.shtml>) such as that of:

- Charles (2007), *How Can I Bring Ubuntu As A Living Standard of Judgement Into The Academy? Moving Beyond Decolonisation Through Societal Reidentification And Guiltless Recognition.*
- Qutoshi (2016), *Creating Living-Educational-Theory: A Journey Towards Transformative Teacher Education in Pakistan.*

Whitehead (1989) coined the term living-educational-theory for these explanations. In the creation of their living-educational-theory practitioners draw insights from diverse knowledges, such as those created in the disciplines of psychology, philosophy, sociology and the fields of leadership and management of education. They do so in order to improve their educational knowledge and practice. 'Educational' knowledge and practice is distinguished by values of human flourishing; values such as authenticity, integrity and those of global citizens who accept their responsibility to contribute to bringing into being a world where the humanity of individuals, communities and Humanity flourish (Whitehead & Huxtable, 2024).

Drawing insights from other living-educational-theories helps to answer criticisms that Living Educational Theory research is not generalisable because it focuses on an individual's explanation of their educational influence in learning. Following Bassey (1991) we focus on relatability rather than generalisability.

First, too many writers try to generalize their findings beyond the confines of their data. Thus, the conclusions of a study of, say, the reading abilities of 100 8- year-olds in five schools, or perhaps of all the 8-year-olds in one LEA, tend to be expressed as though they refer to all 8-year-olds everywhere. The error lies in failing to recognise that there is enormous variation in educational practice – from child to child, from classroom to classroom, from school to school, from LEA to LEA, from region to region, and from year to year. It is folly to extrapolate findings from one population to another. Referring back to my map of educational research, the merit of recognizing the distinction between search for generalization and study of a singularity is that it reduces the likelihood of falling into this error. Of course, the vast majority of researches in education are studies of singularities. (p.10)

Rather than applying a generalised concept to a particular case, as in traditional forms of generalisability, we demonstrate the relatability of a living-educational-theory by showing how insights from one living-educational-theory can be used by another person in the generation of their own living-educational-theory. For a similar reason we also draw on published, peer-reviewed papers, conference presentations and reports of other Living Educational Theory researchers such as those of:

- Boland and Romero's (2017) paper, *(Re)inhabiting Waldorf Education: Honolulu Teachers Explore the Notion of Place*.
- Gumede and Mellett's, (2019) paper, *Forming a 'We' through a good-quality conversation*.
- Rahman, Lund, Alamin, Khalid, Krogh's, (2021) paper, *Developing a transformative, cooperative living-educational-theory with children and youth in the EDS (Education for Development and Sustainability) community of practice in Bangladesh*.
- Whitehead, J. & Huxtable, M. (2022) *Developing a Living Educational Theory Research Approach to Community-Based Educational Research*.
- Dhungana's, (2022) conference presentation, *Living educational values for enhancing harmonious equitable space*.
- Rawal's, (2017) report, *Straws in the wind: An evaluation of a teacher-training programme*, which she made public in the form of a poster:

This poster is a multi-media presentation of an evaluation of a teacher-training programme carried out for all the in-service teachers of Government schools in Gujarat. This poster serves two purposes: 1 as a communication of an evaluation and 2 as a way to acknowledge the work carried out by my core-team and the other teachers. It gives me personal and professional satisfaction to demonstrate the friendship I have developed with my teacher-students as we worked in collaboration towards a common action, striving to make sense, trying to understand, each wide awake to their 'living educational theory', working towards the betterment of education for the children of Gujarat.

Rawal shared the knowledge she created in the form of living-posters, reports and papers, in response to the question she posed on her 2020 living-poster:

Are my values acceptable and useful for others in promoting a transformation in educational practice? Seeing that 'we cannot teach what we do not know'. I believe that as educators who stand for certain values, we have no option but to live them out, embody them in our quest to set an example and influence others to do the same (<http://www.spanglefish.com/livingtheoryresearchgathering/documents/swaroop/swaroop-living-poster-240520.pdf>)

As she does so, Rawal draws on the knowledge created by others and shared in various forms and through various medium, for example on websites such as Whitehead's (<https://actionresearch.net/>) and Huxtable's (<http://www.spanglefish.com/mariessite/>).

## Methodology and Methods

Our methodology is that of Living Educational Theory Research, a form of professional practitioner educational research and practitioner self-study research in which the question is not 'who' am I?' but rather 'What am I doing to contribute to the realisation of values of human flourishing?' At the heart of this question is the acceptance of an educational responsibility to continuously strive to improve one's educational influence in one's own learning, the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations within which the practice is located.

In the development of a living-educational-theory methodology, methodological inventiveness (Dadds & Hart 2001) is stressed in asking, researching and answering questions of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing in my professional educational practice?'



Perhaps the most important new insight for both of us has been awareness that, for some practitioner researchers, creating their own unique way through their research may be as important as their self-chosen research focus. We had understood for many years that substantive choice was fundamental to the motivation and effectiveness of practitioner research (Dadds, 1995); that what practitioners chose to research was important to their sense of engagement and purpose. But we had understood far less well that how practitioners chose to research, and their sense of control over this, could be equally important to their motivation, their sense of identity within the research and their research outcomes." (p. 166)

In exercising methodological inventiveness, it is important to recognise that each Living Educational Theory Researcher generates their own living-educational-theory methodology in producing their explanation of their educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations within which the practice is located. In developing, sustaining, and thriving transformative Living Educational Theory Research and practice, in challenging times and contexts, it is important to stress that each individual must use their own methodological inventiveness in generate their own living-educational-theory.

This process is very different from traditional approaches that usually involve the application of an existing methodology to a research inquiry. This generation of a living-educational-theory methodology, in the course of producing an explanation of educational influence in learning, can often include insights from other methodologies. For example, researchers engaged in Living Educational Theory Research often draw insights from Narrative Inquiry; Self-study Research; Action Research and Autoethnography (Whitehead, 2018). The use of such insights in the creation of a living-educational-theory is part of the process of envisioning and realising a paradigm shift for empowering the future of research and education to bring into being a more harmonious, peaceful world where individuals and communities can learn to flourish and help others do so too. Methods can include empathetic resonance with digital visual data (Whitehead, 2010; Huxtable, 2009) for clarifying and communicating the meanings of embodied values that distinguish practice as educational.

Other methods developed include the use of living-posters. These evolved from a way of enabling people to be present as individuals in communities and make connections with others working in diverse contexts and cultures, as illustrated by the living-posters of practitioner-researchers accessed from the living-posters 'homepage' found on

<https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/posters/homepage2023.pdf>.

A living-poster is intended as an opportunity to bring attention to your sites of practice and your research passions and interests and help you connect with people with similar research passions and interests. You can access the homepage of posters at:

<https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/posters/homepage2021.pdf>.

We encourage you to access and browse through the living-posters from Durban University of Technology, North West University and Nelson Mandela University as staff in these Universities are developing their community engaged educational research. We also direct your attention to the Living-posters of the Indonesian Transformative Education Research Group at <https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/posters/indonesiangp23.pdf>.

Living-posters have also been developed as a research method, as illustrated by Rawal's poster (Rawal, 2020). Other research methods developed include new ways of using digital visual data by a practitioner to recognise the values expressed in practice they want to serve as their evaluative standards by which they judge the effectiveness of their practice. Whitehead first identified himself as a living-contradiction in 1972 when, as Head of a Secondary School Science Department he was asked by the Inspectorate to explore the educational values of a

video-camera and recorder. On viewing himself teaching a class where he believed that he had established enquiry learning, he experienced himself as a living contradiction when he could see that he was giving his pupils the questions to ask rather than eliciting the questions from his pupils. This experience immediately stimulated his imagination to think of ways he could improve his practice. He documented his classroom practice and this demonstrated he improved it by establishing enquiring learning.

We have explained the necessity of generating multimedia explanations of educational influences in learning in relation to limitations in solely printed text-based explanations (Whitehead & Huxtable, 2006a, 2006b). The limitations are focused on the importance of ostensive expressions when compared to lexical definitions in communicating the meanings of embodied expressions of embodied values.

i) Clarifying embodied expressions of relationally dynamic values.

In our research, into sustaining and thriving transformative Living Educational Theory Research and practice in challenging times and contexts, we are seeking to contribute to an understanding of the relationally dynamic values that can enable communities to engage in this research. We are seeking to contribute to the communication of the realisation in practice of humanitarian and life-enhancing values, which contribute to a world in which humanity can increasingly flourish. We are doing this in a number of ways, for example:

ii) Creating personal websites to make freely accessible Living Educational Theory Research and encouraging others to do so too.

This is illustrated by the resources that introduce Living Educational Theory Research to a new audience at: <http://www.spanglefish.com/livingtheory>. The resources at <https://www.actionresearch.net/living/living.shtml>, include over 50 Living Educational Theory Doctorates that have been legitimated by Universities around the world.

As well as personal websites we are also using the website of the Educational Journal of Living Theories (EJOLTs) to help in developing, sustaining and thriving transformative Living Educational Theory Research and practice in challenging times and contexts. We want practitioners to get more from submitting a paper to EJOLTs than simply learning how to successfully 'tick the publishing criteria boxes' of a journal. We want the process of successfully submitting a paper to EJOLTs to be an educational experience, and one that contributes to a practitioner developing their knowledge, understanding, and practice of Living Educational Theory Research with values of human flourishing. Through doing this we believe that we can contribute to developing sustaining and thriving transformative Living Educational Theory Research and practice. We have explained why we believe that this is also contributing to envisioning and realising a paradigm shift for empowering the future of research and education to bring into being a more harmonious, peaceful world where individuals and communities can learn to flourish and help others do so too.

iii) Contributing to the development of cooperative, democratic and educational ways of creating and publishing The Educational Journal of Living Theories (EJOLTs) so the educational knowledge created by practitioners can be recognised, valued and work with by the larger academic community and professional practitioners so individuals, communities and Humanity might learn to flourish and help others do so too.

The Educational Journal of Living Theories (EJOLTs) is an online journal free to access and without cost to authors. It publishes valid accounts created by practitioner-researchers of their living-educational-theories (Whitehead, 1989), which meet all the publishing criteria made public on the journal website (<https://ejolts.net/submission>). Important criteria the paper must fulfil are those concerning the academic and scholarly quality of the research. This presents a challenge as the discourse of the larger academic community is dominated by, what have become established forms of research and knowledge, to which we refer to later in this paper.

For the wider academic community to acknowledge that the knowledge created makes a valuable contribution to the growth of a global educational knowledgebase the journal has to put papers submitted through a double-blind review process, as *The Journal of Transformative Praxis* and other academic and scholarly journals have to do. Requiring authors to ‘anonymise’ their paper presents a particular challenge, given the nature of educational knowledge, professional practitioner educational research and the associated processes of validation. The additional challenge for EJOLTs is how to enable the review process to be educational and not simply judgmental. The solution developed over the years entails a three stage ‘review’.

The first stage is a double-blind review of a paper to establish whether or not: It is of an academic and scholarly quality appropriate for an academic journal; It includes distinguishing qualities of a Living Educational Theory Research methodology and/or makes a contribution to the field of Living Educational Theory Research.

Papers that pass the double-blind review stage progress to the open review stage conducted in the [web space of cooperation \(moodle\)](#). In the open review stage, the conversation is guided by a rubric to help the author/s create a paper to the point that the reviewers recommend the Editorial Board consider accepting for publication. Communication between reviewers and authors is transparent and readers are also able to participate by reading and contributing to the conversation. When a paper is published the conversation is available in the 'published papers' section of <https://ejolts.org>. (<https://ejolts.net/review>).

The final stage of the review process is when the Editorial Board, through a cooperative democratic process, comes to a decision as to whether the paper is to be published in EJOLTs, or further work is needed. The papers published, contribute to establishing the academic legitimacy of multimedia narratives and the development of educational knowledge and research, which responds to the call by Schön (1995) for a new epistemology.

## Findings and Discussion

Contributing to the co-creation of a new educational and collective imaginary (Drewell & Larsson, 2019) involves the envisioning and realisation of a paradigm shift in moving, from the hegemony of technical rationality for empowering the future of research and education, to bringing into being a more harmonious, peaceful world where individuals and communities can learn to flourish and help others do so too. We agree with Carr and Kemmis (1986) that Habermas’ (1987) *Theory of Communicative Action*, provides a theoretical critique in moving beyond the hegemony of technical rationality. We are also persuaded by Monbiot’s and Hutchinson’s (2024) arguments for moving beyond neo-liberalism in the creation of a world in which Humanity can flourish.

Realising our intention, to contribute to envisioning and realising a paradigm shift for empowering the future of research and education to bring into being a more harmonious, peaceful world where individuals and communities can learn to flourish and help others do so too, requires, as we have stressed, the acceptance of educational responsibility. That is the educational responsibility to pose, create and offer valid answers to questions such as, ‘How can I, as a researcher, practitioner and citizen, contribute to the development of local, national and global policies and practices which hold a hope of bringing into being a world with values of human flourishing, and help others do so too?’. Living Educational Theory Research does not deny the value of technical rationality for solving the problems for which it is appropriate. However, it challenges the hegemony of this rationality for solving problems that are grounded in the values of human flourishing. These problems require the acceptance by each professional practitioner of their educational responsibility to live their values of human flourishing as fully as possible, to research the processes of improving their practice and to share the knowledge

they generate in extending and deepening the educational knowledgebase. In focusing on ‘responsibility’ we agree with Bakhtin’s point:

...these problems derive from the fundamental error of “rationalist” philosophy... The fatal flaw is the denial of responsibility - which is to say, the crisis is at base an ethical one. It can be overcome only by an understanding of the act as a category into which cognition enters but which is radically singular and “responsible”. (Morson & Emerson, 1989, p. 13)

***Expanding awareness of situatedness and creating harmonious spaces by strengthening and enlarging international communities of transformative practitioners with values of human flourishing in Living Educational Theory Research.***

Our findings and discussion are focused on values and evidence-based accounts of practitioners expressing their educational responsibility. They do this by holding themselves to account for enhancing their educational influences in the learning of individuals and communities through sustaining and thriving transformative Living Educational Theory Research and practice in challenging times in diverse cultural contexts and fields of practice in international communities of practice. The accounts of expanding awareness and situatedness, have been referred to above in the literature section, and include the value of harmony drawn from Eastern Wisdom traditions. The contexts are those of practitioner researchers living and working in India, Pakistan, Nepal, South Africa and Hawaii drawing on their embodied cultural knowledges; knowledges sometimes ‘categorised’ as those created in the ‘global south’, ‘indigenous’ cultures and ‘Eastern Wisdom’ (DeLong et al., 2022).

***Promoting responsibility, equity, empowerment and enhanced meaningfulness in educational research and practice***

In expressing our educational responsibility with values of human flourishing we understand praxis to be the integration of theory and practice with a moral intent. At the heart of a dialectical approach to praxis is contradiction. Each of us cannot escape our different, challenging socio-political contexts within which we experience ourselves as living contradictions. We have focused on the implications, for living our values of equity, empowerment and enhanced meaningfulness, of our innovative, praxis-driven, transformative educational research and pedagogical practices, in using Living Educational Theory Research to address our experiences of being living-contradictions in challenging socio-political contexts. The theme of the 2021 Conference of the American Educational Research Association was on ‘Accepting Educational Responsibility’. DeLong et al. (2021) explore the implications of accepting educational responsibility in Living Educational Theory Research.

Our meaning of praxis is that of living-educational-theory praxis, “Living-educational-theory praxis, highlighting the fundamental importance of educators creating ‘values-based explanation of their educational influences in learning’ (Whitehead, 1989), as they research to develop praxis within living-boundaries.” (Huxtable, 2012).

This connects with our understanding of what is educational as learning with values of human flourishing. In Living Educational Theory Research, we are continuously deepening and extending our cognitive range and concerns in our understandings of our socio-political contexts. This is shown in each living-educational-theory that is strengthened in relation to a validation process that is focused on enhancing an explanation’s comprehensibility, evidence,

sociohistorical and sociocultural understandings and authenticity in terms of living values of human flourishing as fully as possible.

### ***Cultivating a vision of greater openness***

As we offer an alternative to the hegemony of technical rationality, we use Living Educational Theory Research to explain the creation of sustaining and thriving transformative living educational theory research and practice in challenging times and contexts. In offering our alternative we accept Schön's (1995) analysis of the need for a new epistemology for the new scholarship. Our epistemology defines the nature of the explanations we are offering. In cultivating a vision of greater openness our explanations of educational influence in learning, challenge the hegemony and regimes of truth of technical rationality identified by Carr & Kemmis (1986). These explanations include both what Foucault describes as a battle around truth or regimes of truth and the different battle about the ensemble of truths which are to be discovered and accepted:

There is a battle "for truth," or at least "around truth"- it being understood once again that by truth I do not mean "the ensemble of truths which are to be discovered and accepted," but rather "the ensemble of rules according to which the true and the false are separated and specific effects of power attached to the true," it being understood also that it's a matter not of a battle "on behalf" of the truth, but of a battle about the status of truth and the economic and political role it plays. It is necessary to think of the political problems of intellectuals not in terms of "science" and "ideology," but in terms of "truth" and "power." And thus the question of the professionalization of intellectuals and the division between intellectual and manual labour can envisaged in a new way. (Rabinow, 1991, p. 74)

According to Foucault "Truth" is to be understood as a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation and operation of statements. In his view "Truth" is linked in a circular relation with systems of power, which produces and sustains it, and to effects of power, which it induces and which extends it. A "regime" of truth:

The essential political problem for the intellectual is not to criticize the ideological contents supposedly linked to science, or to ensure that his own scientific practice is accompanied by a correct ideology, but that of ascertaining the possibility of constituting a new politics of truth. The problem is not changing people's consciousnesses – or what's in their heads – but the political, economic, institutional regime of the production of truth. It's not a matter of emancipating truth from every system of power (which would be a chimera, for truth is already power), but of detaching the power of truth from the forms of hegemony, social, economic and cultural, within which it operates at the present time. (pp. 74-75)

In contributing to a new politics of truth, from the perspective of Living Educational Theory Research, we accept Ryle's (1973) point about avoiding the 'intellectualist legend'. We do this by grounding our inquiries within practical questions of the kind, 'How do I improve my professional practice, with values of human flourishing?'

...It is therefore possible for people intelligently to perform some sorts of operations when they are not yet able to consider any propositions enjoining how they should be

performed. Some intelligent performances are not controlled by an interior acknowledgement of the principles applied in them.

The crucial objection to the intellectualist legend is this. The consideration of propositions is itself an operation the execution of which can be more or less intelligent, less or more stupid. But if, for any operation to be intelligently executed, a prior theoretical operation had first to be performed and performed intelligently, it would be a logical impossibility for anyone ever to break into the circle. (p. 31)

It is important to recognise that the ‘I’ in a question of the kind, ‘How do I improve my practice?’, is a relationally dynamic ‘I’ that exists within a community of ‘we’. In our community-based educational research we recognise that values can express both real and apparent conflicts and tensions, between the needs of individual people and those of local, national and international communities. In cultivating greater openness it is important that conflicts can be acknowledged and faced, within the living boundaries (Huxtable, 2012) of the i~we relationships. These constitute the co-operative relationships of people seeking to live values of human flourishing as fully as possible.

### **Interim Conclusion and Implications**

Our conclusion is in the form of questions to you, the reader, as to whether we have offered you a convincing evidence and values-based analysis that contributes to the realisation of the aims of scholars engaged in Transformative Educational Research and Sustainable Development (TERSd). Our questions are focused on conceiving, enacting, and flourishing the depth and scope of transformative capabilities, collaboration, embodied practice, and praxis in education and research. We are continuing to explore some implications of expanding awareness of our situatedness and created a harmonious space by strengthening and enlarging an international network of transformative practitioners. This exploration can be seen in our presentation to the 2024 Collaborative Action Research Network Conference (Huxtable & Whitehead, 2024), in which we are cultivating a vision of openness in the generation of a new collective and educational imaginary (Drewell & Larsson, 2019). We are continuing to share our innovative praxis-driven educational research and pedagogical practices in overcoming challenging socio-political context, in our scholarly narratives about our transformative educational research and pedagogical practices. In doing this we provide the evidence to support our claim that we are promoting equity, empowerment and enhanced meaningfulness in educational research and practice. We also explore the epistemological tensions of inequity and injustice through Living Educational Theory Research.

We have explored some implications of the above questions in our publications (Whitehead & Huxtable, 2022, 2024). Do please access this from the reference section and respond to our most recent research. We hope you will join us in taking the next steps to develop sustaining and thriving transformative Living Educational Theory Research and practice in challenging times and contexts which contributes to bringing into being a more peaceful, humane world where all may flourish and help others do so too. These steps include individuals and communities identifying where they experience their professional educational-practitioner self as a living contradiction, their values negated, and creating constructive ways forward—testing the validity of claims of improving educational practice that enhances educational, values-laden influences in learning—and strengthening accounts of learning to make positive social change in this complex and interconnected world through a process of social validation. We are suggesting that developing, sustaining and thriving transformative Living Educational Theory Research and practice in challenging times and contexts will

require each one of us to accept our educational responsibility for creating and sharing our living-educational-theories with values of human flourishing.

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