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Living Educational Theory Research as values-led continual professional development

Summary

This paper presents a conceptual and integrative review of Living Educational Theory Research (LETR) as a values-led form of continual professional development for teachers and teacher educators. Drawing on published living-educational-theories, peer-reviewed practitioner accounts, and doctoral studies conducted in diverse cultural and professional contexts, the paper examines how LETR has been used to support professional learning, strengthen the alignment between values and practice, and enable educators to contribute practitioner-generated knowledge to the field. While retaining the moral purpose that characterises LETR, claims are carefully qualified and grounded in the literature reviewed. Rather than reporting original empirical research, the paper synthesises recurring methodological commitments, standards of judgement, and educational contributions associated with LETR, alongside acknowledged challenges and limitations. It argues that LETR offers a coherent, ethically grounded framework through which teachers and teacher educators can research and improve the educational influence of their practice, while participating responsibly in wider professional and scholarly discourse.

Keywords: Living Educational Theory Research (LETR), professional learning and development, values of human flourishing, educational influences.

Introduction

The focus of this paper is on improving the continual professional development of teachers and teacher educators, so they realize more fully their educational and

professional, values-laden responsibilities. The significance is in the potential of Living Educational Theory Research (LETR) for professional educators not only improving their own educational pedagogy, but also contributing to local, national and dialogue, which advance the field of education, educational research and practices, and promotes cutting-edge research.

The controversy

The problem: most papers on education, teachers and teacher educators' professional development, and research in education, the meanings of these foundational terms is taken for-granted. This has wide ranging consequences for the contribution education institutions make to the educational, values-led, development of individuals and collectives, who influence as they are influenced by, the local, national and global complex ecologies they are part of. The current spread and influence of 'false news', popularism and authoritarian regimes, and the proliferation of economic, military and ideological wars, signal the urgency for those concerned with education to address this problem.

The purpose of education goes beyond effectively and efficiently transmitting prescribed knowledge, skills and expertise, and the role of professional educators goes beyond those of an instructor. Currently what constitutes professional development often does not support, encourage or require teachers and teacher educators to research into their educational practice to understand and improve it, and realize their responsibilities as professional practitioners to hold themselves to account for the values-laden consequences of what they do, or contribute to the growth of an educational knowledgebase. This paper presents Living Educational Theory Research as a sustainable, morally grounded model of values-led professional development and makes the argument for its broader adoption within global teacher education and professional learning frameworks.

There is a considerable amount of social science research and literature focused primarily on improving teacher's skills, knowledge and expertise as instructors and trainers to effectively and efficiently transmit the contents of a curriculum provided by the education establishment, such as the school, college, or university they are employed by. However, the purpose of education is more than providing a well-qualified workforce to serve a market place and employers; it also has an educational purpose. White's (2007) answer to his rhetorical question, 'what is the purpose of school', 'to contribute to individual's learning to flourish, and helping others do so too' provides a concise summary, not only of the educational, values-grounded purpose of schools populated by children and young people. It also provides a summary of the educational purpose of education institutions for

adults, such as colleges and universities. Such a view is reflected in the principles detailed in the report from UNESCO: "*Reimagining our futures together: a new social contract for education*".

Like UNESCO, we see teaching and teacher education as transformative and universal in addressing global and national challenges in education (Whitehead & Huxtable, 2024a; Whitehead & Huxtable, 2024b). We also share a "humanistic vision of education and development based on human rights and dignity; social justice; inclusion; protection; cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity; and shared responsibility and accountability" (UNESCO, 2016, p. 7). Where economic rationality (McTaggart, 1992, p. 50) dominates, the values-laden purpose of education has been at the periphery. As a consequence little attention has been given to teachers improving their skills, knowledge and expertise to realise their values-laden responsibilities as educators and as professional practitioners.

We agree with McTaggart that we must move beyond the reductionism, which leads all questions to be discussed as if they were economic ones, and a situation where moral questions are denied completely in a cult of economic inevitability. Broudy (1981) has described "de-valuation" as diminishing or denying the relevance of all but one type of value to an issue. He describes "de-moralization" as denying the relevance of moral questions. The reduction of all values – intellectual, civic, health, among others – to a money value would be an example of de-valuation; the slogan 'business' is 'business' is an example of de-moralization (Broudy, 1981, p. 99).

Over the past 50 years Living Educational Theory Research has become established globally as a scholarly and rigorous form of professional-practitioner educational, values-based research. It is distinguished by its use of evaluative standards of judgment and explanatory principles of educational influence in learning based on the practitioner's evolving embodied meanings of values of human flourishing. These are clarified as they emerge during the research. LETR is further distinguished by its methodological reflexivity, and its publicly-validated accounts of praxis as "theory and practice held together with a moral intent" (Huxtable, 2012, p. 51).

Living Educational Theory Research as values-led continual professional development involves practitioners continually researching their practice to understand and improve it, and generating, testing, and validating their living-educational-theories. A living-educational-theory is a term coined by Whitehead (1989) for a valid, evidence-based and values-laden explanation a practitioner generates for their educational influence in: their own learning, the learning of others and the learning of the social formation that forms the context of their practice. The reason we stress the importance of values of human flourishing, in distinguishing learning as educational, is because not all learning in educational; history is full of examples where individuals, groups and societies have learnt how to commit crimes against humanity.

Central to LETR is a professional practitioner realising their values-laden educational responsibilities for understanding and improving the consequences of what they do and contributing to the global growth of educational knowledge. As indicated before, what constitutes educational responsibilities is grounded in the view of education as a life-long, life-wide, values-laden process of people learning to live humanely, satisfying, productive, worthwhile lives and helping others to do so too, and contributing to humanity flourishing as a benign presence in the world. This understanding of education has significant implications for the professional development of educators: for how they contribute to the educational experience of learners in formal education, irrespective of their age; for the development and implementation of policies by professional and controlling bodies, associations, institutions of education, and national governments, and for contributing to global discourses concerning educational opportunities, relationships and experiences that bring into being a more peaceful, humane world.

We are focused here on a view of professional development and learning that goes beyond a practitioner simply acquiring skills, knowledge and expertise associated with their field of practice, or meeting performance standards and quantitatively defined targets. While these elements are important, what is of fundamental importance for teachers and teacher educators is they also engage as professional practitioners in continual professional development. What distinguishes a *professional* practitioner from a practitioner is their acceptance of a responsibility to continually research their practice to hold themselves to account for the values related consequences of their practice and contribute the knowledge they generate to a global knowledge base all may benefit from.

LETR is particularly well suited to this purpose. As educators and professional practitioners engage in LETR, they clarify and challenge the values that give their practice meaning and purpose; deepen their critical reflection; and transform the educational quality of relationships, opportunities, and outcomes in the context of their practice.

In bringing such accounts together, this paper offers an evidence-based argument for teachers, teacher educators, and other professional practitioners, exploring the implications of adopting a LETR approach to their continual professional development. It draws on validated accounts created by practitioners working in diverse cultural and professional contexts, demonstrating how LETR leads to improvements in educational experiences and relationships, enhances the scholarly activity of educators, and contributes to the growth of global educational knowledge. The paper is organised into the following sections: theoretical context; Living Educational Theory research methodology; findings and analysis; discussion; and conclusion.

Theoretical context

LETR values-led continual professional development (CPD) requires critical and creative engagement with relevant literature to improve educational practice, inform the generation of new educational knowledge, and situate findings in the international field of professional learning, development and research to contribute to advancing research and scholarly activity in educational pedagogy and teacher education (Whitehead & Huxtable, 2024a).

There are numerous approaches that practitioners draw upon to explore various facets of their practice, including Action Research, Narrative Inquiry, Auto-ethnography and Self-study. Living Educational Theory Research is distinguished from other methodologies by its requirement that the practitioner systematically researches their own practice to understand and improve it. It requires the generation of a valid, values and evidence-based explanation of the educational influence they have in their own learning, the learning of others, and the learning of the social formations that constitute the context of their practice, and contribute to the flourishing of humanity (Whitehead, 1989).

Biesta (2015) points to what is needed to clarify the educational purpose of education when he writes "We have a language of learning but not of education". We follow many, such as Peters (1966), and White (2007), who see "education" as a values-laden process beyond that of acquiring skills, knowledge, or expertise. This view is powerfully illustrated by Ginott's anecdote (1972, p. 317), in which a Head teacher, who is a concentration camp survivor, sends a note to staff at the beginning of each school year concluding with: "Reading, writing and arithmetic are important only if they serve to make our children more human".

Ginott does not set aside the importance of teachers enabling their students to learn the skills, knowledge, and expertise that comprise the content of a given curriculum. He points to the importance of educators also being aware that they have a values-laden responsibility to enable their students to use those skills, knowledge, and expertise to enhance their own ability to learn to flourish and help others do so too (White, 2007).

This is particularly relevant to teacher-educators, and teachers, who are employed by education institutions and organisations. The Magna Charta Universitatum (MCU, 2020) recognises the responsibilities of universities for realising values of human flourishing and adding to global educational knowledge for the greater good. Given the influence that teachers have on so many lives, in the course of their careers, it is especially important for teacher educators to also understand the implications for their professional practice of the approach they adopt to their own professional development. Educators have the power to potentially influence

not only the lives of the students they are directly in contact with. Quiet ripples can spread geographically and temporally to transform millions of people's lives for the better – or not. So, it is therefore very important that educators periodically pause for thought and seek to answer questions such as:

- What and whose purposes are served by the content of the given curriculum I am required to teach?
- What and whose purposes are served by how I teach?
- What difference is how I teach making to the educational development of my students as I enable them to progress through the given curriculum?
- Am I making the difference I intend?

Each Living Educational Theory Researcher creates and shares their explanation, through an analysis of their evidence-based and values-laden educational influences in learning. They present their findings with explanatory principles that are based on the unique constellation of values of human flourishing that they use to give meaning and purpose to their professional practice.

Advancing research and scholarly activity in teacher education

By research we follow Stenhouse's (1981) meaning that it is systematic inquiry made public. We use two meanings of research in teacher education distinguished by the terms, education research and educational research. We make a clear distinction between education research and educational research. Education research is research carried out within or making original contributions to the conceptual frameworks and methods of validation of the forms and fields of knowledge such as the philosophy, psychology, sociology, history, politics, economics and administration of education. Educational research generates, valid, evidence-based and values-laden explanations of educational influences in one's own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations within which the educational practice is located. The history of educational research shows that it has been dominated by education researchers whose research masks the explanations of educational influences of educational researchers.

Scholarly activity in teacher education is a creative and critical engagement with existing literature in the generation of both educational practice and educational research. The purpose of such activity is based on an individual's desire to understand and improve the educational influences of their practice in their own learning, in the learning of others, and in the learning of the organisation and complex ecologies that form the context of their work to realise values of human flourishing as fully as possible.

Meanings of "educational" and "professional"

By educational we mean learning with values of human flourishing. Not all learning is educational. History provides many examples of where cultural influences have promoted learning associated with inhumane purposes. In our meaning of professional, we make a distinction between being a member of a profession, which means a practitioner fulfilling the criteria for membership of a professional body, and being a professional practitioner. Being a professional practitioner includes accepting responsibility for the consequences of their practice for human flourishing, their own professional learning and development and contributing to the growth of global educational knowledge. A Living Educational Theory Research approach to professional learning and development (Whitehead & Huxtable, 2024) is ideally suited to this responsibility, as it involves the professional practitioner asking, researching and answering questions of the kind: "How do I improve the educational influences of my professional practice with values of human flourishing?"

The responsibility of teachers and teacher educators for researching their professional development with Living Educational Theory Research

We accept the importance of educators fulfilling the criteria that define membership of their professional body, which includes engaging in a prescribed programme to continue developing skills, knowledge and expertise associated with the field and context of their practice. However, more is required of a professional practitioner, which includes accepting responsibility for their own continual, professional learning and development. This responsibility involves asking, researching and answering questions of the kind: "How do I improve the educational influences of my professional practice in my own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations with values of human flourishing?" As part of an individual's professional learning, we include their responsibility for extending their cognitive range and concern with insights from traditional education research.

Researching such questions carries the responsibility of making public the knowledge that is being generated. A Living Educational Theory Research approach to professional development involves the practitioner, generating, and testing the validity of their explanation for their educational influences in learning. We refer to such explanations as a living-educational-theory, to distinguish this from the conceptual framework of Living Educational Theory Research. The distinction is important because traditional theories are used to derive explanations for the actions and influences of individuals from the general conceptual framework of a theory.

Living-educational-theories are generated by individual professionals in response to their own contexts and values, rather than deduced from a general theory.

This responsibility involves the acceptance of the centrality of "I" in questions of the kind: "How do I improve…..?" and of the inclusion of "I", with values of human flourishing, as explanatory principles in explanations of educational influences in learning. The responsibility includes clarifying the meanings of the embodied values of the practitioner and testing the validity of their use as explanatory principles in the explanations of educational influences in learning.

A valid, evidence-based and values-laden, living-educational-theory of an individual's professional learning and development

Whilst an individual can generate and share an explanation for their educational influences in learning, doing research involves a systematic inquiry that generates knowledge as a contribution to the growth of global knowledge. Making public a knowledge-claim enables it to be subjected to public criticism, which enables the validity of the knowledge-claim to be tested and strengthened. Following Popper's (1975, p. 45) insight that objectivity is grounded in intersubjective criticism, we use validation groups to enhance the validity of knowledge-claims.

LETR also meets criticism that a living-educational-theory is merely subjective and anecdotal through the application of Habermas' (1976) four validation criteria:

1. comprehensibility,
2. evidence,
3. sociocultural and sociohistorical understanding, and
4. authenticity in living values of human flourishing as fully as possible

The way these are used in LETR highlights the importance of including within an explanation, insights on the sociohistorical and sociocultural influences in both practice and their explanations of educational influences in practice.

Winters (1989) has applied the concept of rigour to qualitative research using the six principles of dialectical and reflexive critique, risk, plural structure, multiple resource and theory practice transformation. Kok (1991) has demonstrated how she applied these six principles in enhancing the rigour of her explanation of her educational influences in learning.

Data collection that can be used as evidence in explaining educational influences in pupil's and student's learning

We make a distinction between data and evidence. We understand data to be information that is gathered in the course of the research. We understand evidence to be data that are used to justify a claim to knowledge.

In Living Educational Theory Research a necessary claim to knowledge is an individual's explanation for their educational, values-laden influence in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations within which the practice is located. Evidence is needed to justify claims that: (1) learning has occurred; (2) this learning can be validly attributed to the educator's influence; and (3) the meanings of the embodied values of human flourishing, which serve as evaluative standards and explanatory principles, have been clarified through the research.

An excellent example of this process is Mounter's (2002) Master's study "*Can children carry out action research about learning, creating their own learning theory?*" Mounter's use of digital visual data demonstrates how changes in both teacher and pupil learning can be shown and validly attributed to the educator's influence. The creation of a multimedia account, which includes live urls, allows for the inclusion of multi-media, digital visual data to complement and add to the meanings of purely print based texts. Mounter's account provides the evidence for changes in the teacher's and pupils' learning and validly ascribes the changes to the teacher's influence with the aid of digital, visual data.

Clarifying the meanings of the embodied values used as explanatory principles in explanations of educational influences in learning

We believe that each individual expresses a unique constellation of values, in their educational practices which can be used as explanatory principles in their explanations of educational influences in learning. Clarifying these meanings involves two processes, one lexical, the other ostensive. Lexical clarification defines meanings in words, as in Peters' (1966) identification of values such as freedom, justice, and equality. Ostensive clarification communicates meanings as they are *embodied in practice.*

In ostensive clarifications the meanings of embodied values of human flourishing are clarified and communicated in the course of their emergence in practice. For example, in a lexical communication of the meaning of punishment, it could be agreed that punishment is the intentional infliction of pain, by someone in authority on someone who has broken a rule. This can be contrasted with Foucault's (1975) ostensive communication of the meaning of punishment in his description of the death of a regicide.

Because of the lack of appropriate methods for clarifying the meanings of expressions of embodied values in professional educational practices, Whitehead (2010) created a method that was influenced by Sardello's (2008) idea of 'empathetic resonance', with the additional use of digital visual data. The method involves

the movement of a cursor along digital visual data to find the points of greatest resonance with the expression of an embodied value. Marian Naidoo, in her doctoral thesis (2005, pp. 189-190), used this method to clarify and communicate her embodied meaning of the value of "a passion for compassion". Because each teacher and teacher-educator holds a unique constellation of values of human flourishing, it is their responsibility to clarify and communicate their meanings of these values as explanatory principles in explanations of their educational influences in learning.

Enhancing the validity of explanations in terms of their comprehensibility, evidence, sociocultural and sociohistorical understandings and authenticity

To address the criticism, that the explanations of educational influences in learning are merely anecdotal or subjective, we have stressed the importance of a professional practitioner testing the validity of their claim to have had an educational influence in learning. This involves the mutual rational control of critical discussion (Popper, 1975, p. 45) in validation groups.

In any form of research that includes a claim to know something, it is important to understand how the claim is justified in relation to the evidence presented. In explaining educational influences in learning, with values of human flourishing, we use four questions in validation groups of between 3-8 peers to test and strengthen the validity of the explanations, for example:

1. *How could the comprehensibility of the explanation be improved?* Enhancing comprehensibility may involve several considerations, including the clarity of the organisation of the explanation, the coherence of the arguments, and the precision with which key concepts are defined. In explanations of educational influences on learning, comprehensibility can often be strengthened through the inclusion of explicit sections presenting evidence that learning has improved and that these changes can be attributed to the teacher's influence.
2. How could the evidence used to justify the knowledge claims be strengthened? Making a claim about educational influence on learning requires evidence that justifies the claim and protects it from criticism as merely anecdotal or subjective. It is therefore important to identify each claim explicitly and to demonstrate, for oneself and for others, how it is warranted in relation to the available evidence.
3. How could the sociohistorical and sociocultural influences be deepened and extended? It is widely acknowledged that professional educational practice always takes place within a particular context. What is not always fully recognised, however, is the extent to which both practice and understandings of practice are shaped by the sociohistorical and sociocultural contexts in which they are situated.

4. How could the authenticity of the explanation be enhanced, in the sense of showing that the values were lived as fully as possible? Values of human flourishing are used as explanatory principles in accounts of educational influences on learning. Each individual holds a unique constellation of values, which they draw upon in specific contexts to explain their educational influence. These values are expressed as embodied meanings and are clarified through their emergence in practice (Feyerabend, 1975, p. 17).

Living Educational Theory Research methodology

In Living Educational Theory Research, the methodology that is created and used, emerges in the course of generating a valid, evidence-based and values-laden explanation for the individual's educational influence in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations within which the practice is located. This is a most important point in Living Educational Theory Research values-led, continual professional development and it cannot be overemphasised. Each researcher, rather than applying a pre-existing methodology to research into improving the educational influences of our professional practice, must generate their own living-educational-theory research methodology as they produce a valid, evidence-based and values-laden explanation of their educational influences. In the course of the research LETR requires that the practitioner:

- Identifies, clarifies and finds ways to communicate their embodied meaning of values of human flourishing as they emerge in the course of the research, which serve as their evaluative standards of judgment and explanatory principles in their account of their Living Educational Theory Research and the living-educational-theory they generate.
- Clarifies their roles and responsibilities in the social formation (e.g. organisation, institution) which forms the context of their practice.
- Identifies and examines the consequences of their practice, identifies where they experience themselves as a living-contradiction and/or their values contradicted by others and/or the social formation that forms the context of their practice.
- Works to improve matters; evaluates the consequences, what they have learned and implications for their current and future practice.
- Tests the validity of their knowledge claims as their research progresses with critical friends, a peer validation group or Community of Practice.
- Makes the knowledge they generate accessible locally and globally, for example by presenting at a conference, submitting to a journal or defending their doctoral thesis.

Rather than choosing and applying a pre-existing methodology, such as grounded theory, case study, action research, narrative or phenomenology, a Living Educational Theory Researcher exercises their methodological inventiveness (Dadds & Hart, 2001, p. 169) in generating their own living-educational-theory-methodology as they create and share their explanation of educational influences in learning, using their unique constellation of values of human flourishing as their explanatory principles.

Data, in the sense of gathering information is necessary, whatever methodology is being used in the research. It provides the evidence for justifying a claim to know. In Living Educational Theory Research data is:

- analysed as evidence in explanations of educational influences in learning, and claims to knowledge;
- analysed to clarify and communicate the meanings of the embodied values of human flourishing as these emerge in the course of researching the practice and are used as evaluative standards and explanatory principles in explanations of educational influences in learning.

Findings and analysis

The following examples illustrate the tangible effects of educators adopting a Living Educational Theory Research (LETR) approach to their professional development. These accounts were created and successfully submitted for accreditation by teachers and head teachers enrolled in an M.Ed programme. Through developing their knowledge, understanding, and practice of Living Educational Theory Research as values-led continuing professional development (CPD), they tested the validity of their claims to have improved their professional learning and scholarship, enhanced alignment between their values and practice, and exerted an educational influence on the learning of pupils and/or colleagues.

By making their accounts publicly available, they contribute to global dialogue and the growth of educational scholarship. The titles of the accounts reflect the educators' concern to use the opportunities afforded by the Masters programme to generate and answer questions relevant to their daily practice, enhance their educational influence, and realise their values-laden responsibilities as professional educators:

- Cartwright (2008): "How can I enable the gifts and talents of my students to be in the driving seat of their own learning?"
- Formby (2009): "How can I improve my practice as an educator to offer learners a creative and challenging curriculum which enables everyone to identify and

develop their own talents and which also makes space for the nurturing of relationships to enable individual growth in understanding and self-esteem?"

- Skuse (2010): "How have my experiences of Year 2 SATs influenced my perceptions of assessment in teaching and learning?"
- Cripps (2007): "How do I improve my educational relationship with the learners I work with, both adults and children?"
- Williams (2010): "A view from the field: How can my knowledge be of use to other teachers? Back in the garage with my bullshit detector – The Clash."

Doctoral research further exemplifies how educators in diverse countries and fields of practice have refined their teaching and mentoring practices, extending their educational influence through collaborative sharing and public validation of their research:

- Wadsley (2025): *Freeing Fictions with Compassion: Improving my practice as a clinical supervisor through my Living Educational Theory*, PhD awarded by University of Cumbria, UK.
- Mounter (2024): *A Living Educational Theory Research Approach to continuing professional development in education*, PhD awarded by University of Cumbria, UK.
- Russell working as clinical associate professor of business administration in Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA, *Privileging tacit knowledge within a software engineering curriculum: A Living Educational Theory of Practice.* PhD awarded by Maynooth University, Ireland (Russell, 2021).
- Briganiti working as an international development professional in diverse international contexts, *My living-theory of international development.* PhD awarded by University of Lancaster, UK (Briganti, 2021).
- Branch working as a Clinical Assistant Professor of Business Administration in University of Michigan, USA, *Teaching is like engineering: My Living Educational Theory.* Doctor of Professional Studies by Public Works awarded by the University of Middlesex, UK (Branch, 2020).
- Meyer working as a lecturer in North-West University, South Africa, *Becoming participatory artists, researchers and teachers: my living theory of Art Education.* Philosophiae Doctor in Curriculum Studies awarded by North-West University, South Africa (Meyer, 2019).
- Rawal working in India with disadvantaged children and in Higher Education, *The role of drama in enhancing life skills in children with specific learning difficulties in a Mumbai school: My reflective account.* Doctorate awarded by Coventry University in Collaboration with the University of Worcester (Rawal, 2007).

The analysis demonstrating that LETR supports critical reflection, continuous improvement, and the generation of original, validated knowledge in education.

Evidence for the global influence of Living Educational Theory Research values-laden CPD can also be seen in Qutoshi's doctoral thesis (PhD awarded by

Kathmandu University, Nepal, *'Creating Living-Educational-Theory: A Journey Towards Transformative Teacher Education in Pakistan'* (Qutoshi, 2016), Qutoshi illuminates his multilayered and emergent inquiry, into the problem of culturally disempowering nature of teacher education. His aim was to identify a methodology for addressing research problem. Five themes emerged. 1) Dictating and communicating views of leadership; 2) Narrowly conceived traditional view of curriculum images; 3) Conventional and learner-centred pedagogies; 4) Assessment as 'of' learning and 'for' learning approaches; and 5) Objectivist and constraint pluralist research practices.

Qutoshi (2016) demonstrated the meanings of his embodied values as he explored, explained and interpreted the above themes arising from his research questions. He envisioned a transformative teacher education programme and a research methodology with reflexivity, inclusive logics, multiple genres and perspectival language as multiple ways of knowing. He employed a Multi-paradigmatic Design Space (MDS) that related to paradigms of: 1) Interpretivism to make subjective level meaning making by embracing 'emergence' as nature of his inquiry; 2) Criticalism to develop his critical reflexivity in identifying and addressing his research problem; 3) Postmodernism to engage with multiple genres and logics for cultivating different aspects of his experiences; and 4) Integralism to embrace an inclusive-holistic view of MDS in representing his visions of transformative teacher education and research practices in Pakistan. He used this epistemic praxis as professional development in a LETR approach that enabled him to generate new knowledge on cultural-contextual educative practices of teacher education and research endeavours.

In developing his living-educational-theory methodology, Qutoshi offered five transformative visions for teacher education and research practices in Pakistan: 1) A living-educational-theory of inclusive co-leadership with embodied values of intention of doing good for others, humility for humanity, care of self and others with ecological consciousness, love and peace; 2) The metaphor of montage conceiving a liberating view of curriculum; 3) Critical-creative pedagogies for empowering view of education; 4) A holistic view of authentic-developmental assessment; and 5) An innovative-integral view of transformative research. Qutoshi believes that these key learning outcomes are likely to bring emancipatory and transformative soul in the culturally embedded linear teacher education program. (Abstract, March 17, 2016).

Using a Living Educational Theory Research approach to one's professional development takes place over months and years rather than days or weeks. Mounter's accounts of her LETR values-led continual professional development serves as an example. They were created over a period of more than 19 years as she worked in various sites and fields of practice. Mounter began her Living Educational Theory Research during her Master's programme at the University of Bath in 2006, first

researching her practice as a classroom teacher and continued as a Head Teacher. She progressed successfully submitting accounts of her research for accreditation as units and dissertation (Mounter, 2012) to graduate with an M.Ed. When she took the position of lecturer continued her LETR values-led continual professional development as a doctoral student. She was awarded her PhD (Mounter, 2024) for the original contribution her thesis made to knowledge by proposing a new standard of Living Professionalism.

Engaging in Living Educational Theory Research values-led continual professional development as Mounter has done, is not easy. It required considerable effort, emotional and cognitive energy, resilience and courage for her to challenge her own thinking and practice, and find ways of holding to her educational principles in contexts that were not always supportive, encouraging or appreciative as exemplified by her published accounts of her research over time:

First Educational Enquiry Unit (Mounter, 2006): "How can I live my personal theory of education in the classroom to promote self-reflection as a learner?" In this enquiry, Mounter explores her educational theories, their influence on her teaching, and strategies to inspire children in her class to become self-reflective learners. Drawing on theorists such as Morse (1992) and Bassey (1991), she articulates the challenge of making values visible in classroom practice and employs methods including video-recorded discussions and student writing to gather evidence. Action research is positioned as a vehicle to challenge and develop one's personal theory of education.

Second Educational Enquiry Unit (Mounter, 2006): "Language of learning to the language of educational responsibility" This enquiry shifts from focusing solely on individual learning to a broader understanding of educational responsibility. Mounter emphasises the need to move beyond the "language of learning" into a "language of educational responsibility" — a responsibility to oneself and to children — considering educational explanations and evaluations of living values in the classroom. This aligns with Whitehead's (2005) assertion that professional practitioners clarify the embodied ontological values to which they are accountable.

Research Methods in Education Unit (Mounter, 2007): "If I want the children in my class to extend their thinking and develop their own values and learning theories, how can I show the development of their learning?" This enquiry refines earlier work and focuses on how to research and evidence the space created for children to explore and develop their own values and learning theories. Mounter reflects: "Through the process of Action Research, I have clarified and refined my own living values and the ability to articulate them and change them into actions."

Third Educational Enquiry Unit (Mounter, 2008): "How can I enhance the educational influence of my pupils in their own learning, that of other pupils, myself, and

the school?" Here, Mounter explores mutual educational influence and co-creation in learning, reflecting on the transformation of classroom dynamics through shared inquiry and evolving teacher-learner identities.

Understanding Learning and Learners Unit (Mounter, 2008): "Can children carry out action research about learning, creating their own learning theory?" Mounter experiments with narrative enquiry as a passionate teacher-researcher: "I write as someone with a passion for learning and the opportunity to experiment with new ideas… I am finding that a form of narrative enquiry in which I generate my own living educational theory is appropriate for presenting my account."

This unit also acknowledges policy shifts, such as *Excellence and Enjoyment* (DfES, 2003), which supported creativity and learner engagement.

MA Dissertation (Mounter, 2012): "As a Headteacher Researcher, how can I demonstrate the impact and self-understandings drawn from Living Theory Action Research as a form of Continual Professional Development in education?" Mounter explores layered learning as a Headteacher, influenced by Bateson's (1989) emphasis on diversity and interdependence. She highlights concepts such as Loving Recognition, Nurturing Responsiveness, maintaining a "learning space" within, and creative connectivity. Her narrative approach mirrors the layered nature of her learning journey.

PhD Thesis (Mounter, 2024): "A Living Educational Theory Research Approach to Continuing Professional Development in Education". In her doctoral research, Mounter introduces Living Professionalism as a new values-led standard, where teachers continually research their practice and accept educational responsibility for their own development and that of others. Her thesis makes two original contributions to LETR and global dialogue:

1. Proposing Living Professionalism as a teacher standard.
2. Introducing the explanatory principle of ~i~we~I~us~ relationships to understand and enhance educational influence across social formations.

Mounter engages critically with LETR literature to address gaps in theorising educational influence beyond immediate contexts, demonstrating the potential of values-led, continual professional development in fostering reflective, responsible, and influential educators.

Discussion

The discussion is framed by our focus on Living Educational Theory Research as values-led continual professional development. CPD. In the preceding sections we have presented LETR as a sustainable, morally grounded model of values-led professional development and have made the evidence-based and values-laden ar-

gument for its broader adoption within global teacher education and professional learning frameworks.

LETR uniquely fulfils and integrates the *fundamental responsibilities* of a professional practitioner, because it:

1. Requires self-directed, values-informed inquiry into one's own influence.
2. Connects individual practice to systemic transformation, not just personal improvement.
3. Demands accountability to both internal values and the collective aims of human flourishing.
4. Contributes original, grounded knowledge to a global educational knowledge base.
5. Activates and expands the practitioner's ethical, intellectual, and creative capacities, as well as their technical skills, knowledge and expertise.

No other form of practitioner research systematically includes all these dimensions as "*requirements*". Many, like Action Research, Critical Practitioner Inquiry, and Self-Study, align with aspects of LETR, but they do not necessitate this triadic influence (self, others, social formation) or the explicit goal of contributing to human flourishing and global knowledge.

In further justifying our claim that Living Educational Theory Research is a values-led approach to Continual Professional Development (CPD) we draw attention to over 50 living-educational-theory doctorates, that have been awarded by universities in different global contexts and that can be freely accessed from https://www.actionresearch.net/living/living.shtml. Evidence for the large-scale potential of the contribution Living Educational Theory Research values-led CPD can make to global dialogue can be seen in the living-posters homepage of research communities around the world, which can be freely accessed at https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/posters/homepage2025.pdf.

Further evidence for the contribution Living Educational Theory Research values-led CPD makes to improving education, can also be found in the publically accessible archive of the Educational Journal of Living Theories (EJOLTs) at https://ejolts.net/ejoltsarchive.

The significance of the results in the context of existing knowledge can be related to the ideas of generalizability and relatability. A living-educational-theory is not generalizable in the sense of an explanation that applies to all. However, it is relatable (Bassey, 2021), in the sense that others can draw insights from one person's living-educational-theory in the generation of their own. It may seem that this emphasis on relatability, rather than generalizability is a weakness when compared with other theories that emphasize their generalizability. However, the advantage of Living Educational Theory Research is that it emphasizes the importance of each individual as a theory creator and not only as a user of the theories of others.

Professionalism in education requires a research base. Hence, we are seeking to advance research and scholarly activity in teacher education by encouraging educators to engage in LETR values-led CPD. This requires the educator research their current practice and not just inquire into it. A distinguishing aspect of research is the requirement that the validity of knowledge claims is tested and the practitioner contributes the valid knowledge generated to the growth of a global knowledgebase that all may benefit from.

Conclusion

This paper has examined the implications of teachers and teacher educators engaging in Living Educational Theory Research as a values-led form of continual professional development for teachers and teacher educators, situating it within existing literature on practitioner research and professional learning.

Published scholarly accounts of educators working in diverse cultures and contexts have been drawn on to illustrate how engaging in LETR contributed to their personal professional learning and development, and engagement in educational scholarship. By making their LETR accounts public, they contribute to local, national and global dialogue and the realisation of education's "transformational potential to shape just and sustainable futures" (UNESCO, 2016).

For more teachers and teacher educators to engage in LETR CPD support and direction is needed from the local, national and international organisations and cultures within which they live and work. Individual's casting pebbles into a pond can create ripples, but it requires a collective, sustained, and sustaining, effort for those pebbles to transform the pond and the complex ecologies it is part of. Drewell and Larsson (2019) summarise the problem and solution "Generally, we simply cannot see the process of coming-into-being of our social reality. Yet, our collective ability to create social reality is perhaps our most defining human capacity. This social reality is sometimes termed our "Collective Imaginary". This is the emergent property of the complex self-organisation of many minds with the capacity for symbolic language, and it is unique to human beings" (Drewell, & Larsson, 2019, p. 64).

The question remains that only you, the reader, can answer: are you persuaded to explore the implications for you as a professional educator, of developing your knowledge, understanding and practice of Living Educational Theory Research as values-led continual professional development?, and inviting you to contribute to further critical dialogue about the possibilities and limitations of LETR, in contributing to professional development and educational knowledge in diverse contexts with values of human flourishing.

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