

Chapter 8

Practices and Experiences in Educational Researcher Training: Reflections from Research Students Exploring the Theme, Living Well in a World Worth Living in During the Covid-19 Pandemic



Sally Windsor and Amoni Kitooke

Abstract This chapter is a case study which describes and reflects on the first steps into research practice for a group of international Masters students who were soon to embark on writing educational research theses when the COVID-19 pandemic started in early 2020. Because of a sudden transition to online learning and cancellation of in-person fieldwork opportunities, this group of fledgling researchers conducted a small research project that sought answers to the question—*What does it mean to live well in a world worth living in?* The purpose of the project was to find out how this particular group of people, in a certain time and place, would respond to this question. Four themes emerged: political engagement; connection and basic needs; social stratification and access; living slow and in ‘flow’. This chapter outlines this project from the perspective of a research student and the teacher, and illuminates the various student groups’ understandings of what it means to live well in a world worth living in. Using the theories of ‘communities of practice’ and ‘practice architectures’, the chapter reflects on the dynamics and processes through which the research student groups engaged with the subject; and what their experience might mean for educational researcher training.

Keywords Research training · International masters education research · Communities of practice · Theory of practice architectures

Introduction

This chapter presents the case of a novel in-class educational research project from the perspectives of a research student and the teacher. The reflections presented here

S. Windsor (✉)
University of Gothenburg, Gothenburg, Sweden
e-mail: sally.windsor@gu.se

A. Kitooke
University of Borås, Borås, Sweden
e-mail: amoni.kitooke@hb.se

are at two levels. The first one concerns the student groups' research processes and conclusions on the question, *What does it mean to live well in a world worth living in?* In the first part of the chapter, two narrative vignettes are used to describe the course in which the students engaged when they carried out their research project and how it was undertaken. The reflections and conclusions of each group are summarised and discussed.

The second part of the chapter includes a theoretically informed critical reflection on the processes through which the research students and their teacher executed the research projects, and what that might imply for other such engagements in educational research training programmes. The concepts and theories of 'practice architectures' and 'communities of practice' are used to frame the reflection on how the group research projects were conducted.

The Research Course, Students' Projects, and Reflections

Teacher Vignette—Sally

In March, 2020, a 'new' course in Gothenburg University's International Master Programme in Educational Research (IMER) began, designed to introduce students to the practicalities of planning and conducting research in educational and other social sciences. Previous iterations of the course had focused on research environments in which students would study how current and different research groups in the Education faculty practically conducted education-based research projects. However, for a number of years, the students had expressed frustrations. The source of frustration was that research project teams differed greatly in how open they were to the student researchers. Sometimes project teams welcomed students warmly, including them in project meetings (which required them to run the meetings in English), sharing texts and seeking student involvement in various ways. Other project groups were not so open to students observing, let alone participating. At the same time the students were actively seeking opportunities to get started researching in the educational sciences, "to roll up our sleeves and get our hands dirty" (IMER student evaluation, 2019).

The course textbook—the seminal *Communities of Practice* by Etienne Wenger (1998)—informed the notion that educational research is an endeavour of mutual engagement where group members rely not only on their own competence, but also the competence of others. And so, rather than providing opportunities to just observe research project groups, I redesigned the course in the hope that the class itself would begin participating in educational research collaboratively.

The class of IMER students came from different parts of the world and had taken more traditional qualitative and quantitative research methods classes. So, this class was conceived to build on that learning and provide a chance to see the possibilities brought about when using different methods to conduct research in

educational contexts at a very practical level. It was planned that the IMER students would conduct fieldwork on two occasions where the educational, artistic civics and citizenship workshop called “Make your own passport” (MYOP: Wulia, 2014) would be facilitated and studied by the IMER students. The first planned occasion was in a senior secondary school, and the second would be during the Gothenburg Science Festival (Vetenskapsfestivalen) where the participatory workshops would be conducted.

However, as we know, the COVID-19 pandemic arrived and with it the closing of senior secondary schools in Sweden, the move to distance learning for the IMER students, and the widespread cancellation of public events—all of which stifled those plans. In light of these circumstances, it became an opportunity to conduct a small research project, using the class themselves as research participants seeking answers to the overarching research question—‘What does it mean to live well in a world worth living in?’ This question was posed as the overarching idea for this particular class because it is a question the Pedagogy, Education and Praxis (PEP) international network, to which I belong, had been discussing for some time and I was interested in how the unique and varied cohort of students, from all over the world, might answer it.

The purpose of the class and the overall project then became to find out how the group of international students as a particular group of people in a certain time and place responded to this question. As a broad and multifaceted question seeking (at least partial) answers, research could have had any number of foci, and so a smaller number of angles with which to frame (and limit) our research were agreed upon by the IMER students. This was a process that was undertaken in two steps. I posted the question in a discussion board on Canvas, which is the learning management software we were using, and asked the students to respond personally to it. That is, every student was asked to say what they thought living well in a world worth living in was. The question was then discussed in a number of in-class activities and common thoughts, understandings, and interests were noted. Based on how the conversation evolved, four sub-groups were formed, each with four or five members who asked different question(s) to research together that would contribute to the big question. These four themes were:

- political engagement
- connection and basic needs
- social stratification and access
- flow and slow

Student Vignette—Amoni

My class started the ‘PDA185: Introduction to Educational Research Practice’ course on 12 March 2020. My classmates and I were excited at the prospect of conducting a hands-on field research project. Our task was to ideate on the question, ‘What does it mean to live well in a world worth living in?’, using field data from two ‘Make Your Own Passports’ (MYOP) events in Gothenburg.

This planned hands-on field research prospect was shattered when, on 17 March 2020, the University of Gothenburg announced the closure of onsite classes, like all other universities across Sweden in response to the national guidelines on slowing down the spread of the coronavirus. The shattered opportunity for field-based research was not the only disorientation we received: we also suddenly became a digital community, rather than our usual physically interactive selves. The cliché that humans are social animals had become true of us; the months of physical interaction had lent us a level of intimacy we could hardly sustain as a now purely digital group.

In proceeding with our planned research activities, our tutor engaged us in discussions that culminated in a research project we could execute online with the students ourselves as both researchers and participants. The compromise was to split into groups of up to five students each, and explore one dimension of the overarching question on 'living well in a world worth living in'. Four sub-themes were created: 'flow and slow', 'political participation', 'connection and basic needs' and 'social stratification and access to resources'.

My colleagues chose their groups based on their respective knowledge, but I chose to work with the 'social stratification and access to resources' group because the subject speaks to my personal experiences growing up, past professional encounters, and future career ambitions. My participation, therefore, would reflect my own understanding of social stratification and access to resources, as an important dimension of how to live well.

In the immediate mental environment of my participation in answering the assignment were two 'off-the-record' endeavours. Firstly, I personally held the ambitions of leaning my research career towards education for sustainable development (ESD). Secondly, at that time I was reading, aside from my study coursework, Thomas Hobbes' philosophical text *Leviathan*. Thomas Hobbes describes a 'state of nature' as one where all resources belong to everyone and to no one; basically, to whoever can access them, typically by strife, with other contenders interested in the same resources. Birthing what is known as the 'social contract theory', Hobbes justifies the existence of some form of governing power, which he calls 'the sovereign', as an arbitrating remedy to the potentially constant strife for resources by regulating their distribution and performing other such duties in governance.

I think both of these leanings influenced my suggestion to my working group to include an environmental aspect and conduct our research under the subject, *Mapping Awareness about Plants as Mirrors of Social Stratification and (In)equitable Access to Resources among Humans*. The idea was to simulate, for our online participants, a visit to a botanical garden (or other plant habitation) and ask them to discuss what relationships they observe among plants in terms of access to essential resources, like light, that can apply to the human world. It was anticipated that discussions would include how some trees canopy others and deprive them of essential resources, how strongly rooted plants consume nutrients and starve those neighbouring them, and how some plants find some livelihood by creeping on others; and then appropriate the patterns to what can be observed among humans in terms of social stratification and access to resources. The group was largely in agreement with the plan, but when

my team members discovered it was quite ambitious to have to learn, in the available time, some botanical jargon relevant, for example, to plant nutrition so that we could apply and find their parallels in the human world, the plan was completely rethought.

I sulked to myself for not pursuing a project that would include an environmental aspect of ESD, but one can only do so much in pursuing their personal desire if the task ahead requires collective action. I was later happy that the renegotiated project, *Disparities in Experiencing Turbulent Times: Reflections on Education-Related COVID-19 Response Strategies*, was both temporally relevant to the prevailing COVID-19 pandemic, and answers to the social justice aspect of ESD, while mirroring in some way my imaginations from reading the *Leviathan*.

Our deliverables were two: a research report and an individual auto-ethnographical reflection on the processes of engagement, considering our research group as what Lave and Wenger (1991) call a ‘community of practice’. The current vignette encompasses the core of what I reported in the autoethnography paper. An autoethnographic submission gave me the opportunity to reflect closely on my own participation in the research process which was collectively undertaken. For our collective research report, we sought to answer the question, ‘How is socioeconomic status determining access and the experiencing of education across the world during the COVID-19 pandemic?’. We conducted two group interviews of about one hour each with our student colleagues whom we divided, according to country of origin, into developed and developing country groups. We used the World Bank Country and Lending Groups classification (World Bank, n.d.) to make the distinction. The countries from which participating students come include Belarus, Cambodia, Ghana, Greece, Malawi, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Sweden, and the United States of America (Table 8.1). In my research team, students came from Uganda (myself), Rwanda, Cameroon, Nigeria, and The Gambia.

Group Reflections and Conclusions

The students’ group submissions included reflections on what it means to live well in a world worth living in, tailored to their respective thematic foci. The groups’ conclusions all viewed different aspects of education as important, even necessary, for a world worth living in; and their views can be broadly categorised into two main themes: connection and equality/access.

The ‘social stratification and access’ group research identified varying intensities of stratified access to the educational resources demanded by distance education during the COVID-19 pandemic in both developing and developed countries. They found that in contrast with their initial assumption that developed countries would have less inequalities in access to resources amongst their citizens. Of course, the comparison between countries revealed that developed countries reported more general equitable access to resources than developing countries, but this group’s

Table 8.1 Student research project foci

Group	Countries represented in the group	Key research question	Method of enquiry
Social stratification and access	Uganda, Nigeria, Rwanda, Cameroon and The Gambia	How is socioeconomic status determining access and the experiencing of education across the world during the COVID-19 pandemic?	A qualitative thematic analysis of group interview data; public health guidelines by the World Health Organisation and various countries; and the education strategies by UNESCO
Slow and flow	Greece, Sweden, Iran, Belarus	What are the different ways in which graduate students perceive the pace of the world before and during the COVID-19 pandemic? What are the different ways in which graduate students perceive slowing down as a possible indicator for quality of life and well-being?	This group used a photo elicitation method to generate discussions with participants. Interviews conducted on zoom and recorded, then transcribed. Transcripts thematically analysed
Connection and basic needs'	Cambodia, Netherlands, Ghana/Sweden, Malawi	What are the lived experiences of IMER students with regard to various forms of connection and disconnection in times of the Corona pandemic?	Data were collected through online self-administered questionnaires which were sent via email. All participants were first year IMER students and a total of 16 participants took part in the study (9 female and 7 male students); they came from 13 different countries across Europe, Africa and Asia
Political engagement	Ghana, USA, Greece, Nigeria	What is the connection between political engagement, education, and well-being?	A descriptive correlational research design, a survey chosen to understand and access the relationship among the variables of interest

research focused more on in-country access. The study was premised on the assumption that a world worth living in is one with resources; but left a question as to whether and how an equitable distribution of these resources could be achieved.

The ‘slow and flow’ group considered the pace of life as a measure of living well. In their view, moderation is needed in the pace in which life is lived—not so fast that one harms their mental health, and not so slow that one lives ‘a lazy life’ which does not aim to achieve anything. The temporal context of COVID-19 provided a good bedrock for their argument, where most of the group and their research participants observed that the pandemic had halted or slowed down many of the ambitions of individuals and institutions by, for example, causing the closure of businesses, educational institutions, and public transport. This, they reasoned, has given people “more time to focus on both their own mental and physical health through de-stressing activities such as exercise, reading, art activities and spending time with nature” (quote from group report, ‘slow and flow’ group). Nature, as they pointed out, has been found to benefit both the psychological and physical health needs of humans (Bitterman & Simonov, 2017).

Another key finding of this group was that slowing down provides an opportunity for pondering and reading, which they considered a dimension of a good life. The majority of their participants indicated that staying home during the COVID-19 times had afforded them “time for self-reflection, wondering about their goals, their dreams, and to reconnect with their values of a good life. Some participants had the time to wonder about the principles of society and the importance of sustainable values on a global level” (quote from group report, ‘Slow and flow’ group). It was this finding, the feeling of being given time to think properly, and having the tools in which to do that thinking, that for this group clearly linked education and living well.

The ‘connection and basic needs’ group considered the life aspects of individualism, interdependence, and community. Over three quarters of their respondents indicated that they had been raised in environments (cultures) that valued collective living and interdependence as members of communities and families. This group reported that human interdependence is considered a basic need, while individualism is preferred in only a few aspects of life. From their reflections on connecting with both oneself and others, it can be summed up that the student research group considers a world worth living in as one where both possibilities are available for one to choose from or balance depending on the need at a certain time and place. This group concluded that education, whether it be at school, university, or more informal settings could provide a space and place that could foster the connection and a sense of community necessary for well-being.

Finally, the ‘political engagement’ group considered civic action as a dimension of living well. Using a participant survey adapted from two tools, the European Social Survey (ESS) and Civic Education Survey (CIVED), they explored with their classmates cum research participants the relationships between political engagement, education and a meaningful life in a world worth living in. Recognising the limitations of this kind of survey research with such a small number of participants this group were unable to see clear patterns in the kinds of political engagement reported by

their classmates. They concluded that there were many more variables to consider when seeking an understanding of the correlation between political engagement and education. Therefore, this group critically reflected more on the process of their research than on any findings or conclusions about political engagement, education, and living well, that their research could make.

Critical Reflections on Processes and Practices

In this second section, we reflect on the processes that went into conceiving and implementing the group research projects; and suggest how these might inform further research and teaching in a similar manner.

Methodology

As mentioned earlier, this is a case study of situated learning as experienced by the IMER students and their teachers in which we hope to “gain an in-depth understanding of situation and meaning for those involved” (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017, p. 10). The case study approach “is viewed as a valid form of inquiry to explore a broad scope of complex issues, particularly when human behaviour and social interactions are central” (Harrison et al., 2017, pp. 5–6). Thus, in the following section we consider the larger project as the case, that is, all groups participating in the course designed to engage them practically in research methods.

Our reflections were guided by the following questions:

1. How did the student researcher groups negotiate the meanings and approaches to their task and the research topic?
2. How can the reflections on this case inform similar educational researcher training programmes and projects?

Data

Our reflections utilise a number of data sources. Firstly, we use the narrative vignettes presented earlier to illustrate both processes and social interactions in this course. By using vignettes, we aim to “bring forth the virtual thought of... what could happen... [and show] there is an investment in reading, reading the world and self” (Masny, 2013, p. 343). Secondly, data are drawn from posts in a discussion forum that the students contributed to throughout the course. Finally, data are drawn from the groups’ submitted research reports and individual autoethnographic paper submissions. Permission to use these second and third data was received from the students, and their views were de-identified.

Theories

The theories of ‘communities of practice’ and ‘practice architectures’ are used to frame our reflections in this section. The theory of communities of practice is used to reflect on what happened during the course in which international students began to develop their research practices, while the theory of practice architectures is used to reflect on doings, sayings, and relatings to draw conclusions and suggestions for practice in educational researcher training.

Situated Learning in ‘Communities of Practice’

Concepts from communities of practice (Wenger, 1998) were utilised, primarily because this was the course textbook. Communities of practice are defined as particular kinds of networks of people who engage in situated learning processes (Wenger, 1998) where members depend on each other for learning, mutual support, constructive critiques, and collective thinking. Lave and Wenger (1991) emphasise the need to participate in and contribute to the learning community for membership to be effective, and refer to the importance of such communities to enable an individual’s transition to future practices. Learning experiences in communities provide opportunities to understand the notion of praxis (Kemmis & Smith, 2008), with an inquiry approach to action and learning.

The development of the situated learning theory evolved over time. Initially, a community of practice was viewed as a layered environment in which novices form the periphery while experts engaged in what the authors called “full participation” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 37) form some sort of nucleus to which one made their way with time and progress at perfecting the knowledge and skill. In his later publication, Wenger (1998) conceptualises the trajectory to expertise as a co-creative process where both expert and novice contribute to meaning-making and thereby shape their respective but consistently changing practice and identities (Wenger, 2013). What happens with learning in communities of practice is that “theory and practice inform each other, but also includes aspects that apply at a personal level” (Blackmore, 2010, p. xi).

The Theory of Practice Architectures

Developed by Stephen Kemmis and colleagues, the theory of practice architectures outlines the belief that what an individual does, and is indeed able to do, is shaped by a wide variety of discourses, social and political relationships, and the resources or materials available. Learning in any context is never a solitary affair but rather a shared, communal, and intersubjective process that is influenced and formed by local

histories. And although the theory of practice architectures emphasises engagement with different learning practices, the theory ultimately questions “what people do in a particular place and time” (Kemmis, 2009, p. 23).

A practice is comprised of actions that have social, political and, importantly, moral consequences and might be considered ‘good’ when it forms and transforms the individuals that participate in it, and the world in which the practices occur (Kemmis, 2009; Kemmis et al., 2014). Kemmis and colleagues explain that

A practice is a form of socially established cooperative human activity in which characteristic arrangements of actions and activities (doings) are comprehensible in terms of arrangements of relevant ideas in characteristic discourses (sayings), and when the people and objects involved are distributed in characteristic arrangements of relationships (relatings), and when this complex of sayings, doings and relatings ‘hangs together’ in a distinctive project. This quality of ‘hanging together’ in a project is crucial for identifying what makes particular kinds of practices distinctive. (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 31)

The arrangements that prefigure practices can fall into three different types: *cultural-discursive arrangements*; *material-economic arrangements*; and, *social-political arrangements* (Kemmis et al., 2014). The theory of practice architectures has been chosen here because it offers useful perspectives on the different practices that the students and teachers involved in this case learn in order to embark on educational research and what arrangements enabled and constrained that learning. The reflections on the group research project in the current case are used to draw conclusions and recommendations for practice in educational researcher training, broadly.

Reflections

In this section, we use concepts from the theory of communities of practice to reflect on the interactions students had when conducting their research assignment, and the theory of practice architectures to draw conclusions for educational research practice beyond the case described in this chapter.

How Did the Student Researcher Groups Negotiate the Meanings and Approaches to Their Task and the Research Topic?

In defining the concept of ‘practice’, Wenger (1998) suggests that the pursuit of a collective enterprise involves defining the enterprise while the individuals involved interact with one another and with the world, a situation that, over time, results in “practices that reflect both the pursuit of the enterprise and the attendant social relations” (p. 45). Wenger notes, however, that when the individuals come together,

their intention is not to create a community of practice, but rather to pursue their respective ends known to themselves and, of course, to realise the collective enterprise. It is the interactions they engage in that shape their practices, with each of the individuals contributing a part of their behaviour, ideas, identity, and other ingredients. They learn together how to execute their respective tasks to accomplish the joint enterprise, but also create social relations beyond the enterprise itself. In other words, they create a community, negotiate meaning, and learn together. Despite the research task explained in the vignettes only having a short duration, the students' engagement in the activity demonstrated many aspects that relate to the concept of 'communities of practice'.

In relation to creating and sustaining a community, the drastic transition from a physical class to digital interactions formed the context of recreating social interactions. Working on a collective task required that the participants co-create acceptable practices. Group interviews occurred online (i.e., Zoom), and questionnaires were administered through digital forms such as Google Forms, while they might have been administered differently if the class were meeting physically. In addition to the within and between group interactions occurring online in various ways, discussion spaces were created on the learning management platform, Canvas.

Each of the groups engaged in collective meaning-making, as they defined their task and devised ways of approaching it. Wenger (1998) suggests that meaning, in the sense of practice, is an "experience of everyday life", located in the way it is "negotiated"; involving the processes of "participation" and "reification"; processes which are "fundamental to human experience of meaning and thus to the nature of practice" (p. 52). Wenger portrays the negotiation of meaning to be both a productive and receptive process through which one impacts and is impacted by the phenomena they engage with, and the other participants involved in the process. Negotiation is viewed beyond just coming to an agreement but to include overcoming hurdles that may be involved, which one could argue is a process of coming to an intended and satisfactory end. Participation in negotiating meaning requires the bringing together of the individuals' perspectives, with mutual recognition of the roles and levels of engagement. Participation, in this sense, does not necessarily mean collaboration; it can take other forms such as conflict, competition, and intimacy. The nature of participation shapes the kind of community that culminates from their social interaction. Participation also extends beyond the individuals' engagement in the collective enterprise to their involvement in other aspects of society. Reification is the process and act through which "a certain understanding is given form" (p. 59). It refers to giving something abstract attributes that make it feel real or concrete.

The student vignette presented earlier demonstrates how meaning in that particular group was 'negotiated', and the practices that went into 'participation' and 'reification'. In defining the task at hand, each student brought their world view, informed by their experiences and individual pursuits. Amoni's worldview, for example, was partly informed by his reading of Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan*, a text which was unrelated to the group task but which he used to ideate on a world worth living well as one with a 'social contract' that guarantees everyone equitable access to the resources available. His pursuit of a research career in education for sustainable development

(ESD) informed his suggestion that the group approaches the task with an environment component incorporated. If he were working on the assignment alone, he might have succeeded in approaching the task this way. As part of a group, however, many other considerations were present. The group members considered that they did not have the language and expertise required to pursue a project related, in part, to botany; and that the time available would not allow for acquainting themselves adequately. With all the individuals' worldviews considered, the group's negotiated topic—to which every one of them could relate—the disparities in accessing and experiencing education during the COVID-19 pandemic, as determined by people's levels of socioeconomic affluence between and within communities and countries.

In considering the 'practice as learning', Wenger theorises communities of practice as "shared histories of learning" (p. 86), as defined by the associated temporal elements such as the length of time and the context in which the community is working. What, in the case of the example we are discussing now, relates to learning in a temporal and contextual sense is the transition from being a physical learning group to an online one. The cancelling of the field research projects, which themselves were conceived in light of the reflections of the previous IMER students on their experience working with and researching on researcher groups, was an experience that required that both the student researchers and their teacher find an alternative. The entire online research experience with learners as both researchers and participants, therefore, was a temporally orchestrated moment of learning to which each individual in the respective research groups and in the entire class contributed. The COVID-19 experience, which the 'social stratification and access' group reported both intensified and exposed inequalities within and among individuals, communities, and countries of different socioeconomic levels, was itself a backdrop for the groups to reflect on a world worth living in. Certainly, COVID-19, in their view, was not desirable but even in its undesirability, some individuals, communities, and countries were seen to live better than others.

It can be observed, therefore, that the student researchers who participated in the activity perceived their collective task as defining a world worth living in; and their individual task as contributing ideas and approaches to how this definition is shaped and researched. It should be noted, however, that the students' group research reports and individual autoethnographic papers did not explicitly reflect that the groups considered disaggregation of tasks to individuals as an important aspect of their approach to the assignment. Rather, their reports indicated more collectively generated ideas.

How Can the Reflections on This Case Inform Similar Educational Researcher Training Programmes and Projects?

This case and more specifically the course itself was premised on the notion that "people 'learn' practices, not only knowledge, concepts or values ... [and that]

learning a practice entails entering—joining in—the kinds of sayings, doings and relatings characteristic of different practices” (Kemmis et al., 2017, p. 45). The IMER students had vast and often very deep knowledge of different aspects of education and were aware that although they had been taught about research methods, they had not been able to ‘join in’ the practice of research in an authentic way. It was the idea of ‘joining in’ as the best way to learn a practice that underpinned the case. This account of learning practices, described by Kemmis et al. (2014, 2017) as a process of being *stirred in*, more clearly articulates the processes, and activities (in this case educational research) and highlights the importance of “sociality associated with coming to do something new” (Kemmis et al., 2017, p. 47). In this recognition of the intrinsically social aspect of engaging in practice Kemmis et al. “come to the view that learning is no more than coming to know how to go on in practices, and that it occurs by being ‘stirred in’ to practices (including by stirring oneself into them by joining in)” (2017, p. 53).

The research practices that this group of students and their teacher were engaging in were made possible and constrained by practice architectures—the different arrangements that prefigured what was possible yet were swiftly changing due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Most obviously, at first, the *material-economic arrangements* in which the research practices could be learned were drastically altered. The activities could only be conducted digitally, which required not just a computer, but a stable internet connection at home. Up to this point, many of the IMER students, in Sweden just to study, had relied on the University internet connection, and so not being able to connect to the internet constrained the learning of practices in some ways. On the other hand, once access to the digital space was sorted out, conducting research online enabled the students to interact in different, more frequent and interesting ways that were no longer dictated by being physically in one place.

The *cultural-discursive arrangements* that enabled and constrained the practices of research were also altered in the online environment. This cohort had developed a strong bond in attending classes together, where they had practised with each other and a range of teachers how to speak a particular kind of discourse, a language of educational research. The opportunities to debate and discuss, while not completely extinguished, were curtailed by the online environment. For some, it was impossible to spontaneously contribute to in-class discussions. A discussion forum was provided to enable more (asynchronous) contributions, and became the initial space that the IMER students could begin talking about a world worth living in. As the discussions grew, and moved into how to conduct research on the ideas being discussed it was possible for everyone to observe (read) the new ways of saying things about the practices of research.

The *social-political arrangements* that prefigured and were influenced by participation in the research practices were obviously changed by the pandemic as well. These kinds of arrangements affect the *relatings* (that is how we might relate to one another and organisations) that are possible in the project of the practices. These can be student–teacher relations, teaching modes (face to face or online), and recognition of social solidarities and hierarchies. In this case, each group of students was acutely aware of the broader social-political arrangements occurring at the time and

were enthusiastic to understand them. The concepts of social justice, in/equality, care and community, and the arrangements that enabled and constrained these were commonly discussed as important educational research topics. Each group to some extent felt that the social-political arrangements of the world at that time constrained many groups from being able to live well in a world worth living in.

Being cognisant of all such arrangements is, or should be, important in research training programmes such as the one described. This case study showed that attending to the arrangements in such a way ensured the initial engagement of students with the class and more specifically the research practices.

The enrichment provided by pedagogical arrangements, in this case, educational researcher training programmes which involve projects, needs to be reflected on at both collective and individual levels. The IMER group research reports and the individual autoethnographic paper submissions served this purpose. The group reports reflected the group conceptualisation of the subject at hand, while the autoethnographic papers provided a more individualised reflection on the processes, including a reference to the individuals' demographic characteristics such as the communities in which they grew up and how these influenced their worldview, such as on communalism and individualism as measures of living well. The discussion board on Canvas reflected the collective and individual thought evolutions over the course duration, which was an important pointer to what adjustments needed to be made in the trajectory of the learning process.

Mahon et al. (2017) suggest the theory of practice architectures is a theoretical and analytical resource that can be a transformational resource for education, and extend this transformational aim to define research for *praxis* as a special form of practice and one that is morally committed to the good of humankind. They explain the value of research “for *praxis* in the personal sense of helping participants in, or responding to, untoward situations decide how they might act *morally*, for the good of the persons concerned, and also *politically*, in the interests of the good for humankind” (Mahon et al., 2017, p. 2, emphasis in original). It is here, ensuring educational research practices are morally and politically committed to the good of humankind, that this case can be an exemplar for educational research training programs.

This case study is one that aimed for transformation to change on two levels: a) where the teacher consciously sought to change how research practices were practised (and learned), and, b) where the students without exception sought to change an aspect of education that had led them to enrol in the program in the first place. The case as a whole, and each of the research projects conducted, could be considered as research for praxis. It is a case of research “enacted by people ... acting in ways that are morally, ethically, and politically responsible, and acting with awareness that when we act, we are acting in history, changing the world around us, even if only in small ways” (Mahon et al., 2017, p. 14).

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Sally Windsor is an Associate Professor in Sustainability and International Education at the Department of Pedagogical, Curricular and Professional Studies, University of Gothenburg. Currently Windsor teaches courses in Education for Sustainable Development, International and Global Education and educational research methods. Windsor’s research interests include inequality and the unequal provision of school education, sustainability education in schools, social sustainability, climate change education, in-school mentoring, international teacher workforce and policy comparisons, and the implications of globalization on school education.

Amoni Kitooke is a doctoral student in Educational Sciences at the University of Borås, Sweden. His research investigates if, what and how teacher education practices prepare teachers to bridge schools and communities, and to facilitate a ‘community feeling’ in schools; with the view of influencing citizenship dispositions towards balancing individual rights and social responsibilities. He is part of the SPETS (Studies in Professional Education and Training for Society) research school collaboratively run by the University of Borås, Lund University and Chalmers University of Technology.

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