# Contributing to Human Flourishing: Exploring Our Influences and Research Practices in a Cross-Cultural Context

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Objectives

- This presentation posits that repair and remedy in education stem from understanding our values and their impact on learning. We present two objectives:
  - Discussion of our responsibilities in generating values-based explanations of our educational influence and our work as a group to embody and clarify the meanings of these relationally-dynamic values together.
  - Reflection on the distinction between educational and education research.

Background of our work and contributions

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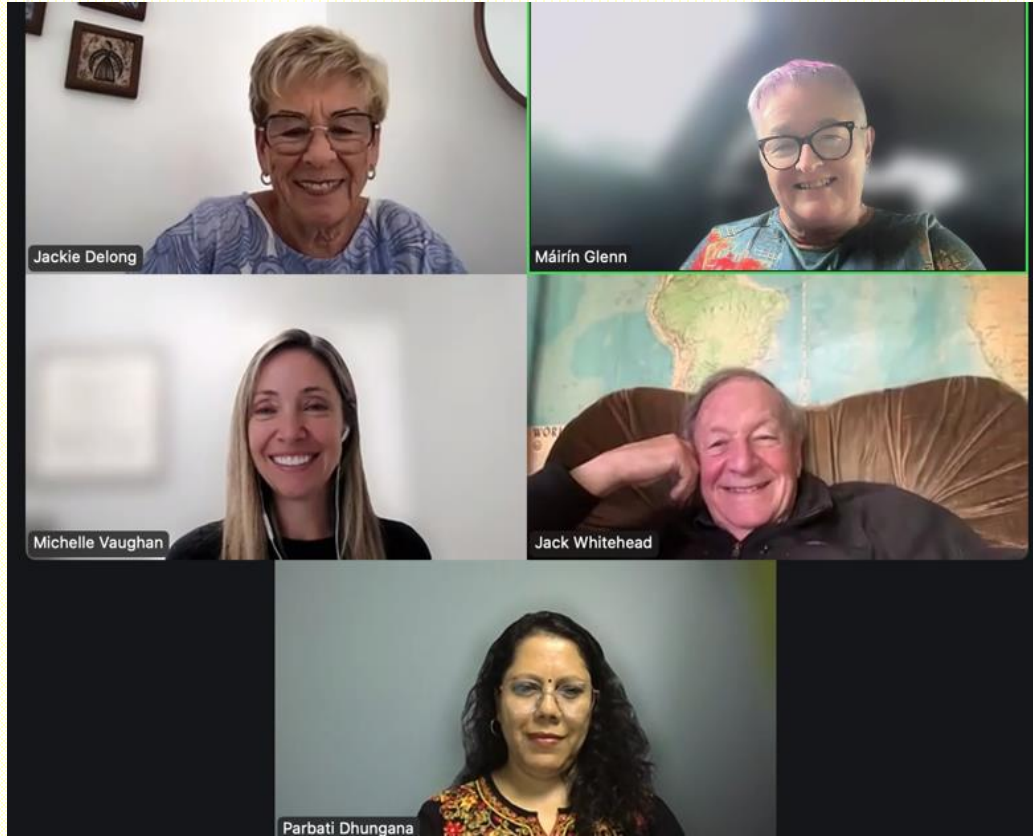
Living Educational Theory: Accepting responsibility for becoming aware of one's values and articulating them is a key element of Living Educational Theory research. While we do not use the terms repair and remedy, our work focuses on values of support, encouragement, caring, empowerment, transformation and improvement. See glossary at https://ejolts.net/glossary

International Presentations: As an international group of practitioner researchers and scholars, we accept our educational responsibilities by generating and sharing valid, evidence-based, and values-based explanations of our educational influences in learning. We support each other through our presentations at CARN (2022, 2023, 2024) and AERA (2021, 2022, 2023) conferences. The following slide contains references as evidence of our continued efforts and presence in this field.

Delong et al. (2021) at the AERA Conference on Accepting Responsibility. https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/aera21/2021aerasymposiumfull.pdf

Delong et al. (2022) on Cultivating Equitable Education Systems. https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/jack/AERA2022sessionprop.pdf

Delong et al. (2022) on Changing Lives, at the Classroom Action Research Network Conference. https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/carn2022/CARN2022sympproppres151022.pdf

Delong et al. (2023) at the AERA Conference on Interrogating Consequential Education Research. https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/aera2023/jw2023aera040523.pdf

Delong et al. (2023) at CARN on Educational Responses to Reaching Out to People and Communities. https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/carn2023/carn2023jddmvtrjwmg191023.pdf

Delong et al. (2024) at CARN on Values-Based Inquiries in Global Contexts. https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/carn/valuescarn2024.pdf

Delong, J. & Whitehead, J. (2023). You and Your Living-Educational Theory: How to Conduct a Values-Based Inquiry for Human Flourishing. https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/jack/jddjwletbookflyer.pdf

Dhungana, P. & Delong, J. (In press). Dialectical Engagement on Eastern and Western Academic Traditions in Values-based Inquiry.

Dhungana, P. (2020). 'Living love': My living-educational theory. Educational Journal of Living Theories, 13(1). https://web-cdn.org/s/1445/file/node/13-3.pdf

Glenn et al. (2024) Generating Theory from Practice - reflections from a network at the Action Research Group Ireland Colloquium

Glenn, M. (2024) on The Power of 'I' in Teacher Research at the Collaborative Action Research Network Conference

Glenn, M. (2020) "Co-convening the Network of Educational Action Research Ireland (NEARI)", Educational Journal of Living Theories, vol. 13, pp. 22-44 (OA)

Vaughan, M., Cheva, E., Ponce, R., Theophile, K., & Vajda, M. (2024). Caring in academia: Exploring the role of values-led practice within the doctoral student experience. Educational Journal of Living Theories, 17(1), 28-54. https://web-cdn.org/s/1445/file/node/17-2.pdf

Vaughan, M., Cheva, E., Ponce, R., Theophile, K., & Vajda, M. (June, 2024). Co-researchers within a Culture of Inquiry: Exploring the Experiences of Values-Based Action Researchers within a Doctoral Program. Panel presented at Action Research Network of the Americas (ARNA) annual conference. Ypsilanti, Michigan.

Whitehead, J. (2024). The dragons of conflict in 54 years of a global, Living Educational Theory Research approach to professional development. Individual paper presented at the 2024 International Professional Development Association Conference. https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/jack/jwipda111124.pdf

Whitehead, J. (2024). Transformative Living Educational Theory Research in the Landscapes of Cultural and Religious Diversity. Keynote presentation to the 4th International Conference on Transformative Educational Research and Sustainable Development (TERSD). https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/jack/jackkeynotetersd191024.pdf

Whitehead, J. & Huxtable, M. (2024). Developing, Sustaining and Thriving Transformative Living Educational Theory Research and Practice in Challenging Times and Contexts. Journal of Transformative Practice, 5(1), 9-25. https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/jack/jwmhjtp.pdf

Key points on the relationship between values and repair/remedy

Researchers who first understand the importance of uncovering and studying their own values and their influence on their own learning, in the learning of others, and in the learning of social formations can contribute to repair and remedy as outcomes of educational research.

- **Self-Awareness**: Researchers must understand their own values and how these values influence their learning and the learning of others. This self-awareness is crucial for providing repair and remedy in educational research. Accepting responsibility for becoming aware of one's values and articulating them is a key element of Living Educational Theory research.

- **Human Flourishing**: To contribute to human flourishing and provide repair and remedy, researchers need to live according to their values and make decisions based on these values. Living values as fully as possible may enable researchers to repair contexts and practices that do not support these values and to overcome experiences where values are negated in practice.

How do we provide our values-based explanations of our influence, as individuals and as a group?

- **Values in Action**: Values are best understood when seen in action. Digital visual data and dialogue can be used as research methods to provide evidence of values as explanatory principles.

- **Series of Writings and Presentations**: We each have provided values-based explanations of our educational influences through various writings and conference presentations. Our influences are also evident in the writings of those we have mentored, showing the evolution of values and the spread of influence within a culture of inquiry.

- **Evidence-Based Sharing**: We consistently share our evidence-based and values-laden explanations of our educational influences in learning through our presentations at CARN and AERA conferences. We take responsibility for inviting others to join our culture of inquiry and supporting new scholars in the field.

Distinction between education and educational research

Education Research: Refers to research within specific disciplines such as sociology, psychology, and history of education. It often focuses on quantitative data and external outcomes and is typically research on others.

Educational Research: This research is values-led, seeks to enhance practice, and is undertaken for the flourishing of humanity. It focuses on learning, self-improvement, society-improvement, and contributing to a better world. It is premised on knowing oneself, living according to one's values, and contributing to human flourishing.

Action-Oriented: Educational research builds from a place of action, with a goal of contributing explanations that are actionable in the field of education. This is seen as a greater goal than just understanding in research.

Values at the Center: Educational research keeps values at the center and supports exploring values, which may be the hidden curriculum. It contributes to enhancing what researchers and participants are doing in their professional spaces.

How does this distinction help to improve our work for the greater good of humanity?

The AERA 2025 call asks us to take a sense of ownership towards accountability and use our scholarship to repair and remedy the world around us. However, we believe that first level of scholarly accountability is to go inward to clarify and justify the values that are guiding practice and research every day. Self-study and Living Educational Theory are tools to do this.

- **Origins and Evolution**: Initially, both Living Educational Theory (LET) and self-study were undertaken by individuals researching their own practice. LET emerged from the individual's values, whereas self-study was not specifically values-led and did not aim to generate a theory. Over time, self-study has grown to include a focus on teaching self-study to teachers, while LET is now undertaken by both groups and individuals.

- **Living Educational Theory (LET)**: LET, as created by Whitehead (1989), is a self-study that asks and answers the question, "How can I improve my practice?" It seeks to improve one's practice through a deep understanding of the individual's values and how they influence their work and context. This methodology is used within cross-cultural inquiries to deepen understanding of practices, language, and goals of educational research.

- **Self-Study**: Self-study involves examining one's own practice but does not necessarily include a living educational theory. It can include reflections on self that may not be related to one's professional practice.

Within Living Educational Theory research, the unit of appraisal is the individuals' own account of their educational influence in learning as they address the question, 'How do I improve my practice?'

- **Standards of Judgement**: In Living Educational Theory (LET) research, standards of judgement are drawn from the individual's values. These standards are used to evaluate the quality of the research and to determine if the researcher is enhancing their practice and living more closely to their values.

- **Unit of Appraisal**: The unit of appraisal in LET research is the individual's own account of their educational influence in learning. This involves creating living-educational-theories with values as explanatory principles to explain their influence.

- **Engaging Others**: Researchers must engage others to support their claims to know their influence on themselves, on others, and on the social formations where they live and work. For example, a claim about loving students into learning can be supported by visual data or dialogue showing this value in action. Vaughan & Delong, 2019

- **Contributing to Knowledge**: Individuals claim that they are contributing to knowledge and influencing their own learning and the learning of others by using their explanation of educational influences as the unit of appraisal. This is similar to using data or evidence in other methodologies.

- **Improving Practice**: A practical example is providing evidence that the value of care influences doctoral students in their learning through a culture of inquiry. This value is evident in writings and recorded Zoom sessions, which serve as evidence of learning and influence. Vaughan et al., 2024

As a cross-cultural group, we have acted and reflected on our understanding of values in our own and in each other's contexts including Eastern Wisdom and Western Critical Traditions; also, our hope is that others may see ways to live more fully according to their values, hold themselves accountable and work to 'dismantle colonial structures"

Cultural Traditions: While it's important to acknowledge the origins of our values, it's equally crucial to learn from the wisdom and insights of others, regardless of their cultural background. This approach fosters a more inclusive and holistic understanding of values.

Cross-Cultural Support: Research cannot be done in isolation; it requires the support and encouragement of others. A cross-cultural group creates a culture of inquiry where members feel safe and comfortable being vulnerable. This environment allows for the sharing and addressing of challenging and uncomfortable concerns.

Understanding Different Approaches: The group has challenged itself to understand different ways of being and knowing, especially regarding Eastern and Western approaches and cultures, as well as colonization. This understanding enriches the research process and promotes harmony.

Harmony and Ardhanarishwor: The concept of Ardhanarishwor, a constellation of Purusha (Shiva) and Prakriti (Shakti), represents an inclusive, integrated, and harmonious whole. When logicality and intuitiveness are balanced, harmony is experienced. This balance is an explanatory principle of living values, such as harmony and equity.

Cultural Lens: Viewing oneself and one's values without a cultural lens can be challenging. However, being part of a cross-cultural group provides opportunities to dismantle imposed beliefs, values, and structures, leading to more authentic and fruitful scholarship.

We invite you to contact us to engage in more dialogue:

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