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THE GREY AREAS: WAYS TEACHERS MAKE MEANING OF
AND DESCRIBE ENACTING PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Faculty of
Montclair State University in partial fulfillment
of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by

CHARITY M. DACEY

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Upper Montclair, NJ

May 2019

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Kathryn Herr

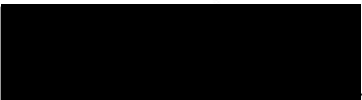
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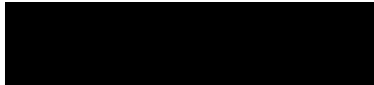
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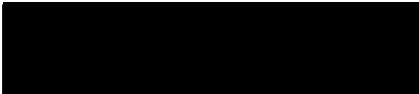
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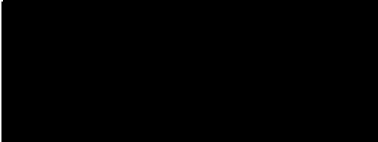

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Abstract

THE GREY AREAS: WAYS TEACHERS MAKE MEANING OF AND DESCRIBE ENACTING PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

by Charity M. Dacey

This dissertation explored the experiences of 12 classroom teachers making meaning of their ethical practice in K–12 schools. The study uncovered how these teachers identify and problematize ethical issues as they relate to their practice. Through semi-structured interviewing, participants' experiences around ethical practice were recorded and analyzed using Gilligan's (1982) *Listening Guide*. The data collected provides insight into how these teachers make meaning of their practices, a process characterized by a complex interplay amongst personal and professional beliefs around caring and protecting students and their needs, a sense of responsibility as employees to adhere to district and school policies, an obligation to uphold the standards of the teaching profession, and the contextualized pressures and expectations of their specific teaching communities. Overall, the study describes the ways in which participants make meaning of their ethical practice amidst the increasing demands of the standards movement and accountability-based reforms that have contextualized teachers lived daily experiences. In particular, in sharing their stories, this study brings to light many instances of K–12 teachers resisting these demands imposed in order to best support the learning and long-term development of their students. I aim to provide a nuanced view into how these teachers remain committed to carrying out what is in students' best interests. Their efforts creatively and quietly resisting and negotiating the structural and human pressures imposed on them are heartwarming at times. Similarly, their struggles, anxieties, disappointments, distress, and fatigue are heartbreaking but

offer a glimpse into how these educators are enacting ethical practice despite the challenging contexts of schools today.

Keywords: ethics, teacher preparation, meaning-making of ethical practice

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deepened as well because I now crave the complexities: How can we better navigate and make sense of the tensions of the world. Thanks, Kathryn, for supporting this development in me.

In a similar respect, I would like to express my gratitude to Michele Knobel, who has also been a mentor, really pushing me to think about the process of writing a dissertation, providing a forum of collegial support and encouragement through our doctoral writing group, and for helping me hear what I am saying about my study from a different angle and perspective. Michele, your knowledge of moral development, sharp intellect, boundless intellectual curiosity, insightful questions, and sense of humor are much appreciated. Thank you for contributing at all stages and for confirming for me at the outset that this work has a place in the academy. To Jeremy Price, thank you as well for affirming my research interest and making time to support me at every stage as well. You helped me solidify my desire to study how teachers make meaning of ethical practice, and you have been such a supportive force throughout this program.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In a 2015 episode of *Madam Secretary*, the main character Elizabeth McCord, inspired by Hillary Clinton and played by Tea Leoni, is a past CIA analyst who becomes the secretary of state of the United States. In the scene below she listens to her husband, a religion professor, responding to a caller's question about the difference between morality and ethics.

You ask an interesting question, Jeff. And I'd like to start by making a distinction that I usually make on the very first day of my morals and ethics class. A lot of people say that morals are how we treat the people we know, and ethics are how we treat the people we don't know. So, morals are what make us a good parent, a good friend, a nice neighbor. But ethics are how we build a society. That's the true test of our higher self. But, what happens, Jeff, when society is ruled by the subjective morals of say, you and your family, and you choose to project that onto complete strangers is that we all end up with is a society that's governed by self-aggrandizement. So, really, by calling to make sure you're the first little peasant to jump off your chair and teach me a lesson with smug superiority about your own particular moral point of view when you know precisely nothing of the situation, you've done your part to contribute to the erosion of our entire social fabric. Pat yourself on the back. Bravo. (Hall, Gregory, & Enriquez Alcala, 2015)

In the example above, Jeff makes the distinction between personal moralities, referring to what individuals act upon in their private lives versus what the collective community has agreed upon as the model for society. This is often the key distinction used to clarify the concepts of morals versus ethics.

In schools and classrooms, teachers strive to treat students with care, respect, openness, encouragement, and fairness. “Teachers make thousands of decisions a day, and they don’t do it about an abstract idea, they do it about the life of a child” (Jupp, 2012). There is little doubt that teachers face decisions that can significantly affect students’ confidence, motivation, and learning. Barrett, Casey, Visser, and Headley (2012) posited that the teaching profession has lacked “an organized set of decision rules that when followed would show that certain dispositions (habits, traits, action-tendencies) are being demonstrated” (p. 891). They argued that professional ethics serve three essential purposes: to ensure high professional standards, to protect students, and to guide teachers in their decision-making (Barrett et al., 2012). The literature suggests that professional ethics are more than a list of behaviors teachers should avoid, and yet they are often articulated in codes of conduct by district leaders or principles espoused by teachers’ unions (Campbell, 2000). It would be beneficial to expand upon the few existing codes of professional ethics to include a set of decision rules for teachers to determine the best course of action when one or more underlying principles are in conflict.

Study Rationale

In this qualitative study, I explored the ways in which teachers make meaning of their ethical practice, given the multitude of ethical dilemmas that teachers face daily in their work. As a K–12 teacher, I recollect many instances in which I faced dilemmas, some that were pedagogical in nature, but often these encroached upon moral and ethical issues. Issues of when to keep confidentiality, how to fairly grade students’ work, and how to navigate district policies that conflicted with students’ best interests are just a few of the examples of challenges that kept me up at night, questioning if I made the right choice. For me, determining what was fair was a major challenge. As a special educator, I learned the importance of showing equity, attending

equally to students' diverse needs, as opposed to showing equality, which translated into treating everyone the same. Yet at times, this ideal called into question some of my own personal beliefs, and the options at hand felt neither acceptable nor satisfying. However, during the first three years of teaching, it was not necessarily clear to me or some of my co-teachers which of these dilemmas that we regularly found ourselves informally discussing were of an ethical nature. Teasing apart pedagogical problems of practice (e.g., forming cooperative groups, providing additional time to work with struggling students, advocating with administration for additional support, or communicating with families) versus ethical issues was often tough for myself and my close colleagues. Inevitably we would find ourselves discussing these dilemmas together in the stands at a weekly football game, and it quickly became clear that context mattered a great deal. Even while we all held teaching positions within the same district, we taught in different schools, we had different principals with different leadership styles and a variety of families and colleagues. A few years later, when I became a special education mentor working with novice teachers in a large urban district, I again noticed the differences in how my colleagues' conceptualized ethics, character, morality, and professionalism. Their conceptualizations were vastly different from one another and appeared to guide them quite differently in the array of circumstances they faced in their schools that they looked to me to help them problematize. At the heart of my desire to conduct this study is how varied, nuanced, and situated understandings are described about ways in which teachers seem to make meaning of their ethical practice. As a teacher educator, and as a doctoral student, I have made mental note over the last 10 years of the disparate ways in which colleagues frame and define ethics and education. Complicating matters at every turn, was the frequent observation that teacher educators, faculty, and K-12 teachers referred to morality, professionalism, and ethics interchangeably in casual conversations.

Informally, I have made a point to clarify with education colleagues, ranging from philosophy professors and teacher educators to personal friends and acquaintances who happen to be K–12 teachers what are the key differences between ethics, morality as it relates to one's character, and professionalism as simply a teachers' responsibility. Clarifications were always murky and varied based on who participated in these discussions. This examination sought to take into account how 12 teachers navigated and reconciled their own personal morality, their conceptualizations of ethics, and their perceived professional obligations: how they made meaning of ethical practice. The multitude of dynamics that were inherent in their daily interactions with others formed the backdrop of this investigation. In Chapter 4, I highlight the themes that I identified in how these 12 teacher participants conceptualized ethics, morality, and professionalism. These descriptions provide a window into how each framed their ethical practice that included: (a) what they thought, (b) how they felt, and (c) what they decided to do in situations of practice amongst competing tensions.

Coming to the Inquiry

It is undeniable that my own experiences within teaching and teacher education influenced this inquiry into teacher ethics. Many situations have emerged during my educational career in which I was unsure of how best to navigate ethical dilemmas. Self-reflection, careful deliberation with others, and weighing the advantages and disadvantages of each set of options have always been helpful strategies. Recently, I started in a new professional role at a local university, teaching my first class as an assistant professor. It made me recall my first year of teaching K–12 students 20 years ago, feeling the same excitement of meeting students in the course and getting to know them better. Likewise, the uncertainties came back to me regarding how to navigate new systems. This brought back to the realities of navigating specific regional

cultures, each school existing in its own constellation of norms and expectations. Just like K–12 teachers, professors learn how schools operate, become familiar with the policies and procedures of a system, and decipher the legal guidelines. Reflecting on my teacher preparation experience, I did not recall any readings or discussion of the professional ethics of teaching or how to navigate ethical practices. The closest mention of ethics at all came in the form of human resources orientation session for new employees. Conduct guidelines was distributed that covered a wide range of topics including student safety. Such responsibilities seemed clear cut and straightforward in orientation settings. Yet later in practice, the same set of duties seemed much more complex when grappling with scenarios that involved real students when colleagues, for example even the debate about whether to drive students' home after practice or a school activity.

In 2018, in New Jersey, the Department of Education released a proposal to require all new teachers to be trained in how to identify and respond and report child abuse. This is the first initiative I have witnessed in which preparation programs are being held accountable for helping pre-service teachers navigating ethical decisions as they related to teaching or the profession of education. In absence of formal training, coursework, or professional development, I have often relied on my internal moral compass, personal sense of morality and integrity, and discussions with trusted colleagues in order to help guide my professional practice. I notice ethical issues that arise regularly when pre-service teachers ask questions, and when we discuss these in class. Most note that they lack any formal training or exposure to guidance and that such topics are assumed to be naturally learned as part of being a kind person.

Whether related to treating all students fairly or equitably, respecting privacy, supporting individual autonomy, or following through on commitments, ethical responsibilities are vast.

Looking more closely, perhaps teacher education programs need to expose teacher education students to the potential ethical dilemmas they will likely face in their practice and model these ethical principles. Ethical standards are directly connected to ensuring and promoting social justice and inclusivity, the pursuit of truth, fostering critical thinking, democratic practice, and excellence. It's difficult not to take greater notice of the incidence of teacher arrests for sending child pornography through phones, a teacher who promised students better grades for sending pictures, and standardized testing cheating scandals. Stories such as these occur regularly here in New Jersey and elsewhere, published online and in newspapers (e.g., female teacher sex scandals [Cavanagh, 2004]; teachers' hesitancy to report cheating scandals [James, 2008]; teachers misusing social media [Preston, 2011]). Are these signals that there is a pervasive lack of responsibility among teacher education preparation programs to address ethical issues in teaching? Over the years, multiple teacher education graduates, ranging from those with whom I had little interaction with to a few I recognized and remember teaching (even one coincidentally who was nominated for the distinction as teacher of the year), have been convicted of having inappropriate relationships with students. Those crimes cross geographic, socio-economic, and racial/ethnicity categories. Personally, knowing a victim of this kind of crime, I am familiar with the devastating effects these crimes have on the student and their family.

Ethical issues were afoot this year as fellow administrator colleague shared a scenario in which a student's test scores for certification appeared doctored. Upon investigation, he found evidence that suggested that the score report was indeed altered. Discussion with the student only uncovered more discrepancies: a denial and no articulation of any remorse for the student's actions. The gravity of this situation weighed heavily on my colleague, since the student continued to deny any falsification of written documents despite the evidence. In 10 years as an

administrator, this had never happened to my colleague, and he struggled with conflicting thoughts about how to proceed. He was partially incredulous that a student with such a high GPA and positive ratings from her cooperating/mentor teachers would falsify scores. He was also shocked that she was steadfast in her denials when questioned, especially when her advisor was also brought in, a faculty member that she had had a relationship with throughout her program. He ultimately had to determine whether they should recommend her for certification based on her decision to falsify test scores. He weighed the likelihood of her possible cheating in the future as well as how she might handle such events with students should she continue as a teacher. Most troubling to my colleague was the student's lack of "ownership" of her actions and the lack of remorse for such behavior.

As teacher educators, my colleague and I shared our ambivalence about standardized tests: While it is a valid measure of content knowledge, measuring teaching readiness based on a standardized test is far from appropriate pedagogically. As administrators, however, one of our shared responsibilities involved implementing and enforcing this measure of readiness for the clinical practice stage and then completion of the certification program. Together we discussed the many studies that debate whether there is any correlation between teachers' standardized test scores and their effectiveness in the classroom (Angrist & Guryan, 2004; Goldhaber, 2007; Goldhaber & Hannaway, 2009). We both agreed that a performance assessment would be more appropriate as a measure for evaluating teaching performance during student teaching because it more accurately provides a snapshot of teachers' abilities and knowledge in practice than a standardized test of content knowledge. This incident made us more receptive to the policy change that introduced a performance assessment in New Jersey. Thinking through this case in which a student falsified scores on a standardized assessment, we questioned whether the student

would have performed well or poorly on the edTPA, the performance assessment in over 40 U.S. states required for teacher certification. However, we both agreed that this was not the central ethical issue at play in this scenario. Rather, it was the student's dishonesty that prompted an ethical dilemma, requiring a course of action as an administrator, and the two main courses of actions led to scenarios both of which lacked ideal outcomes.

In this case, my colleague and I struggled to see how someone who falsified Praxis scores could also effectively create a safe, just, caring, and supportive community in the classroom and, more importantly, serve as a character guide for students. We asked ourselves whether these behaviors—falsification of test scores and being an ethical decision maker and effective teacher—are mutually exclusive. It also raised for us the many assumptions we have about the nature of teaching and learning, the constraints of policy, and how to reconcile these with the structures of the university and the state teacher certification systems. In the process of meaning making about an ethical issue of practice, Geertz's (1973) reference to culture is applicable: "[It] is not a power, something to which social events, behaviors, institutions, or processes can be causally attributed; it is a context, something within which they can be intelligibly—that is, thickly—described" (p. 14). Ultimately, each situational dilemma requires an honoring of the complexity of teachers' context and culture when engaged in ethical meaning making. During this study, it became apparent that how such grey areas are approached, contemplated, and resolved requires a methodological approach that can capture participants' rich and credible stories about their daily professional lives. This was my north star during this study, the motivation to attend to the complexity of each situation, something I tried to enact sensitively to ensure I accurately recount their experiences in a trustworthy manner.

Key Concepts and Influential Ideas

Establishing the meaning of key concepts was essential to promoting understanding in this study. Often *ethics* and *morals* are used synonymously. According to Hazard (1985) morals refer to “the notions of right and wrong that guide us individually and subjectively in our daily existence” (p. 451). By contrast, ethics are norms shared by a group “on the basis of mutual and usually reciprocal recognition” (Hazard, 1985, p. 453). . For the purposes of this study, the distinction between morality and ethics is a critical one, given they are serious, theorized concepts. Other key concepts relevant to this study include laws, regulations or policies, professional dispositions, and theories of moral development.

Personal Morality

Morality refers to how people choose to live their life, what principles to abide by for actions that stem from a set of beliefs that are derived from a certain culture, specific religion, or philosophical orientation, whereby personal interpretations of what is right and wrong are strongly influenced by the factors mentioned herein. Values about honor and morality can vary between individuals. *Personal morality*, referring to personal principles, values, and beliefs derived from one’s life experiences that are subjective, can be cultural or religious and may or may not align with community mores (e.g., Campbell, 1993; Jackson, Boostrom, & Hansen, 1993; Oser, 1989).

Professional Ethics

By contrast, ethics tend to be agreed-upon statements regarding behavior and activity and are used to determine what is right and wrong within a more specific professional realm and to guide behavior (i.e., formal ethics within law, counseling, clergy, medicine, and education). Many philosophers have positioned ethics as the study and development of theories that

encompass the general nature of moral principles (e.g., Socrates, Aristotle, Kant, Newton). This can include aspects of universal notions of fairness, a sense of right and wrong, or what ought to be done in any given situation. Inherent in this historical development is a blurring of the distinction between ethics and morality. With regard specifically to education, Husu (2001) defined ethics as the “norms, values, and principles that should govern the conduct of educational professionals” (p. 68). *Professional ethics* signify the professional ethical standards that assist practitioners within situational and systemic contexts that acknowledge dilemmas in choosing the best course of action (Berlak & Berlak, 1981; Fenstermacher, 1990; Jackson et al., 1993; Hutchings, 2016; Strike, 1990b). Lowenstein (2008) defined ethics as “the attempt to think critically about what is right and what is wrong, what is good and what is bad, in human conduct” or simply stated how people should conduct themselves (p. 43).

Laws, Regulations or Policies

Laws and regulations, or policies, for the purposes of this study, refer to the specific articulated rules, policies, statutes, and judicial guidelines that teachers are required to follow. As opposed to moral issues that focus on how people live their lives, the regulatory position takes a rules-based approach to right and wrong, determined by others as opposed to the individual. Hazard (1984) characterized laws as “the norms that ordinarily are written and expressed as generalizations” (p. 448). Teachers are beholden to laws, regulations, and policies that originate from their core professional responsibilities, including promoting and protecting students’ safety, fostering growth and development, and facilitating students’ learning. As Darling-Hammond (1985) wrote, “It is unethical for a teacher to conform to prescribed practices that are ultimately harmful to children. Yet that is what teachers are required to do by policies that are

pedagogically inappropriate for some or all of their pupils” (p. 213). Therein lies the essence of the ethical struggle teachers often encounter.

Professional Dispositions

Professional dispositions indicate professional attitudes, values, and habits of thought, exhibited through action held by educators and required by accreditation bodies (Burant, Chubbuck, & Whipp, 2007; Caspi & Shiner, 2006; Johnson & Reiman, 2007; Thorndike, 1906). The National Council of Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) defined dispositions as the “values, commitments and professional ethics that influence behaviors toward students, families, colleagues and communities and affect student learning, motivation and development as well as the educator’s own professional growth” (NCATE, 2006, p. 53). Accreditation processes include requirements to measure and track pre-service teachers’ development of dispositions viewed as essential to teaching (e.g., belief that all students can learn, respect for differences of all kinds, taking initiative, understanding of ethical responsibilities).

Moral Development

Relevant to this study is the work that key researchers (e.g., Hoffman, 1976, 1982; Kohlberg, 1981, 1984; Rest, 1983) have done in investigating *moral development*, or the changes in understandings of morality over a life span. Hoffman (1982) argued that empathy may be a biologically based moral motive. Examining the role that reasoning, cognition, emotion, judgment, and action play as interrelated components inherent in moral development can be linked to aspects of ethical decision making. Such approaches honored the “conception of the tripartite structure of ‘psychic life,’” which sought to delve into the “three-dimensional nature of moral experience” (Tappan & Brown, 1989; p. 186). Psychic life in this sense refers to the quest to better understand one’s moral choices and the three-dimensional nature of moral experience,

conceptualized as a *trifecta*, or union between cognition, emotion, and action, none of which can offer further understandings in isolation., Contributing to this line of thinking, Bruner (1986, 1987) argued that “a real poverty is bred” by making too sharp a distinction between cognition, affect, and action. Instead he also advised considering cognition, emotion and action together, an approach that paved the way for Carol Gilligan’s (1986) “Remapping the moral domain: New Images of Self in Relationship.”

An Ethic of Care

Gilligan’s (1982) theory claimed that women have a tendency to emphasize compassion, caring, empathy, and relationships over more abstract concepts such as justice in relation to moral understandings. Chapter 2 summarizes the ways in which Gilligan’s approach to understanding ethical practice framed this study in large measure. Prior to Gilligan’s research, Kohlberg’s (1981, 1984) work established a set of universal ethical principles, something Gilligan disputed. Her work (1982, 1983, 1986, 1987) focused on the ways in which being responsive to others’ needs often emerges as more important than the concepts of *justice* and *fairness*. Gilligan uncovered incidents in which people described prioritizing care for others over any sense of universal rules about what is right and wrong ethical practice. Gilligan’s contributions to psychology and the field’s understandings of ethics weighed heavily in this study; her approach and line of thinking resonated as a way to start to understand teachers’ ethical choices and decisions. In addition, I pulled from Nodding’s’ influential “ethics of care” (1984, 1988, 1992, 1999, 2002, 2012). Nodding’s’ suggestion that all ethical action centers on interpersonal relationships helped examine the situated contexts of schools and classrooms, where relationships between teachers and student are often at the center of the learning

experience. Both Gilligan and Nodding's work were germane to this study, which explored how ethical meaning is made of teachers' professional practice in education.

Code of Ethics

Many professions such as law, medicine, nursing, dentistry, accounting, and counseling have established codes of ethics to articulate the responsibilities of the profession and have formed review boards that monitor and enforce codes of professional ethics (Webb, 2007). When asked on an impromptu basis, often pre-service teachers describe ethical responsibilities along the lines of vague notions of "what we should do" ensuring or fighting for their students' learning needs, instilling democratic practice in class, and being fair with students during their day-to-day professional challenges. Such descriptions are consistent with the National Education Association (NEA) Preamble and Principle I *Commitment to the Student* (1975) highlighted in Appendix A. In 1975, the Representative Assembly of the NEA adopted a Code of Ethics of the Education Profession, a number of responsibilities as highlighted in the following:

The educator, believing in the worth and dignity of each human being, recognizes the supreme importance of the pursuit of truth, devotion to excellence, and the nurture of democratic principles. Essential to these goals is the protection of freedom to learn and to teach and the guarantee of equal educational opportunity for all.

First, Principle I outlined a Commitment to the Student as the primary responsibility and detailed the specific obligations associated with helping each student to realize her potential as a worthy and effective member of society. Next, Principle II, specifically addressed a *Commitment to the Profession*.

The educator strives to help each student realize his or her potential as a worthy and effective member of society. The educator therefore works to stimulate the spirit of

inquiry, the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, and the thoughtful formulation of worthy goals. In fulfillment of the obligation to the student, the educator. (NEA, 1975)

Similarly, in 1994 the advisory board for the Association of American Educators (AAE) developed a code of ethics for educators that was built to uphold the highest ethical standards in an attempt to protect the rights of both students and teachers. While the intention was not to replace the NEA code of ethics, the AAE expanded upon the commitments to the students and the profession (see Appendix B). The second principle in the AAE code for example, focused on ethical conduct with respect to practices and performance, while principle three outlined ethical conduct towards professional colleagues, and principle four articulated ethical conduct towards parents and the community. This was a clear attempt to determine the rules of engagement for teachers, clarifying the behaviors and the practices that the teaching profession can, and should, impose on itself like so many other professions ranging from the medical, legal, counseling and financial professions have established much earlier in their development as associations.

Over the last 40 years since these initial ethical codes were developed, however, the world has increased in complexity and policy changes prompted the need for more specific guidelines. For example, the inclusion of uniquely abled-learners into mainstream classrooms coincided with the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) developing a specific code of ethics for special educators. The CEC code stated, "Special education professionals are committed to developing the highest education and quality of life potential of individuals with exceptionalities" (2003, p. 1). Two years later, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) produced a Code of ethical conduct and statement of commitment specific to professions working with early childhood students (2005). The AAE expanded upon areas already covered in greater detail in the original NEA code of ethics, and provided

additional guidance to concerns about the added complexity of teaching in the digital age (e.g., how to navigate digital interaction with students, families, and colleagues on social media).

Statement of the Problem

Having described my professional interest in this inquiry to many colleagues and personal acquaintances that are teachers, most expressed an active curiosity in this work. There is little doubt that pre-service and practicing teachers alike need preparation and professional development regarding how to best navigate ethical decisions associated with the multitude of scenarios that arise during a typical day as an educator. In schools and classrooms, teachers strive to treat students with care, respect, openness, encouragement, and fairness. Teachers face decisions that can significantly affect student's confidence, motivation, and their learning. Barrett et al. (2012) posited that the teaching profession has lacked "an organized set of decision rules that when followed would show that certain dispositions (habits, traits, action-tendencies) are being demonstrated" (p. 891). They argued that professional ethics serve three essential purposes: to ensure high professional standards, to protect students, and to guide teachers in their decision making (Barrett et al., 2012). As will be discussed in Chapter 2, the wider literature also suggests that professional ethics are more than a list of behaviors teachers should avoid, yet they often are articulated in codes of conduct written by district leaders (Campbell, 2000). A code of professional ethics includes a set of decision rules for teachers to help them determine the best course of action when one or more underlying principles are in conflict.

By way of example, Maxwell and Schwimmer (2016) chronicled how in other fields such as law and medicine there is generally agreement on basic and established ethical principles that shape teaching and learning for entering professionals (e.g., the four basic principles in medical ethics are respect for autonomy, beneficence, nonmaleficence, and justice). In teaching, while

there has been some progress in developing codes of ethics, one could argue that there is still a vast lack of shared ethical understandings. In general, Kultgen (1982) criticized authors of codes of professional ethics, suggesting that the codes tend to serve merely as public relations initiatives and can be mere window dressing as opposed to coherent direction for professionals experiencing the pull of competing priorities. Critics have also argued that codes of ethics tend to be self-serving are focused on protecting economic benefits of the profession at hand rather than protecting vulnerable populations from unethical conduct (Bayles, 1986; Ladd, 1980).

Issues of fairness and equity, loyalty to colleagues, confidentiality to students, assessment practices, rules, and school standards can often prove to be areas of uncertainty for teachers that codes of ethics do little to untangle. As Heilbronn (2008) stated, "There is more than one available course of action and the individual teacher makes a choice of what she considers the right course of action in the circumstances" (p. 95). Teachers express how they often experience feeling compelled in two different directions when faced with circumstances in their practice that evoke mixed feelings, and it is often unclear what the reasons are that explain outcomes in teachers' choices (Meziro, 2000; Jersild, 1965). In Jersild's book, *When Teachers Face Themselves* (1965), teachers revealed their weaknesses, struggles to accept themselves, their decisions, and chronicled their inquiry into the significance of their work and struggle to adopt more healthy attitudes. The purpose of my qualitative study is to uncover the ways in which some teachers make meaning of such incidents, how they identify ethical issues at play, and ultimately how they chose to navigate these decisions and situations.

Further complicating this endeavor however, is the current context mapped by the educational standards and accountability reform movement, and policy initiatives. Ball (2003) referred to the requirement of individual teachers to "organize themselves as a response to

targets, indicators and evaluations,” that also includes the necessity of setting aside personal beliefs and commitments and live an “existence of calculation” (p. 215). As Torres, Kidd, and Madsen (2015) pointed out, accountability mandates have induced added pressure and stress that trigger a wide range of responses, many of which are undesirable. It is no surprise that in this context, the incidents of teachers losing their licenses are more widespread than ever for an array of violations, including academic dishonesty. Teacher cheating scandals have increased significantly within the last 10 years, perhaps a result of the added performance demands occurring as a result of Public Law 107-110 (i.e., the No Child Left Behind Act, NCLB). For example, in Atlanta, teachers went to prison for inflating test scores of children from struggling schools to earn bonuses, keep their jobs, enhance their careers, or maintain their pride, according to investigators (Fantz, 2014; Patrick, Plagens, & Rollins, 2018). These reforms have been ongoing for a few decades now, regulating and incentivizing entire schools, districts, and states based on both material and symbolic rewards and sanctions through quality ratings and monetary compensation (Ball, 2003). In such systems, where power is determined by who controls the field of judgment, Ball posited that teachers are often caught in a web that represents how schools, as public organizations, operate. It is Ball’s opinion that schools have taken up the practices more aligned and associated with the private sector rather than the democratic principles and agendas anchored in the public purposes of education. Instead, Ball believed schools now are controlled “with the methods, culture, and ethical system of the private sector” which further stymied teachers’ abilities to make tough decisions in practice that prioritize what might be best for students, if they are perceived as detrimental to signs of institutional status, rankings, and positive public image (2003, p. 216).

Perhaps more disturbing than academic dishonesty violations such as these is the increased occurrence of teachers engaging in sexual misconduct with their students. Shakeshaft (2003) led a study that found that 4.5 million students out of roughly 50 million in American schools are subject to educator sexual misconduct during their K–12 schooling, and as many as 9 in 10 cases may go unreported. This investigation found more than 2,500 cases over five years between 2001 and 2006 in which educators were sanctioned for sexual misconduct (Irvine & Tanner, 2007). Such ethical transgressions call into question the very nature of schooling as well as question some teachers' understanding and responses to the ethics of the profession of teaching. As Dewey (1903) emphasized, schools have an obligation to embed ethics in every function of education, not only to maintain trust in society but to advance the welfare of society. While it is not the focus of this study to examine the causes of teachers' ethical violations (e.g., academic integrity or sexual misconduct), it is important to note that ethical framing, according to Rebores (2001), requires an honest scrutiny of three essential questions regardless of context: “(a) What does it mean to be a human being? (b) How should human beings treat one another? (c) How should institutions of society be organized?” (p. 5). To better understand how schools, as institutions of society, can uphold and support teachers' ethical practice, it is critical to unpack and understand how teachers make ethical meaning of their practice in their daily work. An awareness of teachers' ethical decision making in a daily basis serves as an effective starting point for this study.

Context of the Study

Maxwell and Schwimmer (2016) identified six core values of teacher professionalism expressed through various teaching codes of ethical conduct that they examined (e.g., care, solidarity, pedagogical excellence, liberal democracy, integrity, and reliability). It appears that

teachers strive to strike a balance between fostering a caring climate and a more formal climate, given the need to have boundaries in place with regard to their relationships with students (e.g., Colnerud, 1997; Elbaz, 1992; Husu & Tirri, 2003; Mahony, 2009; Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2016; Socket & LePage, 2002). Teachers often find themselves operating within a set of tensions: They may desire to adhere to school rules and, at the same time, feel equal desire to maintain a student's confidentiality. Frequently, there are grey areas for educators, situations in which there is a lack of conforming to a clear set of rules. If a student is in danger, either to himself or others, education professionals have no choice than to break confidentiality, but these clear-cut situations are much rarer. Similarly, a teacher's desire to hold to educational standards may exist juxtaposed with the equally compelling desire to be flexible and provide students with second chances when grading is at play. How do teachers navigate these tensions, make meaning of, and describe enacting ethics in their professional practice? This study aimed to both add to the literature in teacher education about the role that ethics plays in teachers' meaning making concerning their professional practice, and potentially how to address the complexity entailed in preparing new teachers for this aspect of their work. This poses the question of whether it is more advantageous to address these differences or hold them in their complexity, given how the real world of teaching unfolds amidst competing tensions. Because teacher preparation programs and school districts collaboratively assist in new teacher development and support, it is also important to explore how teachers contemplate their decisions in the moment to better clarify how they engage in meaning making and decision making. As Fenstermacher and Richardson (1993) posited, "All of us, nearly all of the time, may be said to employ practical reasoning; that is, we reason about our actions in relation to what we want to accomplish and what we believe to be the case about who, what and where we are" (p. 103).

I approached my study with a curiosity about how teachers engage critically and reflect on the meaning of events that they identify to be ethical in their professional lives. Ingersoll (2003) suggested that despite the large number of decisions that teachers make each day, the majority of teachers often do not feel positively about their choices and that they have little input in key decisions that affect their own jobs, a phenomenon he attributes to negatively influencing teacher turnover. Job dissatisfaction stemmed from a variety of reasons, according to Ingersoll and Smith (2003), including poor student motivation, discipline problems, poor administrative support, classroom intrusions, and lack of faculty influence. As a past K–12 teacher and a current teacher educator, I have encountered many ethically complex situations both inside and outside of the classroom, and I am well aware that ethical decision-making does not happen in vacuum. The *context* matters in each ethical situation that may arise, whether it is the school context, the district climate, or the state and national context that may frame how teachers and administrators interpret decisions. While ethical issues can vary from teacher to teacher, administrator to administrator, and from teacher educator to teacher educator, the literature suggests there are trends that have nonetheless emerged with respect to the ways in which teachers describe enacting professional ethics. I set out to unpack teachers' ethical understandings of the decisions they face each day and uncover the ways in which they make meaning of such incidents, how they identify ethical issues at play, and ultimately how they chose to navigate these decisions and situations.

Statement of Purpose

In this study, I first explored what are the ethical issues that teachers identify in their daily practice. I sought to understand how they came to recognize these as ethical in nature. In order to better understand how these participating teachers made meaning of professional

practice, identifying the factors at play was also a part of the process. It helped to reveal what and how these teachers considered their options at hand and the implications of these options. Consequently, the research question I asked in this study was: In what ways do teachers make meaning of and describe enacting professional ethics? During this study, I also came to recognize that better understanding of the role that context plays in teachers' meaning-making processes is important, at the personal, school, district, and community level, because all have unique perspectives and roles. As discussed earlier, when I first began teaching, it was an internal moral compass that primarily served as a guide for me when making decisions about what was right or wrong in any given situation with ethical implications. Yet, as Hutchings (2016) proposed, as a profession, our personal sense of ethics is not enough to help us navigate the demands teachers face given the variability of school contexts and expectations.

I set out to understand how teachers in varying school contexts, with diverse personal backgrounds and experiences, navigate the ethical terrain on both a personal and professional level. How these 12 teachers felt about their students, families, themselves, their efforts, their challenges, and the ways in which they navigated students' needs and educational policies came through with incredible clarity. At times it was clear that there was consistency in the topics of their ethical considerations (e.g., establishing and maintaining appropriate boundaries with students, holding students accountable for their efforts and learning and grading practices in general, maintaining confidentiality with colleagues as well as students, and balancing the needs of one member of the learning community with the needs of the greater community). The teachers' voices resonated with nuanced understandings, expressed their thoughts, a range of emotions, and articulated multiple options regarding the actions they could take in any given situation in which they perceived an ethical problem of practice. Their stories brought to life

daily encounters with ethical decisions, moral issues, and professional dilemmas, each of which was laden with a lack of clarity, competing needs, pressures and priorities. Both the simplicity as well as the complexity of what they each individually faced came through often. Examining the range of possible courses of action presented in any given situation provided a useful glimpse into how these teachers make meaning of and honor their perceived professional ethical obligations.

Significance of the Study

This study is intended to provide more detailed windows into how teachers identify, conceptualize, describe, and navigate ethical issues in their practice. As Chapter 5 will expand upon, pre-service teachers could benefit of more guidance with ethical preparation for their future professional practice, (e.g., ranging from specific tailored university curricula to engagement in more interactive case studies, or practice with engagement in multiple perspective taking). Similarly, for practicing teachers, it is fundamental to identify the ongoing professional development needs that could better address teachers' ethical decision making. It is often the case that working in a care-based profession means practicing teachers can struggle with navigating student relationships and setting appropriate boundaries. As Ball (2003) reminded us, half of the teaching force regularly and voluntarily opt out of the profession before the five-year milestone as a result of teachers' struggles that are complex and varied and as individualized as their students' needs, sometimes stemming simply from teachers' negative self-assessments of their teaching performance and their causes. Johnson (2003) provided two distinct but compelling examples:

What happened to my creativity? What happened to my professional integrity? What happened to the fun in teaching and learning? What Happened? I find myself thinking

that the only way I can save my sanity, my health and my relationship with my future husband is to leave the profession. I don't know what else I could do, having wanted to teach all my life, but I feel I am being forced out, forced to choose between a life and teaching.

In this instance, the teacher expressed the challenges of finding a balance between the demands of teaching and her own personal needs for satisfaction, integrity, health, and wellbeing. These can come in direct conflict on a regular basis or often be sacrificed in the real context of a profession that requires the emotionally and physically draining work of caring for students as the central foundational responsibility from which all other aspects of the work radiate or are scaffold upon. The second example:

I was a primary school teacher for 22 years but left in 1996 because I was not prepared to sacrifice the children for the glory of politicians and their business plans for education. It's as though children are mere nuts and bolts on some distant production line, and it angers me to see them treated so clinically in their most sensitive and formative years.

Here the voice of a veteran teacher expressed the emotions of a committed professional but one that not only sees the daily work involved for educators but also provides a nuanced understanding of the larger picture of education. This embodiment of where education is headed contributed directly to her decision to leave the profession. Research into teacher retention often focuses on the direct impact of school leadership as a cause of turnover. Perhaps examining the possible disenchantment of teachers' understanding would be beneficial (e.g. of economic productivity imperatives, or international ranking systems as the justification for implementing business model approaches to running schools in which children, and their learning, become

commodities used by many for a variety of purposes). Such endeavors fail to focus on the students' growth and development as a standalone rationale, the core principle of ethical teaching. As Warnick and Silverman (2011) pointed out, ethics are generally a neglected topic in pre-service teacher education, and most practicing teachers report that they tend to receive little if any ethical training or guidance to address the ethical concerns that arise in practice. Since students ultimately pay the highest price for teacher turnover, addressing ethics in pre-service and practicing teachers' development could effectively reduce teacher turnover and further bolster students' long-term growth and development.

Organization of the Study

This dissertation is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 outlined the context for research on teachers' ethical practice within the current educational climate and landscape and the dearth of scholarship detailing the complexities of how teachers' make meaning of ethical professional practice despite the increasing ethical conduct violations amongst educators. Chapter 2 reviews relevant scholarship that informed this study and provides an overview of how I used Gilligan's (1982) articulation of an ethic of care and the cultivation of caring relationship as the conceptual framework that undergirds this study. Chapter 2 also delves into the historical way in which ethical framing occurred prior to Gilligan's (1982) approach, as well as some elements of other theories that also help to better understand teachers' meaning making and responses to complex ethical situations that arise in their practice. Chapter 3 delineates the rationale for the way in which I chose to qualitatively study this phenomenon, specifically accounting for the procedures and methods of data collection and analysis. Chapter 4 summarizes the key findings of this study and discusses the significance of possible explanations for these findings. The final chapter reviews these findings in relation to the research questions and explores the limitations and

implications for teachers' preparation and professional development with regard to ethical practice.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

As Mahony (2009) suggested, “Ethics deals, amongst other things, with right and wrong, ought and ought not, good and evil” (p. 983). Given the nature of the relational and conduct work associated with teaching and learning between teachers and students, ethics and pedagogy are naturally intertwined (Campbell, 2008b). This chapter provides an overview of the key relevant concepts that were fundamental to this study’s inception and development. A discussion of moral development as it relates to teachers, the ethic of justice, and an ethic of care help frame where the theory and literature have traveled over the last 30 years since. As Cummings, Harlow, and Maddux (2007) emphasized, teachers have a responsibility to make moral and ethical decisions all the time: They must take into account the needs of students from diverse backgrounds, be fair, consistent, and use their professional authority while ultimately seeing past teachers’ own self-interests. In a similar vein, the moral dimensions of teaching (Goodlad, Soder, & Sirotnik, 1990) and how they have influenced teachers’ ethics education are highlighted in order to help this framing of teachers’ ethical meaning making in the literature to date. Likewise, characterizing ethical decision making as a dispositional component of teacher knowledge is important to examine in the context of the current education landscape. The role that professional educational organizations play in this framing cannot go unrecognized. Finally including a few perspectives from other professional fields outside education can be useful to gain a different vision; comparing the cross-professional literature on ethical decision-making reveals interesting patterns.

Moral Development

Historically, cognitive-based perspectives have dominated the field and were used to explain teachers’ perceived moral responsibilities and decisions. For example, Kohlberg (1981,

1987) claimed that moral development progressed through six stages and three levels (e.g., two stages per level). He categorized these levels of moral development as preconventional, conventional, and post conventional. In the beginning stage, Kohlberg posited that morality for individuals is predicated upon rewards and punishments. That is, effort is made to secure the greatest benefit for oneself. In the conventional stage, individual's morality is based on what is expected in society, and rules of conduct stem from society's norms. In this stage, effort is made to secure approval and maintain positive relations with others and social order. Kohlberg's theory of development in the most evolved level proposed that people are capable of following self-chosen ethical standards of behavior, engaging in questioning rules that violate some people's rights, and taking into account the needs of all members of a community. Kohlberg considered this phase the time when people have (a) the capacity to consider laws of a society, (b) can consider if and how to uphold or violate principles of justice, and (c) makes decisions about morality that are based on principles that appeal to a value of the common good rather than simply self-benefit. In this stage, a distinction is made between being legally right and morally right. Based on Kohlberg's work, Rest (1975) developed the Defining Issues Test (DIT) and applied it specifically to testing individuals' moral reasoning skills. Kohlberg's contribution to moral development is substantial; however, what is less clear is what the DIT reveals specifically about teacher's moral development.

Many have tested Kohlberg's theory in over 50 studies since 1980, primarily using the DIT or the Moral Judgement Interview (Rest, 1979; Rest, Narvaez, Bebeau, & Thoma, 1999; Thoma, 1986; Walker, 1991). While these studies focused on moral reasoning levels are compelling, they do not explain *how* teachers make meaning of ethical practice. The work of these tools is to assess moral reasoning levels, rather than processes. Therefore, for the purposes

of this review, I focused on those who study the process of moral and ethical reasoning, and more recent approaches as well, in large part due to the dearth of work done that comprehensively examines how teachers make moral and ethical meaning of their practice. However, I chose to highlight key conceptual works that were pivotal to setting or changing the direction of moral development research, along with empirical studies that have expanded understandings beyond the capacity of more cognitive-based theories.

Ethic of Justice Versus an Ethic of Care

As a starting point, it is important to acknowledge that Gilligan (1982) was the first notable researcher who took issue with Kohlberg on the grounds of a perceived gender bias. That is, Gilligan saw merit in Kohlberg's contributions in moral development, but she questioned its validity given that his sample was comprised solely of male participants. Similarly, Noddings (1984) rejected Kohlberg's claims. She asserted that an ethic of care rather than an ethic of justice held for many people. First and foremost, Noddings (1984) insisted in her acclaimed book *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education* that:

Ethics, the philosophical study of morality, has concentrated for the most part on moral reasoning. Much current work, for example, focuses on the status of moral predicates and, in education, the dominant model presents a hierarchical picture of moral reasoning ... One might say that ethics has been discussed largely in the language of the father: in principles and propositions, in terms such as justifications, fairness, justice. The mother's voice has been silent. Human caring and the memory of caring and being cared for, which I shall argue form the foundation of ethical response, have not received attention except as outcomes of ethical behavior. (p. 1)

Noddings (1984) coopted the term “ethical caring” from medicine, something she described as “arising out of natural caring—that relation in which we respond as one—caring out of love or natural inclination” (p. 2). For Noddings, teaching is relational work, something that is inherent in the professional role, that is part of all key aspects of instructions such as planning curriculum, implementing lessons, or assessing student work.

Other critical theorists approached the same topics but took them in different directions (e.g. Beyer, 1991; Slattery & Rapp, 2003) by examining the social justice paradigm in relation to the purposes of schooling and teachers’ professional responsibilities. Amidst these feminist and critical perspectives, Strike and Ternasky (1993) and Nash (1996) focused on *practical* ethics, now often referred to as the applied ethics perspective. That is, these scholars took what was initially a theoretical dialogue and applied it to an examination of and reflections upon the everyday choices and actions of practicing teachers. They were heavily influenced by the pivotal contribution in this growing body of work by Goodlad, Soder, and Sirotnik (1990) in their book *The Moral Dimensions of Teaching*. Goodlad and colleagues sparked interest when they gave attention to a heated exchange of views between Lee Shulman and Hugh Sockett, the latter of whom argued that the teaching profession must be framed by a set of moral and ethical norms. This stemmed from a series of debates in the *Harvard Educational Review* of 1987, which featured written exchanges between Shulman and Sockett as they argued the pros and cons of establishing an ethical code to address key aspects of moral decisions that teachers make every day (e.g., how to be fair when assessing student work, what the curriculum should focus on, how should teachers attend to differences). Such debate created a space and an audience for more research to follow that emphasized the need for teachers to embody and enact practical wisdom,

along with other dispositional traits such as honesty, patience, responsibility, attending to social justice, and fairness (e.g., Lovat, 1998; Sockett, 1993; Thompson 1997; Villegas, 2007).

The Moral Dimensions of Teaching

While over 10 years old, Campbell's (2008b) work has provided one of the most compelling literature reviews available to scholars interested in the moral dimensions of teaching. She argued that many in the field had taken for granted both the moral dimensions of teaching as well as the ethical nature of teachers' professional responsibilities. Campbell (2008a) provided a serious discussion and analysis of existing studies of the moral aspects of teaching, and claimed that besides John Dewey (1909) and a few other scholars, the majority of teacher researchers failed on two fronts: (a) to address the moral aspects of teaching, and (b) to provide any nuanced examination of the ethical nature of teacher professionalism. Instead, most scholars focused on accountability, assessment, and measurement of character-building curricular initiatives designed to address character education. In more recent years, Campbell showed that many in the field of education focused solely on the enactment of moral *virtues* in teaching (e.g., Bergem, 1993; Clark, 1990; Tom, 1980). For example, Fallona (2000) examined the ways in which teachers expressed their moral virtues in their relations with students in an attempt to help teachers live excellent lives. In historical terms, Campbell (2008a) assessed the landscape of teachers and chronicled the development of how authority, power, and morality began to make its way into the discourse. She claimed that "the field of professional ethics in teaching is situated within a wider concern for the moral dimensions of teaching and schooling" (Campbell, 2008a, p. 358).

Morals and Ethics in Education

It is nearly impossible to tease apart a focus on professional ethics without first acknowledging and addressing the moral dimensions of teaching. The moral aspects of teaching undergird most of the early literature, whether from the perspective of educational philosophers or researchers.

Moral Dimensions of Teaching

Oser's (1994) chapter for Darling-Hammond's *Review of Research in Education* conceptualized 10 distinct forms of professional morality, and he framed this as the ethical dimensions of teaching. Similarly, Hansen's (2001) chapter for Virginia Richardson's *Handbook of Research on Teaching* was staunchly centered on teaching as a moral endeavor, and he made a point to espouse the virtues of "teachers' conduct, character perceptions, judgement, understandings and more" (Hansen, 2001, p. 828). Hansen was one of the researchers involved in the first major explorations of classroom activity called "The Moral Life of Schools Project" that illuminated how some of the smallest gestures or the most seemingly insignificant comments on the part of teachers can have a significant impact on students without the teachers' awareness (Jackson et al., 1993). This project involved extensive observations of the interactions between teachers and students in 18 classrooms in a mix of public, independent, and parochial schools in the midwestern United States.

When Barlosky (1999) reviewed Hansen's important work, he emphasized the inescapable overlap present between the moral aspects of school life and teachers' ethical considerations, characterizing these as the "often unthought actions, practices, and structures that constitute the institution and the experience of schooling" (p. 236). Barlosky provided an excerpt

from T. S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral* to illustrate the paradoxical nature of examining the moral complexity of school settings and the moral/ethical impact that teachers have on students.

You argue by results, as this world does,
To settle if an act be good or bad.
You defer to the fact. For every life and every act
Consequences of good and evil can be shown.
And as in time results of many deeds are blended
So good and evil in the end become confounded. (Eliot, 1935, p. 212)

The point made by T. S. Eliot cannot be taken lightly: Views of right and wrong are always debatable, for each individual has their own perspective and in any given situation involving more than one individual, there are multiple perspectives. Other researchers have made connections between the moral and ethical aspects of teaching (e.g. Buzzelli & Johnston, 2001; Elbaz, 1992; Husu & Tirri, 2003; Jackson et al., 1993). Buzzelli and Johnston (2001) asked in what sense teaching is an ethical and moral enterprise and focused primarily on teachers' use of authority in the classroom. They made a distinction between being *an* authority versus being *in* authority and examined instructional discourse to see how teachers use their authority to either regulate power or for moral ends (Buzzelli & Johnston, 2001). They concluded that navigating the tensions of morality and power is challenging for teachers and ultimately found that "there is no single right or wrong way to handle situations" (Buzzelli & Johnston, 2001, p. 882).

It is important to highlight here Barrow's (1992) work because she is the solitary voice offering a critique of the well-received narrative articulated by the researchers presented in Goodlad, Soder, and Sirotnik's (1990) *The Moral Dimensions of Teaching*. Barrow acknowledged that while there is a "moral component to teaching," she posited that the same is

true of essentially any human work. She went on to stipulate that “the fact remains that education is no more about morality than many other human activities; it is about developing minds” (p. 107). Barrow provided a rare counter argument to the *Moral Dimensions of Teaching* when she suggested that there are many highly educated individuals who are not necessarily moral, and likewise, there are many excellent teachers who are not particularly moral (1992, p. 105). Interestingly, in his 2011 review on ethical and moral matters in teaching, Bullough (2011) ultimately sided with Goodlad, Soder, and Sirotnik (1990) position about the moral dimensions of teaching philosophically. Despite this, he recognized that Barrow’s concerns are worthy of exploration and suggested that research is necessary to better understand the relationship between teaching abilities such as communication skills, critical thinking, subject matter, instructional competence, and what is sometimes referred to as “teacher goodness” or teachers’ moral or ethical sensitivities (Bullough, 2011, p. 22).

Just five years after Barrow’s work, Colnerud (1997), a Swedish researcher, also examined the ethical conflicts teachers faced by using critical incidents to explore teachers’ ambiguity in relation to the ethics of care, furthering Noddings’ (1984) earlier work. Colnerud (1997) sought to identify what ethical conflicts teachers experienced in their professional practice and in what situations they occur. In doing so, she highlighted the demands that teachers experience given that they often lack the luxury of time to carefully weigh their options and reflect before making decisions. Instead Colnerud found that teachers are often forced to make decisions in the moment in the classroom and forced to respond to a host of demands simultaneously. In Colnerud’s study, 189 teachers in comprehensive schools in Sweden responded in writing to one question: “Briefly describe a situation or a kind of situation when you find it difficult to know what is the right or wrong thing to do from a moral/ethical point of

view in relation to pupils, parents or colleagues” (p. 629). As a result of analyzing their responses, Colnerud arrived at 223 examples of ethical conflicts and categorized them into five variables that appeared to influence participating teachers’ activities in relation to students, parents, and colleagues. These include: ethical interpersonal norms, internal professional norms emanating from the task, institutional norms, social conformity norms, and self-protecting norms. Colnerud reported the conflicts according to which norms and values were identified as being at stake and in conflict with each other, and *protection against physical or mental harm* emerged as the most essential value (e.g., a teacher may want to protect a student from harm but also feels compelled to respect the parents’ integrity; or a teacher may witness and act on a colleague treating a student unfairly or in a harmful way, which conflicts with the social norm of loyalty to colleagues). Colnerud (1997) found teachers struggling with issues of fairness, such as conflicts arising between institutional norms, when determining the grades of students with unique learning needs and whether to measure their progress as compared to other students’ progress of their own earlier efforts.

Colnerud effectively identified the characteristics of ethical conflicts that at least some teachers face and the situations in which they occur, as well as the specific norms that often conflict with one another for teachers. These are not clear-cut situations, that evoke obvious choices, but rather, given the inevitable conflicts that arise for teachers in their professional practice, Colnerud’s research strongly suggests that it is important to uncover how teachers make meaning of the complicated aspects of these situations and how they frame them. In this study, I did not address moral aspects of teaching, nor did I focus on ethics as a teacher disposition beyond summarizing the literature in these areas for relevance. Instead, I focused on the ways in which teachers make meaning of and describe enacting *ethical* practice.

Framing Ethics as a Teacher Disposition

One pattern found in the available research is the direct linkage of dispositions to the ethical dimensions of teaching. Johnson and Reiman (2007) examined beginning teachers' use of a "neo-Kohlbergian framework to investigate disposition in the context of beginning teachers' judgements and actions" (p. 677). Disposition, like the work dilemma, can be traced from *dis* meaning "two" and "position" is from *ponere*, meaning "to put or place." In Spanish, *disposición* refers to an individual's internal tendency, in situations with two courses of action available, to weigh both options and evaluate the benefits and drawbacks of each path. Work on dispositions in teacher education to date has emphasized this internal tendency, as if individuals possess some innate ability to decipher ethical norms. Caution is necessary in associating the skill of ethical decision-making to a personal characteristic, attribute, or disposition. Providing solid ethical preparation for teachers is essential. This is more beneficial than moving in a direction that focuses on cultivating or selecting for teacher dispositions as a way of meeting the demands that teachers face. Because teachers are required to make a host of decisions in the moment, it is not sufficient to leave these decisions to teachers' internal affective instincts, or their personal dispositions, especially when these decisions have ethical implications that extend well beyond their personal moral beliefs. Johnson and Reiman (2007) offered the following definition:

Dispositions are attributed characteristics of a teacher that represent a trend of a teacher's judgments and actions in ill-structured contexts (situations in which there is more than one way to solve a dilemma; even experts disagree on which way is best). Further, it is assumed that these dispositions, trends in teacher judgments and actions, develop over time when teachers participate in deliberate professional education programs. (p. 677)

In their study, Johnson and Reiman (2007) examined 12 beginning teachers and their mentors by employing a case study approach to capture how these teaching pairs thought about moral and ethical issues as part of a weekly mentoring training that was a bi-product of a grant aimed at decreasing high teacher attrition in a rural community. Johnson and Reiman (2007) utilized a quantitative measure, the Defining Issues Test (DIT-2), a Kohlberg-based measure of moral/ethical judgment mentioned briefly at the start of this chapter. Johnson and Reiman analyzed conferences between mentors and teachers, teacher interviews, lesson observations, and analysis of artifacts. They found that “maintaining norms” was the main operating principle teachers utilized, but that over time, there was an increase in the schema labeled as “postconventional,” in which moral criteria factored more heavily into decisions and in which teachers demonstrated more complex levels of judgment. Johnson and Reiman explained: “Teachers became more open to the learner perspective and engaged in more indirect interactions such as prompting inquiry and accepting and using student ideas [and were] able to acknowledge the perspective of their learners, consider varying instructional methods, and self-assess the impact of their instruction” (2007, p. 685). By devoting time for mentors and mentees to reflect and unpack ethical issues in their practice, this rural community found teachers reported higher satisfaction levels in their teaching and less turnover among teachers.

One of the conclusions that Johnson and Reiman (2007) made is that teacher education has the power to influence new teacher dispositions through “Roletaking (not role playing); it is important that action (new role) and reflection remain in balance; Continuity (a continuous interplay of action and reflection is needed) and Support (encouragement) and Challenge (new learning)” (p. 603). Despite the fact that NCATE and other accreditation bodies have placed increased attention on pre-service teachers’ dispositions in the last two decades, this study does

not focus on dispositions. In this study, I have acknowledged that teachers may in fact have pre-dispositions for ethical meaning making, but my purpose is focused on determining *how* they go about make meaning. I wanted to ensure this endeavor acknowledged the potential role of dispositions but remained open to a multitude of explanations that extends beyond teachers' dispositions.

Moreover, Johnson and Reiman (2007) found that the various approaches to examining *how* teachers make decisions required further research and investigation. Similarly, while Piaget (1964), Perry (1968), Kohlberg (1971), and vygotsky (1978), examined how people think, reason, and make meaning out of their experiences by means of various psychological lens. In this study, these theorists must be acknowledged but I did not employ a conceptual framework that over relied on any of the above theorists. Indeed, I argue that understanding *how* teachers make sense of complex events would be limited using any of the above alone, (e.g., a Kohlbergian frame). For example, Kohlberg's (1984) stages of moral development focus on adults operating at Stage 4 or 5. Stage 4 has a law and order orientation. Kohlberg believed that the focus at this stage is on maintaining and following rules, respecting authority and doing one's duty. He believed that adults usually consider society as a whole when making decisions. The fifth stage for Kohlberg, outlined a social contract orientation. At this stage, people can choose to disobey rules if they are not aligned with their personal values, recognizing that there are differing opinion about what is right or wrong and that laws are predicated upon a social contract.

Taking a different approach, Strike's (1990a) work illustrated his belief that teacher education must actively address ethics through curriculum. He made a case for explicitly teaching ethics to teachers in order to make teachers more ethical decision makers, rather than reverting to assumptions about what dispositional characteristics teachers may possess inherently

for teaching work. Strike (1990b) focused on *professional ethics* rather than personal dispositions and expressed a desire for an ethical code that “is thought of as a product of training” (p. 47). That is, Strike was explicit that it is not enough to leave this work to murky at best dispositional tendencies among people who are interested in teaching, allowing them to simply follow their hearts or instincts when making decisions. He posited that ethical preparation should reside in subject matter knowledge preparation and believed that this was an area distinct from simply the moral challenges teachers face. Instead, Strike viewed them as challenges of a cognitive nature and felt that professional ethics must be dealt with directly, rather than implicitly through a series of situations in which teachers can understand and apply a range of complex ethical approaches. In 1994, Wuestle proposed that practicing teachers often operate with internal norms that those within the profession also utilize when judging their own or their colleague’s actions. Wilkinson (2007) also pointed out that the teaching profession has failed “to unite around any agreed set of transcendental values which it may serve” (p. 382). Researchers and scholars were at this time beginning to come together and express uncertainty that the field of teacher education was doing enough to address this area of teacher preparation.

Professional Organizations Framing Ethics as a Disposition

In some respects, teacher education policy has echoed the mixed messages and expectations around the ethical and moral aspects of teaching, particularly with regard to the role of teachers’ dispositions. Professional organizing bodies (i.e., the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education [NCATE], the Interstate New Teacher Assessment, and Support Consortium [INTASC], the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards [NBPTS], and the Council for Accreditation of Education Programs [CAEP]) have articulated the importance of teachers’ dispositions such as honesty, integrity, and an understanding of

professional ethics in teaching (NCATE, 2002). Few professionals question the need for teachers to be honest, fair, empathetic, caring, persistent, collaborative, and reflective; however, there is disagreement in the literature over whether these dispositions are personality traits (Caspi & Shiner, 2006), habits of thought and action (Thorndike, 1906), or belief statements or inferences made from behaviors exhibited (Burant, Chubbuck, & Whipp, 2007).

In 2010, the American Psychological Association (APA) developed a code of professional ethics designed to regulate teachers' behaviors inside and outside of the classroom. Another example can be found a year later when the American Educational Research Association (AERA) drafted a code of ethics to guide researchers, and for K–12 teachers (2011). INTASC stressed that teachers must be committed to deepening understanding of their own frames of reference and potential biases; they must understand the expectations of the profession, including codes of ethics, professional standards of practice, and relevant law and policy. This represents a historic shift. This approach to providing expectations for teachers to deepen their own understandings of ethics signifies a step towards honoring teachers as professionals. That is, teachers must exhibit professional judgment rather than simply following rules without thinking. Similarly, CAEP outlined that before any program recommends candidates for certification, they must ensure they can demonstrate proof that candidates understand the expectations of the profession, including codes of ethics, professional standards of practice, and relevant laws and policies. For example, at the local level, in 2016 Montclair State University (New Jersey, USA); revised its Portrait of a Teacher document and the institutional standards that provide guidance for assessment of these areas of new teacher development. At major milestones (e.g., admission and completion) in the Teacher Education Program, a pre-service teacher must show growth in these areas. The expectation is articulated as effective teachers will demonstrate dispositions

critical to the teaching profession, including being a reflective practitioner, who continually inquire into the nature of teaching and learning to improve teaching practice, advocating for students, policies, and best practices, as well as demonstrating integrity, honesty, and understanding of professional ethics, roles and responsibilities, and relevant laws and policies (MSU Portrait of a Teacher, 2016). These examples all illustrate that in the last 30 years, there has been more emphasis on teachers' ethical responsibilities. This phenomenon coincides with the establishment of professional standards for educators. Recently there has been increasing efforts to formalize codes of ethics (e.g., the Model Code of Ethics for Educators (MCEE); the National Education Association (NEA) Code of Ethics of the Education Profession; the Code of Ethics for Georgia Educators). What is still unclear, however, is how teachers engage with these articulated ethical principles in their practice. Many assume that teachers should just know better due to some moral predisposition, something they probably should have prior to entering the profession, but unfortunately that traditional way thinking marginalized the profession (Hutchings, 2016). Hutchings (2016) proposed that such a narrative devalues the situational complexity that is inherent and occurs regularly in the teaching profession.

Teachers' Ethical Reasoning: Nature or Nurture

Floden and Clark (1988) stipulated that the practice of teaching is filled with uncertainties. There are pedagogical challenges to face as teachers design curricula; there are adjustments to make for students based on their individualized needs; there are relationships to build with students, staff, administrations, and families; and there are many specific policies to understand and follow set forth by the school, district, state, and the federal government (Allen, 2009; Veenman, 1984). Teachers struggle with these ambiguous events and decisions. As a result, Schwarzer and Grinberg (2017) suggested "there is a need for more effective support and

scaffold strategies to help novice teachers during their student teaching semester as well as during their first five years of teaching” (p. 1). The tensions that teachers struggle with regarding moral and ethical issues can be viewed as one of the uncertainties referred to by Floden and Clark (1988).

Jackson, Boostrom, and Hansen (1993) illuminated in their research how teachers are not always aware of the moral impact of their actions and pushed for more emphasis on moral reasoning and the development of argumentation skills in teacher candidates during teacher education preparation. Husu and Tirri (2001) from Finland approached this challenge in another way. They argued that despite attempts to do exactly as Jackson et al. suggested, the significance of practical teaching experience overshadows preparation in this area of teacher development. Instead of blaming teachers themselves, or teacher preparation programs, their focus is on schools becoming the settings conducive to learning how to navigate ethical challenges in practice, since “no amount of time spent in college classes can develop perfect skills in moral discourse practices; it is attained only through the experience of working in schools” (Husu & Tirri, 2001, p. 374). Furthermore, their findings suggested that teachers’ practical moral decision-making skills are not based on pre-established dispositions for moral reasoning. Rather they concurred with Shotter’s (1993) notion of “socially shared identities of feeling,” something that people create themselves in the flow of activity between them (p. 54). All of the moral dilemma identified by teachers in Finland in Husu and Tirri’s study dealt with human relationships and centered on the different ways in which teachers perceived “the best interest of the child,” which even included protecting what they saw as harmful perceptions of others (p. 372). Dialogue, mediation, and consultation with other professions were found to help but failed to solve the dilemmas. This study found that competing interests were often left unresolved,

conflicts continued, and teachers ended cooperative relationships with specific professionals they found ineffective or detrimental to student's needs.

It is this same year that Todd (2001) made the claim that because ethics comes to education from philosophy, an entirely different discipline, current ethical preparation does not exist in teacher education. That translates into leaving teachers to deal with uncertainty on their own (Gauthier, 1963). Husu (2004) also punctuated the point that teachers struggle with these areas of ambiguity when he stated that there is an inherently unpredictable nature of the pedagogical encounter:

Both teachers and students bring a host of idiosyncrasies and unconscious associations in pedagogical situations which cannot be predicted or controlled. Therefore, instead of asking what ought to be, we should ask what makes ethics possible in pedagogical settings. Pedagogical ethics is the study of how teachers and students live together in the context of school, It concerns the concepts of values, rights and duties, and character and will. Also, pedagogical ethics deals with the questions of right and wrong, decision-making, and social norms. (Husu, 2004, p. 124)

Around this same time, Campbell (2003) began referring to *ethical knowledge* as something to be cultivated prior to entering classrooms full-time as well as developed during professional teaching experiences. She stressed the importance of deepening ethical knowledge through professional development. In the 1980s, however, it appears, few schools of education approached teaching applied ethics of any kind in their curriculum directly (Watras, 1986). Most programs during this decade applied a laissez-faire or blended approach to ethical reasoning at best (Glanzer & Ream, 2007; Glanzer, Ream, Villarreal & Davis, 2004; Maxwell et al., 2016). Davis (1999) posited that this phenomenon reflected a general decline in ethics curriculum

during the early and middle decades of the 20th century in the United States. Specifically, in teacher education, it was not until the 1980s that the focus on the moral dimensions of teaching (e.g. Goodlad et al., 1990; Strike & Soltis, 1985; Tom, 1984) reignited a wider dialogue on how to best handle ethics education (Warnick & Silverman, 2011).

Generally speaking, there seem to be three main options for formally promoting professional ethics education outlined in the literature and characterized as: (a) teaching a set of skills that enable teachers to recognize a proper course of action in a given situation; (b) articulating a basic understanding of a professional code of ethics or making it a requirement of graduation and professional certification; and (c) a combination of the previous two approaches (Watras, 1986). Watras proposed that the first option assumes an optimistic approach, in that a teacher can learn to be ethical, whereas the second approach assumes a more pessimistic perspective whereby teachers must be threatened with consequences for behaviors that are instinctual, something he suggests “lends itself to appeals for the careful screening of applicants to the field” (1986, p. 13). In light of this explanation, the focus increasingly placed by accrediting bodies such as NCATE and CAEP on selecting for, and developing dispositions among, teacher candidates suggests that the latter approach has been favored over the last 30 years.

Determining how to best address the ways in which professional ethics education content is handled in teacher education varies by perspective (Rogers & Webb, 1991; Maxwell et al., 2016). Some advocate for developing curriculum (e.g., Reagan, 1983) that directly addresses how to engage teachers in moral negotiation, something that was already more prevalent in the Christian colleges and universities where ethics courses were required in all programs of study, according to Glanzer et al. (2004). Reagan (1983) posited that moral negotiation is a procedure

that dictates having teachers actively unpack scenarios taken from practice. She argued that only through discussions of case studies, where teachers are required to determine a course of action and justify the reasons that explain their decisions, can they critically evaluate counterarguments and judgments, and assess conclusions. Exploring the same scenario from multiple vantage points (e.g., administrator, teacher, family member, and student) could help to justify viewpoints in specific cases. Sichel (1988) found flaws with this approach and countered with situations in which moral negotiation failed to provide clarity, that is, in situations where both sides held valid arguments or both failed to provide valid arguments. Similarly, Brown (1983) criticized Reagan's espoused approach when he situated this discussion of moral negotiation within a larger context of school administration and the influence that institutions have on teachers' ethical considerations. By contrast, Rich's (1984, 1985) work responded directly to this and provided an illustration of the second approach to applied ethics, which involve teaching pre-service teachers about a code of professional ethics as a part of the curriculum such as in a seminar course taken concurrently with student teaching.

Finefter-Rosenbluth's (2016) work supports not only the need for pre-service education but also professional development programs to provide opportunities for developing ethical reasoning or ethical decision-making skills among teachers. She examined teachers' ethical predicaments involving reflective practices in professional development programs (PDPs) using a case study approach of 12 secondary teachers. Finefter-Rosenbluth (2016) based her ethical framework on the premise that there is a direct link between teachers' sense of ethics and their notions of professionalism. Exploring how teachers refined their professional judgment, she found that among the teachers in this PDP, there were ethical dilemmas about invasion of privacy and adhering to procedures, and that the act of reflection between teachers "could

ultimately engender a moral injury” against one another (2016, p. 9). Similar to Husu and Tirri’s (2001) findings, Finefter-Rosenbluth’s analysis suggested teachers who engaged in dialogue with one another about complex dilemmas that involved ethical and moral considerations were often left feeling negatively about the colleagues with whom they disagreed. The distinction of Schön’s (1987) *reflection-in-action* versus *reflection-on-action* is fascinating to consider when examining this study about teacher reflection and ethical reasoning: Some teachers “ethically struggle with the task of reflecting on their colleagues’ actions [and] some of these dilemmas were resolved by negatively impacting collegial-ethical-relationships, such as teachers mistreating or lying to colleagues” (Schön, 1987, p. 9).

Thus far, the research suggests a lack of agreement on the ideal nature of ethical preparation for teachers and options abound: screening for the pre-disposition prior to entry into teacher preparation programs, engaging in preservice coursework around ethics and development of argumentation skills, or professional development while teaching in school contexts. As Husu (2004) suggested, if pedagogical ethics is the study of how teachers and students live together in the context of school, then perhaps attention should now be turned to what the literature has uncovered regarding what other professions have determined to be beneficial that may be applicable to education.

Cross-Professional Literature on Ethical Decision Making

In terms of ethical decision making, Maxwell and colleagues (2016) pointed out that “medicine was on the cutting edge of the movement to make ethics a program-specific requirement of graduation and professional development” (p. 136). From the 1990s onward, many other professions began to follow suit, despite a large degree of variability in how fields such as business, dentistry, occupational therapy, medicine, engineering, neuroscience, and

teaching chose to integrate ethics education (Maxwell et al., 2016). By way of illustration, the work of Abdolmohammadi, Read, and Scarbough (2003) is worthy of exploration, even though it falls outside the scope of teacher education. They report an insightful study that used the term “ethical reasoning” to refer to the process by which individuals deal with ethical dilemmas (Abdolmohammadi, Read & Scarbough, 2003, p. 73). In the years directly following Enron—when it came to light that trusted investors were unethically taking people’s retirement funds with which they were entrusted and keeping them for their own profit, along with other large business scandals that negatively affected many people on a very large scale—many researchers and public critics raised concerns about accountants’ ethical reasoning and professional conduct. Abdolmohammadi, Read, and Scarbough (2003) examined closely the two main elements of ethical decision making. The first component is the morality of justice, which was a key focus of Kohlberg’s (1984) research and assumes people follow universal rules that are concerned with abiding by rules and laws when making decisions (and when evaluating these decisions). By contrast, Taylor, Gilligan, and Sullivan (1997) characterized ethical decision making as a process informed by the knowledge of the person in the situation and their relationship to this person, and necessarily involves both emotion and cognition. While Kohlberg was effective at providing an explanation of the development of moral reasoning in people, Gilligan’s approach is considered adept at foregrounding care for others by appraising particular contextual specifics, and not universal laws, which help determine appropriate action in a more individualized and thoroughly contextualized fashion.

What is fascinating is the manner in which Abdolmohammadi, Read, and Scarbough (2003) examined accountants’ cognitive styles, using the Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), and compared them to their ethical reasoning capacities, using Rest and Narvaez’s (1994)

Defining Issues Test (DIT). They found that there is a self-selecting process at play, in which the majority of the 90 new recruits they studied possessed the Sensing/Thinking (ST) cognitive style, which was overwhelmingly associated with low levels of ethical reasoning. While Abdolmohammadi, Read, and Scarbough (2003) found no significant difference in the levels of moral reasoning between men and women, what is important to contemplate about this study is the relevance of the researchers' methodological approach to education, specifically focused on teachers' dispositional characteristics, which include an awareness and understanding of professional ethics.

The implications of Abdolmohammadi, Read, and Scarbough (2003) study for education are twofold. First, one of the researchers' stated goals was to determine how to identify and then select for accountants who are more ethical. They implemented cognitive tests and approaches to measure such characteristics. This resonates with pre-service and alternative-route teacher education candidates screening as well but leaves unanswered the question of whether the ability to demonstrate honesty, integrity, and an understanding of professional ethics is inherent in the person or if it can be taught. Second, while the concept of identifying those who possess "ethical reasoning" is just as seductive in education as it is in business, the question must be asked as to whether it is more worthwhile to presume that ethical decision making is a set of skills that requires development, time attention, and curriculum in order to cultivate amongst teachers. Well-defined ethical guidelines are necessary for any profession, since doctors, lawyers, clergy, counselors, accountants, and teachers have the highest ethical obligation in any society to protect their clients' health, freedom, spiritual and psychological well-being, financial stability, and ability to learn productively in safe environments in order to thrive. For teachers, this could

require substantial pre-service education and in-service professional development that extend well beyond the customary legal issues addressed in induction programs.

Another pivotal study concerning teachers' ethical reasoning was conducted by Shapira-Lishchinsky (2016), which examined 70 Israeli teachers' responses to questionnaires that revealed 50 critical ethical incidents eliciting ethical reasoning components (i.e., morality of justice and morality of care) about culturally responsive teaching and social justice. The incident she used is outlined in the following:

You are a homeroom teacher. Your middle school student calls you sobbing from the park at about 6 pm. Her parents are fighting at home (verbally, not physically—they are shouting at each other), and she says she is afraid to return home. She asks you to come to talk with her in the park because she does not want others to see her sobbing and asks you not to tell anyone. (Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2016, p. 250)

Most respondents struggle between showing sincere care for the student while trying to avoid breaking rules about meeting with students outside of school, while also struggling with their legal duty to report to protective services if a student may be in danger, regardless of confidentiality issues with the student. The findings suggested that only 4 of 18 participants were aware of expected ethical behavior concerning not meeting with a student outside of school. Further, only a small number of participants were preoccupied with perceptions of complying with expected behavior, such as having a professional figure present during any sort of meeting with the student, as evidenced in the following:

I would not go to the park after school hours. It is not my job. I don't know how to deal with this case. I don't have the training to deal with this complex situation. I would talk to her on the phone and direct the student to a school counselor, and immediately after

the conversation would report to the principal and school counselor to deal with this situation. (Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2016, p. 250).

Ten of 18 participants chose to help the student immediately, regardless of their acknowledgement that they should have a professional figure involved in this scenario (e.g., letting a counselor know or calling protective services). Four of 18 teachers would have notified the school counselor only after obtaining the student's permission, despite their knowledge of their responsibility to tell a counselor or authority.

I'd go to the park, support her, implore her to get the school counselor or psychologist involved, and I'd try to convince her to agree to report the case, but I wouldn't report it unless she agreed. I'm her homeroom teacher, and she needed to know that she can trust me, tell me all her difficulties and troubles in her situation, in her own way, vs. the perceived expected behavior: "reporting to social welfare authorities" (male, public non-religious middle school social coordinator, tenured, working full-time, 9-years of experience). (Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2016, p. 250)

Unlike in the aforementioned example, most responses in Shapira-Lishchinsky's (2016) study blended both Kohlberg's and Gilligan's different ways of explaining how people make moral judgments (i.e., justice and care). Thus, while other key studies (e.g., Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2001; Tirri & Husu, 2002) suggested that teachers most often defined themselves and their professional tendencies more toward care than justice, Shapira-Lishchinsky's (2016) work presented evidence that teachers' ethical reasoning "rejected the binary proposition of care vs. justice and elicited a softer approach of social justice" (p. 252). While there are findings to suggest that Kohlberg and Gilligan are clearly important influences on the field, for this study,

they will not be the theoretical lens used to make sense of teachers' ethical meaning making. Rather, this study is approached from the perspective of evidence presented suggesting that teachers have the ability to combine these two approaches to evaluate critical ethical incidents when making decisions about how to proceed in any given scenario, what Shapira-Lishchinsky (2016) called the integration approach to teachers ethical decision-making process. According to these recent findings, it is important to be cautious about characterizing teachers' challenging decisions as "dilemmas." *Dilemma*, from the Latin *di-* "twice" and *lemma* "premise," suggests a choice between equally unfavorable alternatives. I wanted to obtain clarity about the tension's teacher experience in their professional practice, how they manifest, and the ways in which teachers make sense of these decisions without the constraints of a binary framing (e.g., Kohlberg and Gilligan).

Finally, Jacob Sunday (2013) pointed out that teachers often try to suppress mentally their memories of the incidents that cause ethical dilemmas, as they evoke uncomfortable feelings. Given the multitude of events that transpire during a typical day in a classroom, teachers tend to try to focus on the more clear-cut issues that are more easily discussed with others. Teachers can struggle to find the words to express the complexity of issues that give them mixed or uncomfortable feelings. Fears of being judged can also factor into the decision to keep to themselves the uneasy feeling teachers may have regarding complex ethical situations they face. Sharing doubts about their ethical decisions can be hard, especially when relying on the emotional support of colleagues who might feel they would have decided differently. To illustrate the complexity of ethical quandaries, Pozgar (2014) highlighted Warrick's statement that typically two opposite approaches for dealing with dilemmas would possess both elements of positive and negative consequences, especially when considering context: "The difference

between moral dilemmas and ethical ones, philosophers say, is that in moral issues the choice is between right and wrong. In ethics, the choice is between two rights” (Pozgar, 2014, p. 168).

In this study, I aimed to explore the ways in which teachers struggle with their ethical decisions, specifically delving into whether, when conflicted in practice, teachers perceive *multiple* right or wrong approaches that may be equally confounding when engaging in dilemmas of professional ethics. Such scenarios may provide opportunities to more closely examine and unpack teachers' meaning making while avoiding typical binary thinking and analysis. The research on teachers' moral and ethical considerations to date highlights how much such work is needed in order to further clarify and determine how to best support teachers' learning in this area at the preservice and in-service stages of development as professionals.

The key concepts presented in this chapter—moral development as it relates to teachers, the ethic of justice, an ethic of care, the moral dimensions of teaching (Goodlad et al., 1990), the framing of teachers' ethical decision making as a disposition, and cross-professional literature—are important to gaining a deeper understanding of the context of how teachers make meaning of and enact ethical practice. The next chapter, Chapter 3: Methods and Procedures, offers an in-depth examination of this qualitative study's design and mythology.

Chapter 3: Methods and Procedures

A solid answer to everything is not necessary. Blurry concepts influence one to focus, but postulated clarity influences arrogance. (Jami, 2011, p. 130).

This chapter summarizes and discusses the qualitative research methods I used throughout this study to explore the ways in which teachers make meaning of and describe how they enact professional ethics. This chapter will not be following the usual structure of a methods chapter due to the nature of Gilligan's *Listening Guide*. To best understand the multi-stage analytic process, in-depth examples of my data analysis are provided in this qualitative study design description. The chapter commences with a rationale for this methodological approach, after which I highlight the study participants. Next, I detail the data collection procedures, including semi-structured interviews and critical incidents. I explain the multi-stage process of Gilligan's *Listening Guide* and showcase examples to illustrate how this method effectively facilitates this exploration. I also highlight, to a reasonable extent, the coding of the ethical issues that were described by twelve teachers in their professional practice because while Gilligan's *Listening Guide* assisted in identifying these teachers' ethical issues and the ways in which they weighed the advantages and disadvantages of a range of potential solutions, there were times during this study when more than *Listening Guide* was necessary in order to discover how they made meaning of navigating their choices. Finally, this chapter provides an account of trustworthiness, my positionality as a researcher, and how I tried to anticipate and navigate the ethical issues regarding this research study.

The first section of this chapter presents the rationale for employing a qualitative methodology for this research study, in which I sought to understand more about my participants' experiences, practice, and knowledge concerning and feelings about ethical

considerations in their professional practice. In the second section, I explain the methods used to recruit participants, and the third section outlines the methodological inquiry and procedures found in Gilligan's (1982) *Listening Guide*. Gilligan's methods guided how data was collected, coded, and analyzed and facilitated how participants' inner thoughts and feelings were captured, including reflections about ethics in their practice and their "unpacking" of experiences and reflections. Lastly, I highlighted the reasons behind the methodological choices used at each stage of this study. First, I tried to consistently be aware of my positionality. Second, I attempted to engage honestly in the parrhesias-tic approach, one that tries to balance the complexities with "a practiced ethic of truth-telling" that comes at the price of sustained risk to the very identities/subjectivities through which we are known (Kuntz, 2015, p. 93). Third, I revisited throughout this study a focus on how the discourse that I scrutinized could have been interpreted in other ways, using other methods, possibly arriving at different results.

Methodological Approach

As outlined in Chapter 1, the purpose of this research study was to explore the ways in which teachers characterize, describe, unpack, and problematize their ethical decisions that arise in professional practice. My aim was to better understand the role that ethics play in teachers' meaning making about their professional practice. As a result, it was important to settle on a research design that could render comprehensive understandings, capturing the complexity entailed in teachers' sense making of their professional experiences and how they interpreted events and relationships that can be viewed from a range of perspectives. At the beginning of this inquiry, I settled quickly on qualitative research given that it "aims at understanding the meaning of human activity (Schwandt, 2001, p. 213).

By first engaging in a pilot interview with a teacher who did not serve as one of my participants, I was able to more meaningfully consider the value of employing an open-ended approach versus selecting a design that follows a specific methodology. Ultimately, I chose to engage in using Gilligan's (1982) *Listening Guide* method, designed to attend to voice, in this case the voice of teachers. Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg, and Bertsch (2003) presented this method of analysis that focuses on voice and relationship through multiple listenings to the information presented by participants. The *Listening Guide* method requires the researcher to listen for three distinct types of information. First, the researcher listens for plot, referring to participants' stories and events as they describe them taking place in vivid detail. Second, first-person voice refers to how participants speak about themselves. Third, contrapuntal voice is a musical term, and attends to the gaps or missing information, conflicting understandings or responses. By using Gilligan's *Listening Guide*, I sought to be as comprehensive as possible in hearing the participants' stories and making sense of the meanings they convey. By listening to each interview multiple times, each with a different purpose and focus, my intention was to clarify their statements and meanings and to engage in identifying themes that resonated with the participants. The inquiry and analysis procedures of *The Listening Guide* (Gilligan, 1982) were challenging but effective, and not impervious to the inherent limitations that Kuntz (2015) outlined when conducting research of this kind:

Consider for a moment the standard interview (a primary technology for the production of voice, noted earlier) wherein a participant's meaning-making is reduced to a voice in a data file that, in turn, is processed into a transcript (the actual event of the interview has thus, moved from a materially situated interactive telling [the interview] to disembodied voice [the recording], to text [the transcript]), which is then categorized by a series of

codes, which may or may not be considered in relation to one another (now textual representation—of voice, of experience—shifts to purely metaphorical articulation), which is then situated within some evidence - revealing text (the paper, manuscript, or dissertation). (p. 45)

Kuntz (2015) made a convincing case that by the time a written text is completed, the researcher has lost the context that formed the conversation between interviewer and participant; that context becomes decontextualized essentially. During this study, I gave a great deal of thought to the concept of *voice*, what it entails, what it signifies, and what it can do: Voice transmits language and thoughts, it provides clues about the expression of emotions at or below the surface of what is being said, and can even conceal or withhold any of the aforementioned that the interviewee might want to avoid communicating. The opportunities and the challenges presented in using a voice-based method were myriad: Simply *listening* to these 12 teachers' voices was often not enough to be able to really *hear* what they were saying. Their authentic yet sometimes incomplete reflections about ethical practice required further probing and analysis using *The Listening Guide* (Gilligan, 1982) between the first to the second interviews. It tended to be in between these two data collection cycles that I puzzled over the incidents that participants shared, which often contained fragments of instances or contradictions in form or meaning that prompted follow-up in the form of inquiry in the second interview. Later in this chapter, I will present a fuller discussion of *The Listening Guide* (Gilligan, 1982) method utilized in this study.

In the beginning of this process, my goal was to adhere as closely as possible to Tracy's (2010) eight criteria that characterize excellent qualitative research. At key milestones in this journey, I came to understand these criteria on a much deeper level than at the outset. There were times when I struggled to reconcile elements of my methodological approach with the

improvisational aspects of being a researcher. Regardless, I tried to focus throughout on ensuring that the teachers' descriptions of enacting ethical practice (a) was a worthy, interesting, and relevant topic (see Chapter 2 especially), (b) employed appropriate, complex, rich rigor in terms of data collection and analysis processes (this chapter), (c) had transparency and sincerity about methods and challenges (this chapter), (d) had credibility, multivocality, with thick descriptions and triangulation, (e) resonated, was evocative and transferrable, (f) made a significant contribution (see Chapter 5), (g) adhered to ethical research practices (this chapter), and (h) had meaningful coherence between the literature, and achieves what it set out to understand (Tracy, 2010). Honestly, while this was the north star during my study, adhering to all eight criteria was challenging at times. Repeatedly, I needed to process some of the data by building in extra time to attend to alternative explanations that helped account for these teachers' ethical meaning making of their practice that they shared. The assistance of committee members and critical friends was invaluable for guidance and encouragement to recursively circle back to some data, mining for consistencies, patterns, and inconsistencies as well as for explanations of possible significance. This was both frustrating and gratifying at times when, as a researcher, I began integrating new approaches into already existing frameworks.

Study Participants

The sample for this study is comprised of 12 practicing teachers, all of whom work in K–12 public schools in nine different towns in northern and central New Jersey. In order to identify potential participating teachers for this study, I engaged in convenience sampling (Patton, 2002) and asked various individuals who work in the education field to share my participant self-nomination e-mail (see Appendix C) with potential K–12 teacher contacts. These included graduates of an Urban Teacher Residency Program associated with a local university who had

completed at least one year of full-time teaching and who might be interested in the study (see Appendix D). Four participants were secured by this means. The next four respondents were graduates of a grant-based alternative program for licensure. Finally, I sent a similar general self-nomination e-mail to educators and principals in my professional network asking for any referrals of colleagues that might be interested in participating in this study. Four more participants were secured in this manner. There were two teachers who teach in the same elementary school in this group. There are also two pairs of teachers that teach in the same district but at different schools within those districts; they do not know one another.

The research project was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) following the human research subject protocol (see Appendix E). I ensured that all participants were given a thorough explanation of their informed consent form, and I asked each if they had any questions. I shared that my goal was keep participants identifies as anonymous as possible so that they could trust me to share their authentic thoughts, feelings, and ways of navigating any challenges regarding their ethical practice. A few questions arose, and one participant declined to be part of any follow-up publications should this project warrant it. A remainder of the questions pertained to the limits of confidentiality and the law. Each participant confirmed their understanding that if any of the information provided included instances that endangered children or broke the law, it would have to be reported. All participants signed the consent form acknowledging that their participation in this research project was voluntary, they understood the purpose of the inquiry, and that their responses would remain as confidential as possible. I explained that as participating teachers in this study, they would earn 12 hours of professional development for their time, through the auspices of the university. At the conclusion of the two interviews, critical incident collection, and member checking through follow-up e-mails, texts and phone calls, I

submitted the paperwork to obtain the verification of 12 hours of professional development time. Finally, I reviewed with each participant how the data from these interviews and critical incidents would be protected and stored to ensure their anonymity.

Participants vary in demographic backgrounds, range in years of experience, content areas taught, grade level experience, and ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. Six of the participants are characterized as beginning teachers, having 2–3 years of experience; three were mid-career teachers with 4–6 years of experience; and three were experienced teachers between 12–30 years of experience. Some participants went through traditional teacher preparation programs, some were trained via an apprenticeship-based residency program, and others went through alternative certification programs. Some had no induction support, while others had some school-based mentoring and professional development. Seven participants teach in urban school settings, while five teachers are working in suburban school settings.

The 12 teacher participants teach in a mix of grade levels, predominantly elementary, and also in high school math and science. Seven teach in elementary schools (K–3), four of which are special education teachers with Teacher of Student with Disabilities (TSD) certification. Four teach high school science; one teaches middle school math. Ten are female and there are two male teachers. All 12 participating teachers are from a variety of racial, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds. Three participants immigrated to the United States from Kenya, Tanzania, and Canada. In addition, three participants described their parents as first-generation immigrants coming from the Philippines and Portugal, and they detailed their extensive struggles to establish financial security for their families and integrate themselves culturally. These participants were born in the United States, and two of the three were raised in bilingual homes, as opposed to one of the participants, who described herself as an English language learner (ELLs). Regardless,

each described an affinity for working with students making similar transitions to the United States. Six total participants described themselves as ELLs, and each claimed to use their second language skills teaching in mostly informal capacities, however only one participant officially taught in a bilingual setting for her first year of teaching. I asked each participating teacher to choose a pseudonym that I used when citing them. Table 3.1 offers a concise overview of the participants' profiles.

Table 3.1.

Participant Characteristics

Name	Years of Experience	Teaching Position	Background	ELL
Alana	4	Elementary Special Education	Raised in U.S.	Yes
Alex	30	Elementary General Education	Raised abroad	No
Arianna	2	High School Math	Raised in U.S.	No
Brady	3	High School Graphic Arts	Raised in U.S.	No
Charlotte	12	Elementary General Education	Raised in U.S.	Yes
Edward	2	High School Science	Raised abroad	Yes
Emma	6	Elementary Special Education	Raised abroad	Yes
Laura	3	High School Science	Raised in U.S.	No
Meg	18	Elementary Special Education	Raised in U.S.	No
Olive	4	Elementary General Education	Raised in U.S.	No
Rebecca	3	High School Science	Raised abroad	No
Tatianna	2	Elementary Special Education	Raised in U.S.	Yes

In the following, I provide a brief description detailing what participants shared about themselves, including their definition of what the term “professional ethics” means to them.

Alana (pseudonym)

As a first and second grade teacher of special education students, Alana specifically has worked with students with autism for four years in sum, in two different urban schools. She is a mother of an elementary-aged daughter. She completed a non-traditional teacher preparation program. When Alana thought about ethical teaching, she described

a humanistic approach, a model which is heavily built upon relationships and an understanding that if you have a relationship with somebody then you are more likely to listen to them, because you care about them ... thinking about issues in a way that goes beyond obedience, because it's about relationships and shared responsibility, a collectiveness that some people have and some people don't have. (Alana, Interview 1, 9-25-17)

Alex (pseudonym)

Originally from Tanzania, Alex speaks both English and Swahili. She had taught for 30 years all within the United States, both at the high school level in chemistry as well as at the elementary level in second grade. She has extensive experience with the Montessori philosophy of teaching. She is married and is the mother of a grown daughter. Alex completed a traditional teacher preparation program after getting into teaching in a private school where she learned a great deal on the job in her first few years. She did not plan to be a teacher. Alex very easily conjured many situations that she felt revealed her perspective on ethics, and she provided an

example of an ethical question for teachers, based on the knowledge that there was shortage of paper in her school and her principal asked that teachers conserve it.

Am I going to take some paper from there when I know there is a shortage because I have seen people taking the paper when they know there is a shortage? How can you do that, you know that there isn't any paper, why would you take some and not think about?

Alex connected this to her husband who works in the business world and uses the example of business travel and expensing dinner meeting for five people having spent \$500. Alex explained that she challenged her husband on this point:

How could you spend \$500 if you wouldn't spend this money for five members of the family? No, why would you do that? It's expected. The business people can have these fancy lunches. So, in terms of my colleagues, I know for myself that we are short of paper. Even I am struggling with paper but without the knowledge of my husband I buy it for the school. Now if, say I was in a situation where I didn't have it, what would I do? So, I kind of understand it but it's still unethical. (Alex, Interview 1, 9-29-17)

Ariana (pseudonym)

In her second year of teaching Algebra, Ariana worked in a diverse urban high school, teaching students placed in self-contained special education classes. She speaks both English and Filipino. She completed a traditional teacher preparation program and is working to earn Teacher of Students with Disabilities certification through an online program. Her understanding of ethics was about treating everyone fairly, which did not mean to her that everyone gets the same exact treatment, but rather students were entitled to get what they needed in order to learn effectively. She provided the example of her resource room, "and not giving the exact same test to everyone,

rather, it's me giving nine different tests, because they [the students] are on such different levels" (Ariana, Interview 1, 10-21-17).

Brady (pseudonym)

At the time of this study, Brady had been teaching for three years. He started teaching in a middle school where he taught pre-engineering and application literacy before he moved to teaching in a large urban high school where he currently teaches graphic arts. Brady is married and was expecting his first child. He completed a non-traditional teacher preparation program and keeps in touch with some of the other teachers from his program. He defined ethics as the principles that govern a person's activities: how to conduct oneself to represent the roles and responsibilities about the job that an individual has been given. Brady described that:

as a teacher I am a public figure, representing both the high school and the district in the way that I conduct myself. These principles should be based on the responsibilities and the culture of the position, as a teacher, this is the responsibility for children. This includes preparing students to be successful and to navigate in the world, understanding how to complete certain tasks and also the rationale behind why is it necessary.

Professional ethics include many rules and responsibility of the position and also knowing what's right and what's wrong and engaging when to do what's right and not to do if wrong, if that make sense. (Brady, Interview 1, 11-4-17)

Brady made the distinction as well between his personal ethics for teaching, which include illuminating for students why they should do the things that they do.

Charlotte (pseudonym)

As a second-grade inclusion teacher, Charlotte had been teaching for 12 years, many of which were in a co-teaching setting. Her initial desire was to be a school psychologist, but when Charlotte decided to become a classroom teacher, she enrolled and completed a traditional teacher preparation program. She spent her career in the same district but moved between two urban schools in which the vast majority of the students were Hispanic and English Language Learners (ELLs). Charlotte is engaged to be married. Charlotte grew up Catholic and went to parochial school from pre-K to high school.

Professional ethics are about doing the right things the right way, not just when somebody is looking, not just because you are getting paid, but about doing what's right, doing what's expected, and superseding those expectations. For teaching this is first and foremost making sure students are happy, healthy, and learning. This includes reflecting on practice and being honest with oneself and doing what's best for all the people involved, including family, friends, and/or the classroom of students, something that can be simple and complicated at the same time. There is also an aspect of staying centered, cutting out the noise and the negativity and staying positive, just doing one's job and just being a good person when no one is looking. (Charlotte, Interview 1, 9-16-17)

Edward (pseudonym)

From a large family of teachers, Edward at first avoided teaching but ultimately succumbed to joining the profession. Edward was in his third year teaching biology in an urban high school. He is originally from Kenya, is married, and has three school-aged daughters. He completed an alternative route program for obtaining his certification and he keeps in touch with others from his program, as well as the mentor who was a professor of his during his first year of

teaching. Edward saw the professional ethics of teaching about “doing what you are supposed to do when you are supposed to do it, and it’s about how you carry yourself, how you associate with your students, how you associate with other teachers, how you handle conflicts that arise” (Edward, Interview 1, 10-2-17).

Emma (pseudonym)

A teacher for six years, Emma has been teaching students with and without disabilities in an elementary special education setting. She is from Portugal and is an English Language Learner (ELL); her significant other is a teacher as well. Emma was in her second year at her current school, in a suburban high-performing district. She began her career teaching in a low-performing urban district and would have continued in this district, just at another school, until she discovered that by moving to a suburban school, she would make close to \$10,000 more than in her previous district. Emma described ethical practice as something that can be complicated to navigate. She used the example of bullying and how it presents an epic dilemma for bystanders, something she discussed with her students especially:

... because, we don’t know if you should stand up for that person because you know it’s the right thing to do, or you also have self-interest and you don’t want to get involved because it might affect you in a negative way, right? So, I think how I would define professional ethics is, ethics that have been professionally set for you. But I think that, many times, it’s your personal ethics that clash with the professional ethics. For example, the process in special education is one in which you may know it isn’t necessarily beneficial for a student. That’s my personal ethics playing into it, I know what my professional duties are and what I’m held to and what my job description is professionally. But then, personally, I don’t agree. Professionally, technically, your

contract says one thing. And your procedures are in place and you do what you're supposed to do in this one way. But, if and when I don't agree with something, because I think it's ethically or morally wrong, if I can get away with it, I will do it. I won't follow policy. (Emma, Interview 1, 9-30-17)

Laura (pseudonym)

Prior to becoming a teacher, Laura earned her PhD in science. She had been teaching high school biology for three years in a large urban high school, and at her current school for two years. Laura spent her first year of teaching in a very challenging public charter school. She is married and spends a great deal of extra professional time after school hours encouraging and supporting her students to apply to college, helping them with their standardized test preparation and college applications, and gently pushing them to achieve more and consider a wider array of future options. Laura's view of professional ethics was the decisions that she made related to her job and, particularly, with the students. She believed that her professional ethics were largely based on the way she was raised and her desire to help her students be successful. Laura was committed to working with students from an urban population and has a strong belief that for teachers, this does not mean having just pity but an understanding that they have not been trained the way that students have been in suburban schools with parents who are going to make them sit down starting in the first grade to do their homework at night (Laura, Interview 1, 10-28-17).

Meg (pseudonym)

A teacher for over 18 years, Meg taught in the same district for her entire career, with the exception of a semester spent teaching in Hawaii. She is a self-contained special education teacher working with students with moderate disabilities at the elementary level. Meg's students come from a mix of Hispanic, African American, Islamic, and Middle Eastern backgrounds.

Currently she teaches first grade. Meg is married and has two children. In making ethical decisions in her practice, she described utilizing all negative, positive, and neutral experiences in her professional life but also in her personal life, and knowing the expectations of the group that she works for and works with. Meg distinguished teachers' intentional decisions and the range of motivations that lie behind them. For example, she characterized some of her decisions as "decisions for the better" in which the outcome is geared towards the student's growth and learning. Meg explained that sometimes she found herself in situations in which her ideal decisions that would be "for the better" of the student is not possible in the moment. When those situations have arisen, and Meg described assessing the options and determining that the stakes are too high to act in favor of a student's growth. In those instances. Meg said she will take time to reflect upon options to ensure she can cultivate growth for the student in the future, even if the results will not be apparent in the current moment as opposed to later. She considers herself a very observant person who watches events and people very closely, and she adapts accordingly whether it is a student colleague or district leader that she is working with on a particular student issue. Meg's mindset about making ethical decisions is that if she couldn't get what she thought was right based on her experiences and expectations, then she laid the groundwork to ensure it could eventually happen because she acknowledged that all things do not happen when she would prefer. There were times Meg described having to be patient and employ wait time, something she had reconciled to be not necessarily a bad thing. Even though Meg often thought that something might be right in the moment, she would remind herself that perhaps wait time might be required, and in so doing, something better might happen later.

Olive (pseudonym)

Prior to becoming a teacher, Olive was an assistant teacher for many years in a preschool program. She also worked in sales in California for many years. After she divorced and became a single parent to her son, Olive decided to make a career change into teaching. She has taught kindergarten for four years in a suburban very progressive school. Olive also teaches a night class at the local community college to second language learners. She thinks a great deal about her college students and often imagines what her kindergarteners might need when they become college students. In her view, ethical decisions play out in her classroom when she has to choose what's best for her students, something that is a little risky when this translates into making decisions that place what the parents want or what the curriculum says at a lower priority. Olives described this as her job beyond my job, her true higher calling, an obligation underneath, a professional ethic, but one that sometimes can be really tricky.

Rebecca (pseudonym)

Originally from Canada, Rebecca is a single mother and has a son and a daughter. She is in her third year of teaching science in an urban high school, where she is one of three White teachers in the school. Rebecca's students are predominantly from under-represented groups, and she teaches a high percentage of English language learners (ELLs). Rebecca shared that her son and daughter attend private Catholic schools, which often proves to be a challenge with differing holiday schedules than the public school in which she works. Rebecca went back to school to become a teacher, went through a divorce, and obtained her citizenship all within the last three years, and she observed that a great deal of her development as a teacher accompanied these changes in her own personal life. For Rebecca, professional ethics in teaching are the standards and the guidelines to be followed; however, within that, just like within any set of laws, there's

room for interpretation. In Rebecca's view, one must figure out the culture of the school and how people are interpreting it and then find out the interpretation one can live with. In her particular case, Rebecca thought that she had improved over the past few years figuring out what administration wants, being at a level she is comfortable with and at a level that students respect as well (i.e., students know what they can and can't get away with and they are aware of which teachers going to give them hundreds no matter what their effort is) (Rebecca, Interview 1, 10-28-17).

Tatianna (pseudonym)

At the time of this study, Tatianna was in her second year of teaching in an urban district. She teaches in a self-contained special education classroom with students with severe autism who often have to be moved to more restrictive school settings. During this study, Tatianna moved into a bilingual placement, which proved to be an adjustment. She ultimately needed to take time off from teaching due to multiple professional challenges. Tatianna also went on leave during her first year of teaching after being physically injured by one of her students. She returned to her classroom before the conclusion of this study. Tatianna defined professional ethics as a Hippocratic Oath of teachers, something tied to her pedagogy. Tatianna believed that "it all comes down to how she should treat her students, a professionalism, a standard to uphold, and ethics are about how to navigate that standard" (Tatianna, Interview 1, 9-14-17).

Data Collection Procedures

At the start of this study, I sought permission from the Internal Review Board (IRB) to explore this area of research with human subjects. Each participant was provided with the option to participate (or not) in both the research study as well as any publication that is an outgrowth of this study. In order to protect the privacy of the participating teachers who volunteered to be a

part of this study, I audio-recorded all interviews and kept audio files on an external hard drive. I utilized a transcription service, and prior to upload, I de-identified the participants' names and the file names. I reviewed, downloaded, and kept on file the transcription service website disclaimer about protection of confidentiality. I asked each participating teacher to choose a pseudonym and used this pseudonym consistently used throughout in memos, field notes, and the researcher's journal. I used a password-protected phone and computer to exchange all text messages and e-mails from participants and deleted them after transferring them to a word document, where the information was redacted before being housed on the external hard drive. I reassured all participants that there will not be any repercussions from having been open with me during this study, and reminded them of this at the start and completion of each interaction.

In order to capture how participating teachers considered, reflected upon, and described ethical practice, the primary method of data collection for my study was interviewing these teachers about how they thought and felt about the ethical decisions they made in their professional practice. DeMarrais (2004) suggested that interviewing is "a process in which a researcher and participant engage in a conversation focused on questions" that are related to the focus of the research study at hand (p. 55). In addition to two semi-structured 60–90-minute interviews, participating teachers were asked to make note of critical incidents from their practice, which will be further explained in a following section. The goal of the critical incidents was to provide further information supplied directly from events that occurred in the participating teachers' practice during the day about how they made meaning of their daily decisions and the ethical implications that participants may have identified, noticed, and reflected upon.

First Semi-Structured Interviews

In this study, the first semi-structured, audio-recorded interviews were conducted with the 12 participants between September and November 2017. Each of these interviews took place in the participating teachers' classrooms, at local coffee shops, at the park, and one interview took place via Skype. I focused on asking participants about their experiences as teachers, about their relationships with colleagues and students, and their reasons for choosing the teaching profession. The purpose of this interview was to establish trust and rapport with participants and to gain a more complete sense of their teaching context. Additionally, a few questions in this first interview addressed their knowledge of and their perceptions about what ethics means to them, what the professional ethics of teaching consist of, and how they described any illustrations of ethical decision making in their professional practice. I avoided limiting professional practice to only classroom examples in order to ensure that participants could identify ethical decisions and issues that pertained to their experiences as teachers extending beyond the classroom (e.g., to families, administrations, and colleagues). Guiding questions were geared towards establishing how these teachers defined professional ethics and the ways in which they perceived issues of this nature that arise as they moved through their teaching day. I tried to remain flexible with the format of the questions in the first interview in order to allow time to get acquainted and build trust and rapport (Merriam, 2009).

I tried to obtain a picture of the participants' typical day, what activities they engaged in, what events transpired often, and what their contextual experiences typically were in their school and districts. In doing so, I focused on what methodologists like Patton (2002) describe as "experience questions." Experience questions tend to provide space for participants to expand upon the context, their thinking about events and interactions in rich detail. Thus, the three main

guiding questions in first interview were as follows: (a) The focus of this research is in “professional ethics” but it can be such a complicated idea in practice. Even defining it has been a challenge, so how you think about that for yourself (i.e., What do you think professional ethics are? How would you define professional ethics?); (b) What are the issues within their school from their perspective? What kind of issues does your school face? What are they? How are decisions made at your school? Are there any decisions that are made that impact you and your teaching? Are there decisions that you'd like to make but can't? Can you share an example?) (c) Since teachers make a multitude of decisions a day, the third area of questioning focused on asking participants to describe the hardest parts of teaching for them. What makes this aspect challenging for you? How do you go about making difficult decisions? Can you tell me about a situation in which you made a difficult decision? What made it difficult? Why did you make the decision you did? Thinking back now, early in your career did you ever made a decision that now you would have acted differently? What informs your thinking?” This last line of questioning was intended to help illuminate any differences in what participants' responses might reflect about the line between *good* versus *ethical* practice, or similarly perceptions between *bad* versus *unethical* practice.

Critical Incidents

Critical incidents have been used in many disciplines, including education, and was originally developed in the Air Force for the selection of qualified candidates (Flanagan, 1954; La Mare & Sohbat, 2002). Angelides (2001) suggested that it is important to avoid associating the word *critical* with too much meaning because ultimately critical incidents could be very minor, almost incidental events that happen in the educational setting. Similarly, Tripp (2012) posited that critical incidents provide the chance for reflection upon very mundane daily events

that occur routinely—something that prompts essential understandings about the meaning of what is likely happening below the surface of events themselves. I chose to use critical incidents as opportunities for participants to take notice of seemingly minor events that might give insight into practice and provide reflection. Tripp (1993) acknowledged that using critical incidents as a reflective tool in teaching “comes from history where it refers to some event or situation which marked a significant turning point or change in life of a person” (p. 24).

For the sake of convenience, as well as authenticity, I asked participants to record these small events, dilemmas, or lingering questions they had about their practice using their preferred mode of recording (i.e., Google Docs, scratch paper, text message, voice memos, e-mails, journal entries, etc.) over the span of a month following the first interview. I provided specific guidance to participants: There were no length requirements and these moments are typically not melodramatic incidents, but rather more mundane events (Tripp, 2012). I shared with participants an example Tripp detailed in his book in which a teacher begins to think more deeply about his relationship to power and the message it sends his students when he began to recognize that in other classes, students are not required to ask for permission to use the restroom, yet he has always previously required permission. I was clear with participating teachers that there really was no required format for critical incidents nor were there topics that were off limits. Instead, their reflections, dilemmas, or questions about their ethical practice could be as open ended or as specific as they desired.

The teachers recorded their daily moments that lingered in their minds beginning in October 2017 and continued throughout the spring of 2018 using a variety of modes. Some provided small daily moments that made them feel uncomfortable in some way and on which they did not have time to reflect in the moment. Others jotted down small notes about incidents

that they wanted to discuss later, events in which participants had mixed feelings about their actions, or the actions of colleagues or students' family members. At first these began to trickle in, and then the momentum picked up. Some participating teachers sent me critical incidents regularly, others sporadically. Some teachers sent upwards of 10 critical incidents that we discussed thoroughly in the second semi-structured interview. Other participants identified only a few incidents and reflected mainly on minor daily occurrences that they felt related to or resonated with particular ethical aspects of their practice that they did not think to speak about in the first interview but took notice of afterwards. I coded these participants' critical incidents in NVIVO and added these to the collection of participants data from their first semi-structured interviews. The second interview opened with a discussion of the critical incidents and how they were or were not connected to what we discussed during the first interview.

Some of the participants' critical incidents (featured in Chapter 4: Findings) punctuated an area of concern that participating teachers described about their ethical practice. I found them to be an effective source of data. Critical incidents presented the chance of uncovering hidden meanings of what may be less noticeable or taken for granted at first look (Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2011). Participants agreed that after doing this reflective exercise, there were indeed events that were not very dramatic or even obvious that provided windows into meaning making (Tripp, 1993). One participant failed to send any critical incident but was apologetic and explained unforeseen life circumstances were overwhelming. Although the critical incidents were primarily collected through e-mails and text messages over a series of months beginning in September 2017 and concluding in April 2018, I have received a few since that time when three of the participants have continued to reach out, something I clarified that I welcomed during the final interview at the conclusion of the study.

Second Interview

Conducted between January and March 2018, these second round of interviews took place at participating teachers' schools, at their homes, at my office or home, or by phone. After initial rounds of listening with the *Listening Guide* and completing open coding of my own accord after the initial interview and receiving some critical incidents from participants, it became clear that ethical meaning making is complex. Applying Gilligan's round of analysis in which I created "I poems" from the initial interview transcriptions was particularly illuminating and helped form the basis of the second interview (Debold, 1990). I allotted 60–90 minutes for each of the 12 participants to clarify data presented in the first-round interviews, including sharing some of their I poems with participants. This was a way to check for validity of the I poems by testing out the accounts in the I poems through member checking with key informants at the time of the second interview. I first provided a brief overview of Gilligan's *Listening Guide* method to the participating teachers at the start of the second interview. I also printed the I poem for the participating teachers prior to their second interview and provided them with a copy to keep after they reviewed it. I asked them to tell me what they thought about reading the I poem, what they noticed, and whether they felt it reflected what they shared either in the first interview or one of their critical incidents. Their reactions were consistently that they were shocked by how the I poem accurately reflected the emotions they were feeling and highlighted the affective components of the stories they shared when the more superfluous language was removed and only I statements remained. A few participants were clear that this technique highlighted the internal tensions they felt in these moments when they experienced conflict.

I always asked about the accuracy of the depiction in the I poem during this final interview. As Maxwell (2010) suggested, it is critical to "rule out specific plausible alternatives

and threats to your interpretations and explanations” (p. 281). Initially when designing this study, I did not anticipate that I would be doing the data analysis for each participating teacher for the first interview, and in many cases the critical incidents as well and sharing it with the participants and soliciting feedback regarding accuracy, but I am immensely grateful that the study evolved in this way. I was compelled to share my initial data analysis with my participants to get their read on their statements, and it was a very helpful process. This final interview allowed for more than simply updates; participants provided direct feedback regarding the I poems, as well as weighed in on the initial findings emerging at the time. Finally, participating teachers also expressed interest in this methodology and wanted to know more about how to follow the process of a voice-centered, relational method (Brown & Gilligan, 1991, 1992). I sent a few participants an article detailing the *Listening Guide* and the steps involved in creating I poems. A few of the participants expressed interest in trying to use the Listening Guide in their own practice and wanted to continue to collect critical incidents as a reflective tool. In summary, member checking proved helpful at this point in the study, and many participants expressed positive interest in the methodology used.

Data Analysis

I used Gilligan’s *Listening Guide* to assist in the facilitation of meaning making among participants about their daily decisions that have ethical considerations. This method aided in understanding what these 12 teachers were communicating with me during this study, on their terms, from their points of view, candidly sharing what they struggle with regarding ethical practice daily—essentially, what keeps them up at night. As Gilligan and Eddy (2017) explained, “the act of listening is not straightforward. What is said directly may differ from what is implied.

People can say seemingly contradictory things, like children can both love and hate their parents, and everything said is not of equal weight or value” (p. 77).

Gilligan's *Listening Guide* outlines three consecutive listenings. The first listening is focused on attending to plot, who are the characters both speaking and being spoken about, what are the themes, metaphors, images and emotional language being used. The second listening is referred to as the *Listening for "I" and first-person voice*, and at this state, an I poem is created by separating out each I phrase in order of appearance. The third listening is known as the *Listening for counterpointal voices*, which “attends to the participants voice not for its content or themes but for its quality or musicality. This means listening for different voices and their interplay, or harmonies or dissonances within the psyche, tensions with parts of itself” (Gilligan & Eddy, 2017, p. 79). Generally, there are four questions about voice and relationships that are recommended by Gilligan to pay specific attention to look for, so during data analysis at each stage, I took detailed notes in my research journal delineating as much as I could identify regarding (a) who is speaking to whom, (b) in what body or physical space, (c) telling what stories about which relationships, and (d) in what societal and cultural frameworks (Gilligan & Eddy, 2017 p.77)?

Listening for Plot

As recommended, I listened closely to each audio recording four times. During the first round of listening, I attended to the plot of the story that each participant described, as Gilligan (1982; Gilligan & Eddy, 2017) outlined. Experimenting with various transcription methods helped with this process, along with listening multiple times to the audio recordings of the interviews. Taking notes helped to provide a detailed account of the characters, the context in which event transpired. Similarly, it was useful to assign basic codes in NVIVO about the plot of

the stories participants shared (see Table 3.2 for the top 20 of 80 total initial list of codes that emerged after the first semi-structured interviews and collection of critical incidents). It was an effective approach for tackling the first round of Gilligan's *Listening Guide*. From the outset of this process, deciphering how participants contemplated ethical practice as opposed to simply their practice in general was challenging. At times, during the review of the first round of interview results and listening closely to the plot, I often thought to myself, "Why didn't I specifically ask, 'What are the ethical aspects of the scenario you described?'" It was at this point that I added this question to the second interview in hopes of recursively circling back to some of the first interview results for clarification.

Table 3.2

List of Top 20 Open Codes after Initial Interview and Critical Incidents

Node Name	References
Assessment/Testing/Grading	77
At-Risk Students	44
Boundaries (Establishing and Maintaining)	35
Breaking the Rules	37
Communication with Others	168
Classroom Management	34
Decisions with Ethical Implications	92
Differentiation	47
Different Cultural Expectations of Teaching and Learning	23
English Language Learners	21
Fairness	28
Helping Students After School	21
Inappropriate Placement of Students with IEPs	57
Influence on Students	52
Learning Pedagogically How to Teach From Students	24
Motivation	25
Negotiations—Student Credit	17
Obligation	26
Relationships	21
Supposed to/Should (Ideals and Living up to Them)	32

Ultimately, I identified and labeled 18 different affective codes. When participants described scenarios from their daily practice, they expressed a wide range of emotions (i.e., moments in which their voices rose by octaves, expressed laughter, voice volumes increased when participants became animated recounting stories in great detail, and when participants cried). I noted these moments when listening to the recordings repeatedly and then highlighted them in the transcriptions, noting the emotion(s) expressed with a simple word (e.g., anger, empathy, guilt, pride). After loading all first-round semi-structured interview transcriptions into NVIVO, I reviewed each again. I listened to each recording and followed the transcription, fixing transcription errors as I went. I stopped often and entered most of the handwritten notes indicating these affective codes into NVIVO. There were a handful of examples in which I was torn about whether I had used accurate labels of the emotion being expressed. For these, I asked my critical friend to review. Afterward, we discussed potential alternative codes. I then took this back to the 12 participating teachers in their second semi-structured interview for clarification of affective code. After I collected critical incidents and conducted the second semi-structured interview, more codes emerged, and the number of instances of the same codes multiplied.

After the conclusion of the additional rounds of listening that Gilligan's *Listening Guide* recommends (described later in this chapter), I did a consolidation exercise to identify areas where codes could be collapsed more succinctly. This was particularly helpful when there were instances of overlapping codes, or very similar codes that reflected ambiguity and possible emotions. There were times when participating teachers expressed hesitancy, stammered, or started to speak and then stopped; sometimes they tried to start over speaking again, and at other times they would apologize for not starting again, saying they felt like they had never spent as

much time in depth thinking through some of the situations they described and needed to think more about them to process the events and their feelings. Gilligan's *Listening Guide* proved to be an effective method in this regard. Consolidation and collapsing of codes occurred through recognition when listening and reading another time, as well as printing all codes and doing a categorization exercise. Later re-questioning of participants' intonations and word choices helped to clarify what they described and how these moments in their practice really affected them. It was a messy process at times, given that the incidents that were most puzzling were often difficult for participants to describe; they struggled to find the right words to clarify and explain, even in the second semi-structured interviews. Capturing meanings and the reasons behind pauses would sometime become more apparent in follow-up e-mails or texts when teachers could better articulate how they felt after time spent in reflection. With processing time, they found clarity enough to articulate their feelings and meanings behind the emotions.

I later came across a quote when reading about analyzing discourse in Strauss (2005), who detailed a phenomenon referred to as "emotional and motivational hotspots" This struck a chord after spending months coding stories and descriptions that participants shared. Strauss detailed how she used these as places in her data to enter into a more fine-grained level of analysis to capture the speakers' meaning, sometimes including ambivalence. While Strauss did not utilize Gilligan's *Listening Guide*, her statement helped affirm for me during this analysis process that there is a value in the identification of affective codes, almost as markers to return to when engaged in the meaning-making process. They signaled places to puzzle through again for potential signs and explanations of meaning during the analysis process. Similarly, I reviewed Quinn's (2010) work, and found similarities in the data collected in this study and what Quinn referred to as areas of expression in dialogue—the pauses, sighs, and hesitations described as—

“verbal fumbling.” Quinn (2010) suggested that the researcher should focus on these areas of the data for deeper analysis. She explained that linguistic features such as shifts in pronoun from “I” to “you” to “they” signify the speakers’ internal conflicting positions and feelings on a subject, signified by the speaker switching voices. While I intentionally followed the process laid by Gilligan in her *Listening Guide*, there were specific aspects at times during this study that resonated with other researchers and other approaches that signaled a hybrid approach. I chose to follow suggestions by both Strauss (2005) and Quinn (2010) to identify any emergent emotional “hotspots,” along with any details about tone of voice that may have helped uncover or assess the emotional tone. In total, 18 distinct emotional codes or hotspots were identified (see Table 3.3). Overall, these codes were referenced 186 times throughout the 24 semi-structured interviews and the 30 critical incidents collected. The identification and definitions of codes evolved throughout the study. There was a fluid and recursive examination of the labeling and meaning of each of these codes as they related to participants’ descriptions provided both initially during the first semi-structured interview and then again later in many cases when participants were asked to provide clarification in the second semi-structured interview or during member checks performed later in the study.

It is noteworthy to point out that these hotspots became points of reentry in the data analysis process. They offered insight into participants’ thinking and feelings, particularly the moments of ambivalence or descriptions of feeling torn. These expressions required multiple visits back into the audio recordings of participants’ accounts and dialogues that could provide more details regarding tone, tenor, and cadence of voice that always offered clues to meaning. Because the *Listening Guide*, at its core, is focused on trying to uncover meanings, that is, to really hear what participants are trying to convey, I found the approaches by both Strauss (2005)

and Quinn (2010) to be usefully complementary to Gilligan (1982) in this endeavor. The blending of these approaches signifies a hybrid methodological approach to analysis used in conducting this study.

Table 3.3

Emotional Affective Codes and References

Emotion/Affect Code	186 References
Aggressive	2
Anger	30
Appreciation	5
Defensive	22
Fear/Scared	9
Felling Torn	10
Frustrated/Upset	77
Guilt/Regret	31
Ill-Prepared	9
Nervous/Anxious	12
Patient	8
Pride (“Tears of Joy”)	14
Sad/Disappointed	25
Satisfied/Enjoy Work	22
Empathy	7
Stunned/Shocked	4
Unappreciated	11
Uncertain	49
Uncomfortable	11

It is important to note that I employed an open coding strategy in NVIVO simultaneously with Gilligan’s *Listening Guide*. I was curious to compare the process and results of open coding while engaged in using the *Listening Guide* (Gilligan, 1982) for interpreting data, thusly challenging my previous understandings of the value of open coding, methodology, and potential findings. I found open coding helpful for the identification of common trends amongst the types

of dilemmas that the twelve teacher participants described. Open coding did facilitate some understandings in the data analysis process. For example, early on in the data collection process I was hearing a variety of different emotions expressed across participants, which led to coding these. Overall, using the open coding technique served as a way in which to approach the same data with a different technique to determine if similar or different patterns emerged. It helped me to identify places in the data where it was important to member check, re-evaluate and re-analyze for possible alternative findings, suggestions and explanations.

A few of the top 20 codes of the 80 generated overall, through open coding overlapped, which was neither helpful nor problematic. I reached out to critical friends at this stage to talk through and clarify areas of overlap, interesting patterns and puzzling occurrences that I could not theorize (e.g., “Negotiations—Student Credit” “Effort,” and “Assessment, Testing, and Grading”). When combined, these codes totaled over 100 instances. Additionally, there were some patterns that emerged (e.g., “Obligation” and “supposed to/should”) that contrasted to references about “Breaking the Rules.” Third, a trend appeared with regard to teachers’ consistent references to anger and guilt over “Inappropriate Placements for Students with IEP” and inherent lack of services where students were concerned, particularly with “English Language Learners (ELLs)” and “At Risk Students,” notably also mentioned over 100 times. Trends emerged pertaining to the tensions that participating teachers described feeling in moments of conflict with respect to pedagogical practice, navigation relationships with others, and the communication surrounds these relationships, at which students were always the center of focus.

Even at this stage during the first round of interviews, while listening for plot and coding these in NVIVO, it became evident that for the participating teachers in this study, a host of

factors were at play in any given ethical situation that emerged in their professional practice.

Table 3.4 represents the considerations that emerged. Participating teachers frequently referred to district policies, legal issues, administration's views, public perception, professional integrity, family upbringing, personal beliefs, pedagogical principles, colleagues' opinions, beliefs held by students' family members, and school culture as distinct considerations.

Table 3.4.

Teachers' Ethical Considerations

Ethical Considerations
Personal Beliefs Family Upbringing Integrity Concern for Student Colleagues Opinions Pedagogical Principals School Culture Administrator's Views District Polices Legal Issues Public Perception

These considerations provided some clues to participating teachers' ethical concerns and the competing influences they experienced, but it was unclear how these interacted with one another or the role that they played in the teachers' meaning-making process. At this stage, the following question emerged: How do these items factor into teachers' considerations of ethical practice? This informed my approach in the second interview. In some ways, these considerations acted as signposts that emerged as participants articulated instances in which they struggled to make sense of their own or others' actions described in the first interviews.

First Person Voice and I Poems

What is an I poem? After I first listening to get a sense of what was happening in these teachers' stories (i.e., the plot). I attended to how the "I" or first-person voice moved across the terrain during the second round of listening (Gilligan & Eddy, 2017). Listening for the first-person voice provides a chance to hone in on the subtler emotional resonances that emerged in many of the participating teachers' narratives. In order to illustrate how the *Listening Guide* method helps to attend to voice and relationship, I include in the following an example regarding how many of the teachers struggled with determining what is the right boundary with student relationships, as well as how to best maintain appropriate professional relationships with students once a student has gotten too close. This pass through the data is helpful for exploring to first person perspectives, feelings and inner thoughts as well as outer actions. By comparing the transcription of Edward's reflection on the tensions he felt between the need to establish trust with students and also keep clear boundaries in place with the I poem crafted from the same text, the *Listening Guide* method is evident.

I'll talk about the manner you carry yourself, how you associate with your student, how you associate with teachers ... It's tough when it comes with—how we carry ourselves, how we interact with students because students want to, one, they want us to build trust with them. The administration expects them. You are required to build trust with these kids so they can tell you things in case something, God forbid, is happening. I mean, you need to have a way of communicating to the kids. But, from the kids' point of view, they really don't know the boundaries. I mean, yes, I talk with you, we joke about most of the things but there are things I cannot do to you I mean, I really can't give you a hug. Okay, yeah, we need to have that boundary. But I really can't tell kids that. They don't know

that personal space. You have girls who come trying and either give a hug or they are way on your personal space and you are like, yeah. I understand what you are trying to do, you are trying to have a conversation, but we need a space. I mean, that's how life is, you just don't walk up somebody's face and have a conversation. I have, like, a rapport with most of my students. You find a previous, a former kid, student, an old part of the classroom community who comes back right into the classroom you are in now teaching and they want to ask you something, or they are upset about something. Like yeah, I understand—but you have to say, I am in the middle of teaching. No, I can't just talk—talking to the kids or doing whatever like me, to kids are for you. I can. But, I'd rather not because now you are putting all your business out there for everybody and now all these kids are listening to you. You don't want that. (Edward, Interview 1, 10-2-17)

Only the first-person statements are kept, and the details fall away when making the I poem. This helps to reveal the feelings of tension that speak to the research question, in this case, how teachers make meaning of ethical practice.

Edward's First I Poem

I'll talk
 I'll talk with you
 I cannot
 I really cannot give you a hug
 But I can't really tell kids that
 I understand
 I mean that is how life is
 I have rapport with most
 I understand
 I am in the middle
 I can't just talk
 I can. But, I'd rather not

The emotional resonance is highlighted and punctuates how Edward described his struggles daily in his interactions with his students. Below, I underlined the “I” statements in the transcription. It

illustrates how the I poem is crafted. As the I poem took shape, various aspects of the struggle Edward experienced began to emerge. Elements are revealed that explain why he chose to keep students at arm's length and why he encourages groups of students to come for help after school. Ultimately, Edward will not be alone with students for fear of any opportunities in which an allegation of improper conduct could occur and leave him vulnerable without other students to provide a verifying account.

I just have to take care of myself. So, I am like I know because I see in the news all the time and it's a big thing. So, I'm like yeah, I'm just going to protect myself and protect you because you don't want to be with a kid and then she goes and say something. So, that's one thing I try to do most, have them come in. I'm not saying to hurry them. Come, come, come after school. If you don't want me to help you, just come, sit down, get a computer, I'll babysit you because that's how I call it. Just come, I'll babysit you because kids cannot be in the room by themselves. They need an adult. So, I am like if you have math issues, just come sit at the back. I may know how to help you out, so ask. Or if you can't ask, sit at the back, do your work and then go home because I am going to be here anyway so, I would rather have a bunch of kids. And kids like coming in because they will come in, we'll listen, we talk, play some Kenyan music and they'll like it or hate it and then we'll talk. Knowing they hate my music, I'll put some of the bad music they listen to and then they're like no, no, no that's not fair. I'm like yeah, I didn't hear. And we just joke around but in the long run, I have many students in the room. (Edward, Interview 1, 10-2-17)

Edward's Second I poem

I just have to
I am
I know
I see in the news
I'm just going to protect myself
I try
I'll babysit you
I call it
I'll babysit you
I may
I am going
I would
I have many students
I'll put
I'm like yeah,
I didn't hear
I have many students

In his mind, he imagines himself on the news, a story featured about teachers who have been accused of improper contact with students, something he witnessed with a colleague at his school. It is the I poem that reveals the thoughts and feelings that surround and inform this choice to navigating the tensions of student relationships. As Chapter 4 will outline, Edward experiences a tension between his desire to be caring to his students, and the desire to adhere to policies that delineate teacher student boundaries. He also struggled to navigate his fears of possible negative perceptions. Edward pictured the worst-case scenario of being a news story. As a part of this data analysis process, I discussed at least one I poem with each participant. They were the emotional hotspots that served as flags marking the path for reentry into the data.

Contrapuntal Analysis

When employing Gilligan's *Listening Guide*, it is critical to get to the root of what is being said, or even what is not being said, something that traditional research methods fail to do;

instead they keep the cultural frameworks in place (Gilligan, 2018). After doing the contrapuntal analysis of the same passage highlighted above, the tensions became apparent in Edward's explanation of the complexity of the situations that involve interaction with students that he views as needing a father figure and attention from a male teacher that is known as caring and compassionate. By identifying "You," "I" and "They" (see Figure 3.1) in the language used, tensions are further revealed in the contrapuntal analysis. The interplay, illuminated this by the shift in voice from "I" to "you" to "they" revealed that Edward is clearly able to see these issues from multiple perspectives. These perspectives include (a) his students' perspectives, (b) his own perspective as the teacher "in the middle," (c) his administrators, who acknowledge how essential it is for positive teacher and student relationships, and (c) the outsiders' perspective who might judge from afar as "the public."

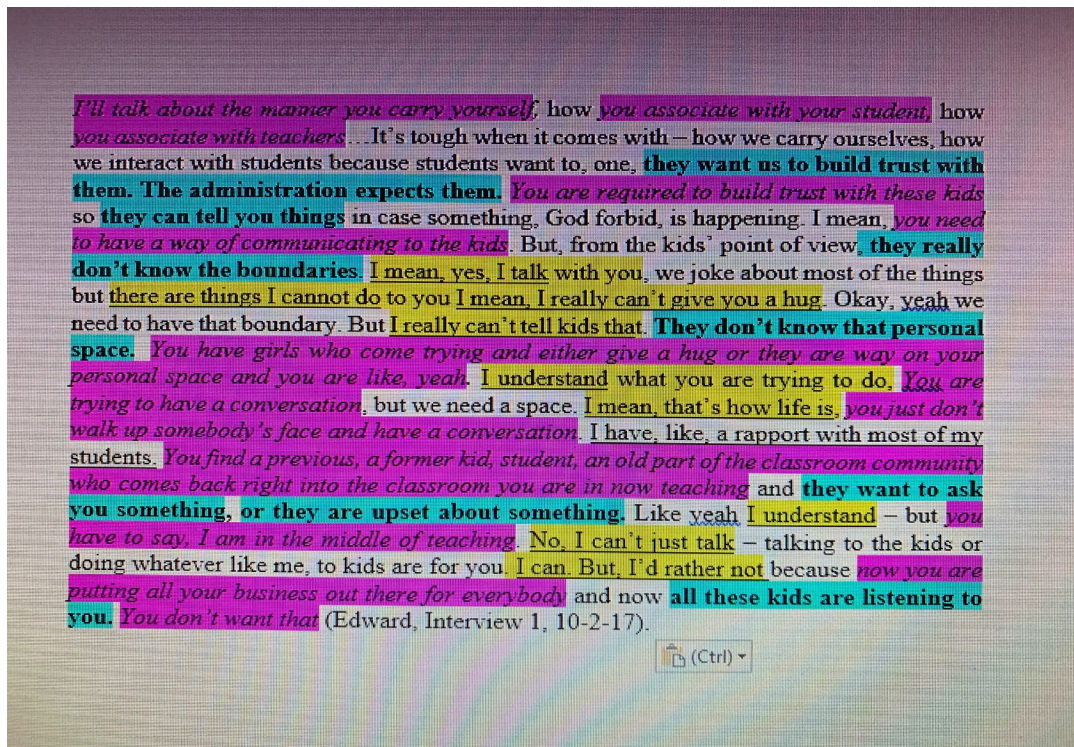


Figure 3.1 Contrapuntal analysis of Edward's same passage

Edward's perception of a judging public is real in his mind and represents the cases he himself has heard about firsthand, as well as the more distanced cases of teachers who have either been accused or who have been convicted of having inappropriate student teacher relationships. It should be noted that this public operates with limited information or understanding; the truth in the matter is almost irrelevant. Finally, this example helps to delineate the one additional aspect of the hybrid nature of this study's methodology. While Gilligan's *Listening Guide* method was effective for uncovering many elements that subsequently became the findings herein, as Chapter 4 will show, it did not provide all the necessary techniques for actually arriving at findings.

Critical Friends

I began this process by obtaining the commitment of two critical friends who were willing to act as a sounding board and provide feedback during this process, listening for my interpretations of what I hear from participants after I made transcripts of both rounds of interviews. Both critical friends are graduates of the same doctoral program I am enrolled in; they know my thought processes, my potential biases, and me well. I also engaged a critical friend with whom I have attended conferences at the later stages of writing, who read chapters and provided writing feedback along the way. I first engaged in the process of examining my own preconceived ideas about ethical meaning making as a teacher educator in my own practice and asked my two critical friends to read and listen to my initial journal accounts, memos, and overall questions as I puzzled through this work. They would inquire with questions to clarify and explore deeper meanings, challenge assumptions and encourage delving more deeply. In these ways, they provided useful feedback, prompting reflection about my positionality when approaching my own professional practices within an ethical context. My critical friends helped me to examine my expectations and understandings about an event that was highlighted in an

interview or critical incident, that required follow up with the participant who shared the event. In addition, there were situations and incidents that participants described that brought up memories about my own practice, which prompted in-depth critical discussions with my critical friends. It was during a meeting with my critical friends that we decided to map each participant's ethical decision-making points to see if it could help further reveal the ways in which they navigated the ethical considerations they had identified in the semistructured interviews and critical incidents.

Mapping Participants Ethical Decision-Making Points

In order to explore key patterns across participants, it was necessary to first map each participant's tensions within the contexts that they described these ethical challenged in their practice. This produced a series of patterns that, in turn, generated four continua that crossed participants, as described in depth in the next chapter. For me, it was useful to isolate and identify which of the four continua were at play for a participant in a given context. For example, Figure 3.2 illustrates Edward's ethical tensions and how I attempted to represent these various competing tensions in context because it helped to recognize one strand or continuum of tensions as distinct from the others. Imagine three tangled necklaces and trying to disentangle them from one another. Multiple sets of competing tensions were often present within the same scenario, so mapping these tensions for one participant at a time was key to better understanding the complexity of factors at play in any given situation simultaneously. While this is not part of Gilligan's *Listening Guide* per se, Gilligan's method helped to get to this point in the research process. My method of developing themes came out of using Gilligan's *Listening Guide* but not right away or in a linear manner. I kept returning to certain instances in which participating teachers' descriptions of how they wrestled with tensions were hard to clearly articulate because

there was so much going on simultaneously. These competing sets of tensions came into play in varying ways, and participants often articulated mixed feelings because of seeing issues from multiple perspectives.

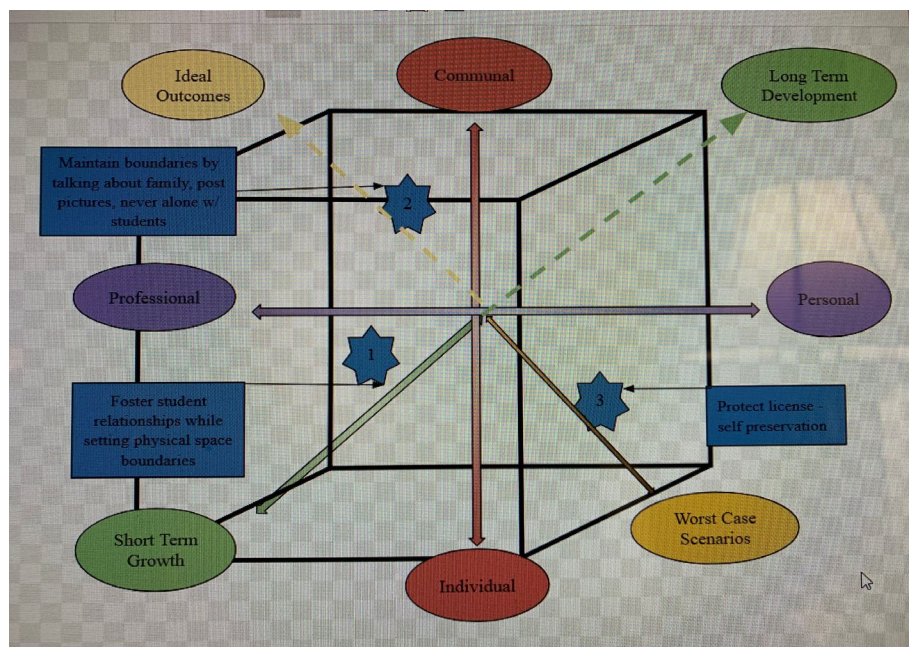


Figure 3.2 Mapping Edward's ethical tension: Navigating student boundaries

Mapping how each participating teacher's descriptions aided in her identification was a critical step in developing themes out of the work that stemmed from Gilligan's *Listening Guide*. In many discussions with my committee chair, I was able to start identifying how these tensions played out differently for the participating teachers when they were faced with ethical issues. This was an important discovery for this study; while it was not a finding, especially since it fell short of helping to illuminate how teachers made sense of their ethical practice, a trend did emerge. It was evident that these factors tended to be at play and were considered carefully by the teachers in this study when they felt conflicted about how to proceed in the situations that they described. *The Listening Guide* was limiting in some respects when moving from analyzing

data to arriving at findings. In addition to my conversations with my committee chair, it was sitting down with my critical friends and talking through the data and what it might suggest about these possible competing tensions, and mapping the tensions together for the first participant that I began to see that there would be value in trying to do this for all participants. While trends and patterns did emerge, Chapter 4 will not include a discussion of all participants in this regard, but rather will highlight a few key examples.

Trustworthiness

Are these findings sufficiently authentic ... that I may trust myself in acting on their implications? More to the point, would I feel sufficiently secure about these findings to construct social policy or legislation based on them? (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 205)

Trustworthiness in this research was ensured by member checking, meeting with critical friends at each stage of the study, and keeping a fieldwork journal to not only record my own reflections on Google Docs but also my own ideas, fears, confusion, and reactions to experiences (Merriam, 2009). As my study progressed, I kept bias and reactivity, or the effect of the researcher, at the forefront of my focus. For example, there were times in which I asked myself, am I focusing too closely on gender here? As a result, I would ask one of my critical friends to listen as I provided an account of the data in which this emerged. Then I would provide the transcription of the interview and ask for my critical friends' take on the same issue. Similarly, I employed member checking with key informants by "systematically soliciting feedback" about data and conclusions from participants in my study (Maxwell, 2010, p. 283). For example, after the first round of interviews, it made a difference to share the participants' I poems with them for their review. Upon examination, participants repeatedly expressed surprise at the degree to which their I poem accurately reflected their thoughts and feelings on the subject at hand. These were essential steps

during the process, that at times in the second interviews proved to be essential to circulate back on to ask about particular statements from the first interviews. Reclarifying “What is the ethical aspect of the decision scenario or dilemma” proved to be essential to decipher what for the participant was the issue at hand for *them*. Staying with participants’ vantage points was another element that required checking in with my committee chair and my critical friends to ensure that I avoided assigning meanings and definitions from the literature about what constitutes *ethical* practice as opposed to just *good* practice in teaching students. Gilligan (1982) outlined that using the *Listening Guide* can help clarify the meanings behind what participants may only allude to or mention briefly as an afterthought, and through repeated listenings. By utilizing this method and member checking in the semi-structured interviews, I attempted to stay true to what participants meant in context of the situations that they described. At times this was a challenge that I addressed by taking a break for a day or two and then attempting another round of listening, as attentively to particular interviews that I found puzzling and contradictory.

My Positionality

I have no personal or professional involvement in the schools in which the study participants are located nor do I have any involvement with the participants themselves. Nonetheless, I considered my positionality throughout this study as a researcher, given it influenced the interpretation of the data. For example, as a past K–12 teacher, I empathized with the dilemmas the participants described, and I often identified with how they chose to react. The trusting relationship that we developed was a necessary one, sharing stories about their practice but also about our families and our backgrounds, and we would share resources that related to some of the topics that emerged during the interviews or correspondence regarding critical incidents. At one point during the study, I noticed that some participants and I had developed

enough rapport that we exchanged text messages back and forth, while other participants and I communicated only through e-mails, a bit more formally. This gave me pause, and I thought a lot about what conditions and factors help facilitate a closer relationship. In the second-round interviews, I tried to pull back a bit with these participants, and draw out the others more so in hopes of being fair.

I consulted Luttrell's (2010) array of memo writing strategies. I settled on her *Memo on Audience: Two Versions* and tried to imagine both a sympathetic and hostile audience for this work and, after interviews, wrote about some of the explicit, more controversial aspects of what participants shared. None were illegal, however there were aspects of some stories that might not be well received. Luttrell (2010) suggested describing one's own set of moral, ethical, and political considerations and the steps necessary to take with possible dilemmas. This assisted as I hit a few issues; for example, when a participant was having a very difficult time, we discussed whether she might consider withdrawing from the study.

In addition, as a researcher, it was important for me to separate out what I believe is best pedagogical practice because there were also times in which I found myself encroaching upon making my own judgments about participants' actions and decisions. Writing about these and their moral and ethical implications was a helpful practice.

How to best keep confidentiality was an issue I thought a great deal about. I was very careful to withhold any reference to participants' identifying information when in professional circles, especially given that a few participants were referred through professional contacts. I reflected on whether I was more empathetic as a past special educator teacher with some of the participants who struggled in their challenging contexts as special educators. At times, this called into question some of my own personal beliefs and views on political considerations in

education. Some dilemmas participants described were not ethical in my view, and yet after re-clarifying, they were insistent that they were of an ethical nature. Teasing apart pedagogical problems of practice versus ethical issues came up repeatedly.

Also, during the course of the study I changed positions and universities, moving from a large public institution to a small, private, Catholic university. Working within a large public context, and then a small Catholic environment caused me to notice how the topic of ethical practice is, or is not, considered and referenced. This shift did cause a slight readjustment in my positionality. Prior to changing contexts, I did not question my own potential assumptions about morality and ethics and the role that they do, or do not, play in higher education. The contrast of moving to a Catholic institution was pronounced. Daily there are references made by students, faculty and administrators alike referring directly to the Franciscan traditions, in the mission of the institution, the program, and goals of fostering competent, caring, and compassionate educators to serve a diverse population by promoting a collaborative spirit, encouraging self-reflection, and emphasizing life-long learning. This has caused me to examine more closely the general education course offerings (e.g., the philosophical orientations of education versus moral and ethical implication in decisions. Having a new daily professional context has prompted me to look at this work and ask if I see anything differently because of this change.

Ethical Issues of Research

There were a few times in which incidents occurred that required checking to verify as a researcher how to best adhere to the principles of ethical research. At one point in the study, one of the participating teachers described an upsetting situation at her school and how it impacted not only her students but also how it influenced her actions afterward. I consulted with my dissertation chair and the language on the participant permission form since it directly referenced

guidelines for coping with stress and emotional discomfort and the participants option to withdraw from the study. This participant chose to ultimately go on medical leave to seek treatment for additional stress she had experienced through events occurring in her school during the time of this study. I again checked and asked if she would like to leave the study to ensure minimizing any additional stress potentially caused by reflecting upon her work environment and its challenges. This participant reported that she would continue in the study, and her second interview was postponed until her return to work after her medical leave.

Inevitably one ethical issue that emerged was hearing from a set of participants who both had teaching positions within the same district and at the same school. This meant I had to be very careful to avoid letting either teacher know I was familiar with the school context, based on this shared context, and that I was a colleague of their principal. I found comparing the experiences of two teachers at the same school dealing with the same school context fascinating and wrote in a memo about how two teachers with the same principal had such different perspectives and ethical challenges in the same shared context. I consulted Luttrell's (2010) *Memo on Audience: Two Versions* in this specific instance. While I would have found it fascinating to have these two participants compare their experiences and how they navigated ethical practice so differently, I went to great lengths to ensure these two teachers' confidentiality, as I have done with all participating teachers in this study. Additionally, one participant is related to a past professional colleague with whom I am very close, so I went to extra lengths to ensure self-censoring when this person asked how my study was going and always was very general stating progress was on-going with no details offered.

Chapter 4 presents findings that were generated from using Gilligan's *Listening Guide* about how these teachers make meaning making of ethical practice. It outlines what I came to

understand about how teachers made meaning of ethical practice in their daily lives, a process that is far from simple. While participating teachers had similar ethical considerations that they took into account, the diversity of ways in which they defined professional ethics provided a clue into the various tensions at play and how these teachers seemed to consider these tensions when reflecting on how to enact ethical practice.

Chapter 4: Continua of Competing Tensions

This chapter presents findings that were generated from using Gilligan's *Listening Guide* discussed in Chapter 3 to examine data gathered through interviews and the teachers' written descriptions of critical incidents. This process of analysis, along with my own general open coding in NVIVO, produced key themes about how these teachers make meaning making of ethical practice. This chapter presents what I came to understand about how teachers made meaning of ethical practice in their daily lives, a process that is far from simple. While participating teachers defined professional ethics in different ways, there were a plethora of common components that these teachers seemed to consider when reflecting on their ethical practice outlined herein.

These participating teachers' descriptions included an ethic of care, Gilligan's (1982) theory that claimed that women have a tendency to emphasize compassion, caring, empathy, and relationships over more abstract concepts such as justice in relation to moral understandings. This chapter highlights ways in which participants described an ethic of care and how it came into play with other components (e.g., the perceptions of others, policy, and legal guidelines) across discrete contexts when teachers make meaning of their practice. Overall, I developed four continua that intersect and together help represent the ways participating teachers negotiated tensions and made meaning of ethical practice. First, there is a continuum that represents, at one end, a professional orientation towards ethics, and at the other end, a more personal orientation of ethical practice. Second, there is also a continuum that signifies how teachers can focus on *short-term* results on one end with regard to students' academic learning, emotional interpersonal and developmental needs are set against students' *long-term* development and growth in these same domains. The third continuum spans honoring the individual as opposed to recognition of

multiple stakeholders involved in ethical practice. Finally, there is a fourth continuum comprising, at one end, a conceptualization of the *ideal* outcomes in any given situation as contrasted by the *worst-case* scenarios imagined along a continuum as described by participants regarding how they made meaning of ethical decision making. Some of these continua come together based on situation, participant, and their context. Not every continuum is at play in every circumstance, but often multiple continua are at play simultaneously. Figure 4.1 represents the four continua.

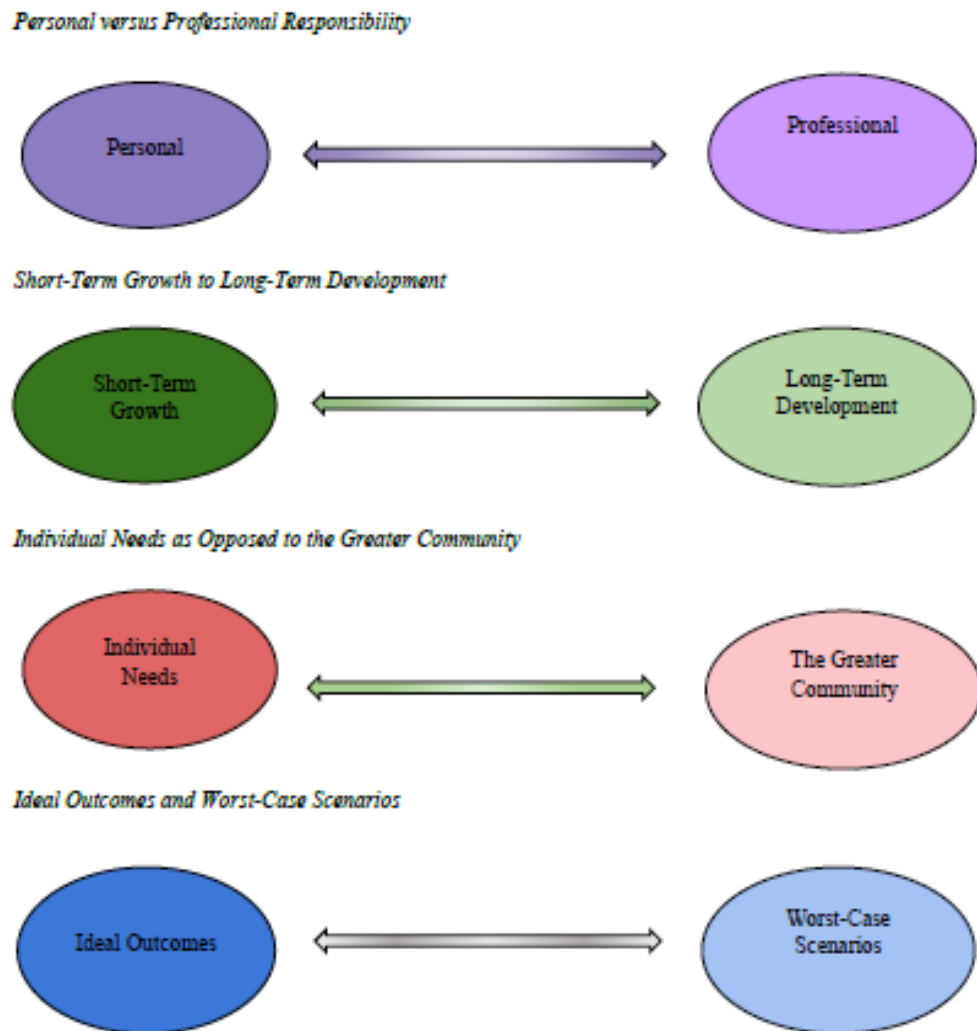


Figure 4.1. Four continua of competing tensions

Admittedly, this chapter focuses a great deal on a few exemplar participants' reflections practice, which is intentional. Rather than providing an immense array of examples that span all 12 participating teachers, my goal is to share a few poignant examples that illustrate the four continua and the ways in which they can overlap and intersect depending on the context and the situation. In the last part of this chapter, one participating teacher's meaning-making process is mapped to help delineate how she deliberated and came to make sense of daily ethical practice. Charting these teacher participants' considerations along these four continua illustrates how the various continua come together in certain contexts and emphasizes the complexity of these teachers' ethical decision making. Highlighting a participant's decision points illustrates the dynamic forcefield of tensions that took shape and varied based on context, participants' growth and development, and students' circumstances, and gave shape to their decision making. Some patterns began to emerge about how this plays together in different ways at various times. For instance, within most ethical dilemmas that participating teachers described, at least two sets of tensions could be found simultaneously. Often participants articulated finding ways to proceed that alleviated tensions on one continuum, but could do little more than keep another continuum of tensions at bay. The argument in this study is not just that there are four continua but that these continua overlap and are interconnected with each other.

In these moments they had to determine how to prioritize and appease these multiple competing sets of tensions. Findings from this study indicated that meaning making may begin in a space that is internal to the participating teacher, framed by their personal sense of morality, but it then moved along the different continua to encompass both internal and external tensions and understandings that inform professional practice and help these participating teachers determine course of action in any given situation. This reflects these teachers' ethical decision-

making process, essentially how these teachers considered and enacted ethical practice. Before delving into the four continua however, the importance of care and its role in ethical practice must first be examined more closely to better understand how it undergirds all aspects of these teachers' practices.

Care-Based Ethics

Ethics in any profession are by definition about shared understandings, communally agreed-upon principles of engagement, codes of involvement that guide actions, and set rules of participation that ensure safety and well-being, productivity, positive learning, and development. Lowenstein's (2008) conceptualization of ethics emphasized maximizing good and minimizing harm and suggested that ethics are an attempt to think critically about human conduct, determining what is right and wrong, what is good and bad. Teaching is often characterized as a humanistic profession that requires kindness, care, compassion, empathy, an understanding of others, and an ability to build connections with a variety of people. Teachers in this study reported that their primary responsibilities are grounded in promoting the well-being and learning of their students. Tensions emerged however when these teachers reported trying to simultaneously advocate for their students' wellbeing while also supporting and enacting the mission of their schools, and/or trying to uphold their own sense of professional standards of excellence.

Throughout this study, participating teachers shared perspectives about the challenges they encountered daily when juggling the curricular and academic tasks of teaching with the relational needs of students with whom they forged relationships, as well as the and expectations of other adults. These teachers articulated a central focus on building and maintaining caring relationships with students as one of the most central and the primary responsibilities of the

teaching profession. Relational concerns were most often articulated as the issues that provided substantive ethical conflicts for these teachers. Care practices went in many directions, emanating out from teachers (i.e., sources of care) to students, from teachers to colleagues (i.e., collective care in a school community), from teachers to families, and even as teachers directed care inward to sustain themselves (i.e., self-care).

All 12 participants mentioned a central grounding in their professional desire and motivation to care for and help students, specified as one of the fundamental responsibilities of teaching. Care is situated at the center of most, if not all, moral, ethical, or professional responsibilities these teachers described. This directly links to what ethicists have published in the literature on the subject. Gilligan (1982) and Noddings (1984) established care ethics as an approach based on the incompleteness of theorists (e.g., Erikson, 1950; Kohlberg, 1981; Piaget, 1965) who instead emphasized universal truths such as justice, rather than recognizing the primacy of caring and the varying degrees of interdependence between individuals in any situation. Others (e.g., Held, 1990; Kittay, 1999; Ruddick, 1998) took a more critical stance and emphasized the need for society to equalize the private and public ways in which care is divided into labor and the implications of gender herein. All suggest that the ethics of care can serve as a promising alternative to the more traditional justice-based approaches. In 2012, Noddings explained that:

In an encounter or sequence of encounters that can be appropriately called *caring*, one party acts as carer and the other as cared-for. Over time in equal relations, the parties regularly exchange positions. Adult caring relations exhibit this mutuality. However, many important relations are, by their nature, not equal relations, and mutuality cannot be expected. For example, the parent-infant relation is not one of equality. The parent can,

must, do things for the infant that the infant cannot possibly do for the parent. (Noddings, 2012, pp. 771–772)

Noddings advocated for an ethic of care as the undergirding concept in relational ethics. Like the plethora of feminists weighing in on this area of thinking, Tronto (2005) added to the literature here regarding how an ethic of care is enacted in practice specifically by identifying four specific elements of care, including attentiveness, responsibility, competence, and responsiveness. It goes without mention that there are very specific aspects of this line of thinking that have gender implications. First, Tong and Williams (2009) pointed out that care ethicists have more recently tried to separate gender from virtues and values, rather than assigning masculine and feminine perspectives on such topics as morality and moral development. Second, feminists such as Tronto (2012) have argued that gender roles are social and culturally constructed. Since care-based professions are traditionally comprised predominantly of women, care can sometimes be assumed to be a feminine characteristic or role.

Aspects of care, or care-based ethics, emerged as a salient focus for this study. Many participants expressed the importance of upholding a positive influence on students and creating and sustaining a responsive connection with other educators and support professionals in the school community as well. Inherent in the descriptions of care practices presented later, there was a distinct importance placed on the context of the situations in which participating teachers' dilemmas emerged. Interdependence between teachers and students within the classroom context was always emphasized, and this extended to other teachers, administrators, and support professionals within the great school and larger district communities; essentially relationships provided both the background, as well as the foreground, to teachers' considerations of ethical practice.

Ethic of Care as an Overarching Umbrella

Gilligan's (1982) ethic of care claimed that women have a tendency to emphasize compassion, caring, empathy, and relationships over more abstract concepts such as justice in relation to moral understandings. Participants' expressions of what caring means in this study had multiple dimensions, and it acted as both an undergirding principle and also an overarching umbrella of ethical practice. An ethic of care played out in different configurations with individual students (i.e. for some students, care was shown through empathetic responses, while for other students, care was expressed by holding students accountable or following through on a consequence). Care practices also unfolded communally. Teachers often described the importance of individual students being a part of the larger inclusive community in which all students' needs are respected and each member of the community must show and be shown empathy and compassion. This was conveyed as a classroom priority in that each teacher seemed to feel beholden—as the articulated in their interviews—to build, maintain, and model effective relationship-building skills with all students and serve as a moral role model for students. Care-based ethics were described as the venue through teachers could make a positive difference for students, through daily practice. As professionals in a human-focused caring profession, they reported ways in which showing care for students helped so many aspects of their practice, from increasing students' motivation and commitment to improving their sense of confidence for a subject, willingness to try challenging tasks, and engagement in aspects of learning they don't like. Care was the vehicle for relationship development and maintenance in many ways, and relationships formed a context for learning in the classroom community. Participants described how care for students became complicated, however, when it competed with the demands of other adults' expectations, district policies, and students' own articulated desires and goals.

Seven participants' statements right at the beginning of their first interviews directly reference the centrality of care in the daily work of teaching, essentially the need to show empathy and compassion to students. By way of illustration, Alana spoke about "how much I care about my students" and how "I try to be someone that cares about them" since "as teachers we are entrusted with their care, and their education" (Interview 1, 9-25-17). Another example of the role that care plays can be seen in Brady's statements that "I am very caring about people" something he communicated included pitfalls because "I care so much, sometimes I think I care about them more than they care about themselves" (Interview 1, 11-4-17).

This is evident as well in Emma's case. She explained that her students "have learned that I care" and even with her most challenging and often frustrating student, she is adamant that she must still show that "I really care about him" (Interview 1, 9-30-17). Rebecca and Tatianna described how important it is to show this care despite how challenging some of their students' behaviors can be at times. Tatianna recognized her at-risk student's cry for help and his many attention-seeking behaviors. She interpreted these behaviors as a need for care, attention, and support: "He needed someone to care about him" (Interview 1, 9-14-17). Similarly, this can be seen in the case of Charlotte, who explained that "I show them that I care *every day* when I am there" (Interview 2, 1-18-18). Edward made the point that caring is "listening to them" even "just to take the time to listen to them when you are so busy" and "I might have a list of things to do on my planning period but instead when someone walks into my room, I show them that they matter. I listen to their story, I just show them I care" (Interview 2, 3-7-18). Laura expanded upon this idea when she described showing up to students' events, games, and outside of school performances that matter to them "Because you are there. You care. They know it too then that you care" (Interview 2, 1-27-18).

Laura characterized caring as a source of motivation, something that drives her, just as many of the teachers in this study viewed a care-based ethic as an aspirational quality that helped guide decisions and actions that promote students' growth, learning, development, and happiness to ensure students are flourishing. This was characterized as a "duty" of teaching, a notion that Held (1990) supported in her assessment of teachers' responsibilities: "Caring, empathy, feelings of others, being sensitive to each other's feelings, all may be better guides to what morality requires in actual contexts than may abstract rules of reason or rational calculation, or at least they may be necessary components of an adequate morality" (p. 344). Teachers in this study certainly described demonstrating an ethic of care as important as teaching a lesson, content knowledge, or any assessment of knowledge.

Care is Bidirectional

Modeling this care-based relational way of being for students was a critical component for the teachers in this study. In this way, there was a second manifestation of care under the overarching umbrella of an ethic of care. Demonstrating a care-based ethic in teachers' own behaviors was described not only as important to establishing trust and rapport between teachers and students but also in order to teach students how to be caring with one another and with their teachers and other members of the school community. In this regard, as far as caring is concerned, teachers acknowledged the reciprocal nature of the exchange (e.g., "he shows you that he cares, and he returns the care to you that you showed." [Alex, Interview 2, 1-30-18]), rather than an entity that is one-directional (e.g., "I make sure that I take care of the student's learning needs but I get little back in return with some students." [Alex, Interview 2, 1-30-18]). Distinctions were made in the data between caring relationships among teachers and students,

and among students and other students, and a communal sense emerged that all play a role in making a greater good.

For example, Tatianna expressed this as “how we handle each other, we have to take care of one another ... this is an important thing: I teach to care for one another in our class” (Interview 2, 3-5-17). Teachers said repeatedly that one of their responsibilities is to show students how to operate in a caring manner with one another and the teacher, to ensure a productive and safe environment for all members of the class. Participating teachers described the challenges of the task of teaching students to listen to one another receptively, to demonstrate respectful and caring attitudes and behaviors, and how to foster these in order to have these skills taken up in life beyond the classroom. Participants described this aspect of care—how they tried to cultivate cooperation between students and instill a sense of care about the greater world: “we’re taking care of our environment ... we’re taking care of our school ... we show we care and we do our best” (Charlotte, Interview 2, 1-18-18).

According to the teacher participants these aforementioned aspects of an ethic of care are at play consistently. Teachers articulated that they perceive their primary responsibility as teachers to be caring for their students, teaching them how to appropriately show care to others, and encouraging and modeling how to be caring members of society. This responsibility is more important (or at least equal) to their professional obligation to ensure students are competent on tests, adept at displaying content knowledge, and proficiency academically. Many of the participants identified this as one of the primary reasons for entering the profession, and some cited confusion and disappointment when they noticed the absence of a care-based ethic amongst other teachers. Some participants described colleagues from their schools and others with whom they have come into contact that were not doing their duty as teachers: “They don’t care about

students, so why would they sign up to be a teacher in the first place?" (Emma, Interview 1, 9-30-17). Many said variations of Alex's statement that "Caring is like the number one responsibility for teachers, and yet this colleague of mine will often say, 'I just don't care anymore' which I cannot even begin to understand that thinking there" (Alex, Interview 2, 1-30-18). Many provided accounts of teachers who they believed cared more for students at one point in their careers but became overwhelmed and stopped caring. Brady indicated that "there are some teachers that are lazy or tired I guess, but I care so much, maybe too much" (Brady, Interview 1, 11-4-17). Participants seemed to unanimously agree that teachers who do not care should not be in the profession. Care was described as the key essential ingredient from which all good practices stems.

Striking a Balance

Some participating teachers took issue with colleagues who cared too little for students. Other participating teachers fell on the opposite side of this issue and recognized the dangers of colleagues caring too much for students. Participant teachers believed that there must be a delicate balance between these extremes. There existed a fine line when implementing a care-based ethic between caring too much and not caring enough. As mentioned previously, one of the challenges participants described was caring too much for students at times which could lead to trouble. Brady mentioned this as his downfall at one point. Charlotte also alluded several times to her journey as she struggled with this at key points in her teaching career. She had been teaching second-grade students for 12 years in a general education setting in a suburban school. She had spent her career in the same district but moved between two schools in which the vast majority of the students were Hispanic and English language learners. Charlotte's initial desire was to be a school psychologist.

I think I'm still vulnerable. I think I tend to be an emotional person and I am a caretaker, I like to take care of people. I like to, you know, because when I started out, my initial desire was to be a school psychologist and what are you doing there – you're kind of reading people, you're trying to understand, see where they're coming from and try to help them cope. (Charlotte, Interview 2, 1-18-18)

Charlotte conveyed that during her 12 years in teaching, there had been a few incidents that prompted reflection about her ethical practice directly as they related to her responsibility and desire to care for her students. She grew up Catholic and went to parochial school from Pre-K through high school. Morality played a significant role in her education and identity formation based on the influences of family and Catholic school. Professional ethics for Charlotte were about “doing the right things the right way, not just when somebody is looking, not just because you are getting paid, but about doing what's right, doing what's expected and superseding those expectations” (Charlotte, Interview 1, 9-16-17). Regarding ethical responsibilities in her teaching practice, Charlotte was adamant that “this is first and foremost making sure students are happy, healthy and learning and includes reflecting on practice and being honest with oneself” (Charlotte, Interview 1, 9-16-17). For Charlotte, doing what's best for all the people involved, including family, friends, and/or the classroom of students, is something that can be simple and complicated at the same time. Building and maintaining student relationships are at the heart of Charlotte's teaching priorities, and over time, her understanding of ethical practice evolved after grappling with how to keep professional boundaries with students and families so that she does not get too involved and so that she does not care too much.

Care exists at the core of these teachers' perceived responsibilities, and ethical practice is intertwined so tightly alongside, in between, and within this context of care. Therefore, in order

to best understand the four continua of tensions that teachers expressed experiencing, it is helpful to imagine a push and a pull that occurs as a part of engaging in caring relationships, especially with students.

Continuum 1: Personal as Opposed to Professional Ethics

Defining professional ethics was a challenge for these participants, and it was difficult for me to come up with a common definition across participants. In the interviews and critical incidents collected from the 12 teacher participants in this study, I sought to better understand how they defined professional ethics. My goal was to hear about how each teacher participant thought about professional ethics for themselves, despite the reality that it can be a complicated idea in practice. There were some common threads that ran throughout their definitions, but also there were key differences. These definitions emerged from coding, listening to first person voice and creating I poems, and identifying contrapuntal voices,

As previously discussed in Chapter 2, there are key distinctions made in the literature between personal morality, ethics and professionalism, and yet this study found that how they operate in real life is not so distinct. While the ethics literature is still relevant, I found major points of entanglement between participants' moral, ethical, and professional conceptions. There was a tension that emerged between teachers' understandings of moral, ethical, and professional responsibilities when facing their daily challenges inside and outside of classrooms. Participants muddled and conflated these notions sometimes, and at other times they purposefully teased them apart, which tended to vary depending on the context and situation at hand (see Figure 4.2).

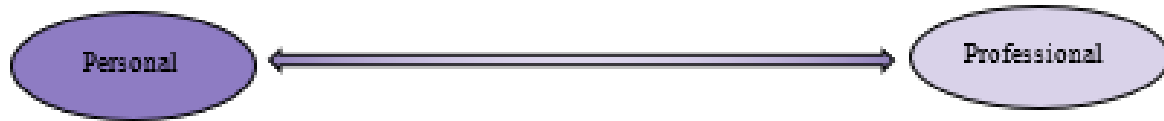
Personal versus Professional Responsibility

Figure 4.2. Continuum of the personal versus professional responsibility

Participants often referred to concepts such as duty, responsibility, obligation, ethics, morality, and professionalism in their interviews and critical incidents. Their entanglements with these concepts was a puzzling phenomenon, but as the study went on, the listening guide was pivotal to helping unpack the reasons that explain and further clarify the ways in which these concepts existed in relationship to one another—at least for this set of teachers. Similarly, it is noteworthy how often conceptions of relationships and caring were mentioned both directly and indirectly in relation to the teachers' sense of obligation toward their students as well as their coworkers within the greater school community. While these concepts may be presented discretely in theoretical discussions, this study suggests that they often intersect and overlap, and are taken up very differently in concrete settings of the classroom or school community. They were often described in very non-discrete ways and presented as inseparable in the ways that participating teachers understand them in practice: blurring lines and consistently creating grey areas.

Returning to the case of Charlotte, it became evident that she repeatedly described tensions between the personal nature of caring for students and professional lines that must be drawn in terms of adhering to relational boundaries. Charlotte expressed how she cares about her

students but she also recognizes that this creates tension for herself when she is also the disciplinarian and instructional leader. In second grade, “they’re so little and I’m not, I guess, I’m not trying to be their friend. I’m trying to be a teacher figure, you know, I’m trying to just be the adult in the room ... my job is to keep [them] safe at all times” (Charlotte, Interview 2, 1-18-18). Charlotte explained that while she does not have children of her own, her students often referred to her student as “mom” accidentally when they raise their hand to ask for guidance. She takes this as a positive mistake that tends to happen with students so young when they feel safe and comfortable in the classroom learning environment. Yet, Charlotte also tries to distance herself and have students show respect for the professional role of teaching. Her situation exemplifies the shared tensions experienced by many of the participating teachers as incidents from their practice prompted reflection about ethical concerns, in particular grey areas that emerged with respect to professional boundaries and the building of positive support relationships with students.

There are two incidents in which Charlotte expanded upon these challenges in greater depth. These include her own emotional involvement and investment in student relationships and the tensions these create with adhering to policies. Charlotte described a particular student relationship: The student was really struggling in class and seemed to be neglected at home. Charlotte’s desire to care for the student was evident. Charlotte and her colleague helped this student in a professional capacity that included her regular teaching responsibilities, but extended past these responsibilities as well on a regular basis. For example, these included taking the student to get his hair cut right across the street from the school:

I mean the boundaries were super blurred there. I was nervous about blurring the boundaries because I could get in trouble like, you know, I, this is crossing the line even

though we had [his mom's] permission, he was still a student. If I walked him to the barbershop a block away, I was responsible for him. And I'm putting myself in a position that if something were to happen to him, you know, the mom could always renege and say no, she had no permission. You know, she could have always claimed that I did something or my aide did something that we didn't do, or we didn't say. There's a policy that says unless you have this form of documentation, you're not supposed to have this kind of contact. There's a handbook that is, you know, so vague and at some point, you just don't read it although you should, especially in terms of situations like this, you want to see or like what are we doing. In what I told my aide at the time I was like look, I can't take him to the barbershop. (Charlotte, Interview 2, 1-18-18)

This tension can be identified by examining the I poem representing Charlotte's reflection about her decision regarding this student:

Charlotte's I poem

I mean
I was nervous
I could get in trouble
I am crossing the line
I walked him
I was responsible
I'm putting myself in a position
I don't want this

For Charlotte the grey areas emerged during incidents in which her emotional involvement with students bumped up against the need to adhere to professional school and district policies. She acknowledged that:

from a legal standpoint, if the mom ever wanted to press charges, or say a lie ... how would I protect myself? Now, I would just get documentation. Yeah, I would have it in writing that, that this is okay, I, you know, have the mom signed and so, you know, with the document that states that it's okay for him to walk with me to get a haircut.

(Charlotte, Interview 2, 1-18-18)

Both Charlotte and her colleague were regularly concerned about this student, both in class and at home. At one point, Charlotte's colleague at school almost agreed to adopt the student. The student's mother was overwhelmed, and she asked Charlotte's colleague if she would consider adopting her son as well as his siblings. As a result of the fact that Charlotte's colleague could not agree to take all the children, the mother and the children moved abruptly with no explanation. They lost touch for years. Charlotte shared that she ran into this same student recently in the school hallway after he transferred back to her school:

It's really sad, you know, I bump, I literally bumped into him in the hallway and I said, "Hey, how are you?" And he goes, well, you know, he's deep voice now, it's so weird. He's like, "I'm okay" and I was like, "you sure?" And he is like, "Yeah." And I was like, "Okay, you know, you can come to my class anytime you want." He goes, "we'll see." You know, joking around with me. I'm like, "All right, I'm just letting you know," and I try to do that every time I see him, when I do bump into him. (Charlotte, Interview 2, 1-18-18)

Charlotte described often being conflicted with how much she cares about her students, a state of being that she cannot just turn off at the end of the day, a phenomenon that creates

tension at home where it is a source of disagreement between her fiancé and herself. However, over her 12 years teaching Charlotte recognized growth in herself in this regard:

Emotionally, I think that I've learned that at the end of the day, they are not mine, I did not give birth to them. They're not my children that I take home. So, I think, although it's difficult, the weight of the emotion is difficult not to turn off when I get home. But I do, in my mind, I say okay, I'm not her mom, I'm not his mom, I do what I can at school and I hope for the best when he goes home. (Charlotte, Interview 2, 1-18-18)

Charlotte's account of meaning making of her ethical practice appears to involve a recognition that she has evolved from a very personal sense of caring and responsibility to a more professional understanding of her role as a caregiver, one that includes more clearly drawn boundaries that were hard won based on experiences with her students.

Proof of understanding of the recognizable limits to Charlotte's professional role is evidenced in her statement: "I am not his mom." Earlier in her career, this was not as distinct for Charlotte. She desired to impact her students' experiences outside of school, at home, and positively influence their long-term growth directly and immediately. One of Charlotte's ethical grey areas that she learned to navigate includes how she learned to draw the line between teaching responsibilities and not taking emotional baggage home with her, something she admires in her colleagues:

I think that my friends are good with boundaries like, they draw the line. Even though we take that emotional baggage, internal emotional baggage, home. But they do draw the line. And my friend, she draws a line, she's like, "I have a kid at home, I can't take all this work home, I can't take all this stuff home. I'm going to get into an argument with my husband and I can't do that so I need to leave it here." I don't know how she does it.

But she does it, so just cut it off. She cuts it off and like we're in a group text at home about, you know, what these things going on at work and did you see this e-mail?

Nothing from her. And she's in the group text but nothing from her. (Charlotte, Interview 2, 1-18-18)

Charlotte first expressed a very personal, internal framing of her relationship to her students, but this shifts over time as she made sense of her ethical practice. This is epitomized by her statement: "Emotionally, I think that I've learned that at the end of the day, they are not mine, I did not give birth to them. They're not my children that I take home..." (Charlotte, Interview 2, 1-18-18). She also has an awareness that she may continue to struggle to set boundaries between work and her home life because caring is a part of who she is, something she cannot easily turn off at the end of the workday, even after 12 years of teaching. Charlotte's account reveals her envy of her colleague who explained that she does not read or respond to any texts coming from their group at school when she is home with her child:

She's like yeah, "it's all suspended when I am with my kid, that's it." And I admire that and I hope that one day if I have children, like, I could be like that. But still be effective, and like she is, she's still effective. She's tough in class, she expects—she has high expectations, she's tough but she's warmed up because of her son. And she— she is one that I go to when I need to stop. She's like you're doing too much, cut it out ... there's only so much you can do ... she is like deal with it, and sometimes you need that kind of tough love it's just like all right, you're right ... she's also the ones to say don't drive yourself crazy, don't do it. She's like, "I won't drive myself crazy here." (Charlotte, Interview 2, 1-18-18)

Charlotte became more aware of her weakness in this area, and she has learned to recognize in herself times when she needs to reign in her feelings. This awareness has helped her to see that she can reach out to her colleague whose approach she admires and borrow this colleague's strategy on this issue in order to put some professional boundaries into place with her relationships with students. These benefits both Charlotte's student and herself in that it provides her with some emotional protection.

I try to just turn it on and show them that I care when I'm there and then when I leave, it's like I have no control over that space. So, I just try emotionally to say okay, we can kind of handle each other and take care of each other here. But I can't, I can't control what happens at home and I think that that kind of mantra is what maybe gets me through. I can't control it, I can only control but so much and help but so far. I do try to give them those coping mechanisms like, okay, well, the next time your little sister does that to you, grabs your stuff, you know, what, what can you do? I can tell my mom or I can tell, I can teach my sister that, that's those are her things and those are mine.

(Charlotte, Interview 2, 1-18-18)

These boundaries help Charlotte to focus and return each day and provide care and support to her students while respecting the boundaries of her role of teacher.

Often, the line of being a caregiver can be a blurry one. Personal experiences inform the work of being a caregiver and instructional leader. In addition, professional expectations weigh heavily in participants' decisions as well. For those teachers in this study who have their own children, they described that becoming partners and then parents or primary caregivers for an aging family member often helped them set better limits and reprioritize their time. Charlotte

described her feelings of envy for a colleague who has this experience, and Charlotte described trying to emulate this as a newer teacher who is single without additional family responsibilities. This phenomenon participating teachers described, summarized the challenges of being a quality caregiver while also maintaining appropriate boundaries. Yet this challenge is not represented solely on the first continua. It also applied to *how* these teachers tried to show they care for students. This meant not simply showing care for students' short-term growth but rather for students' long-term development as well.

Continuum 2: Short-Term Growth versus Long-Term Development

While Charlotte had begun to distance herself emotionally from her students over time, as highlighted in the last section, she described her movement on the continuum from *personal* to *professional* but it also revealed another way in which she engages in ethical meaning making. When she said, "I do try to give them those coping mechanisms like, okay, well, the next time your little sister does that to you, grabs your stuff, you know, what, what can you do?" (Charlotte, Interview 2, 1-18), she is articulating an intentional focusing of her efforts on build her students' long term coping skills. Charlotte provided a few accounts that reveal how deliberately she works at cultivating skills that would ideally serve her students developmentally down the line, rather than in the short-term. For example, the following narrative illustrates how Charlotte took pride in hearing from parents that her efforts were successful. She found it satisfying that she was making an impact on her students' longer-term and outside-of-the-classroom environment:

Parents will tell me like, parents will come and say, you know, he's been doing so good with his homework lately, he sits down, he gets to work, I don't have to fuss with him and because, and I'm thinking in my mind well, that's probably because I say, "get it

done as soon as you go home so you don't have to worry about it." You know, so they are taking these things that I'm saying even if it's as simple as that and they're doing it, they're following through. So, I think that, that maybe helps. (Charlotte, Interview 2, 1-18-18)

Charlotte's statements exemplify the second continuum, along which participating teachers make sense of their ethical practice. Sense-making occurred as they came to recognize the benefits of their efforts developing and supporting coping mechanisms and strategies for successful engagement in life long-term rather than simply focusing on their short-term learning needs to get through the current class during the present year.

Short-Term Growth to Long-Term Development

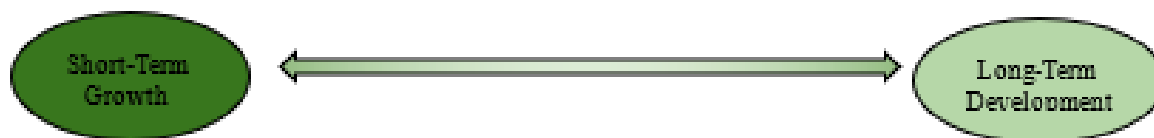


Figure 4.3 Continuum from short-term growth to long-term development

Another example of Charlotte's impact on her students' long-term development can be seen in the following:

So, I think those are the things, through their experiences in class, I try to, I remind them that they can transfer those experiences and those strategies at home. Just like homework, you learned it here in school, you learn that skill here in school, now you're going to practice at home. So, the same thing goes for, you know, personal interactions—you had a problem in school when we resolved it by talking. So, when you have a problem at

home, you can resolve it by talking. So, I try to make those connections for them while we're in school and hope for the best when they take it home with them. And I think that if I try to maintain like a happy, quiet, safe space as best as I can so that they can also try to do that at home. I don't know, I've kind of created like I said, like a mantra that says, just do what you can here and they'll take it home with them. And I try to keep that as a peace for me like, just like to give me some kind of peace of mind that hopefully they're taking it home and using it at home. (Charlotte, Interview 2, 1-18-18)

Charlotte's form of care for her students has evolved into taking into account both what is manageable for her to provide in school within the limits of the school rules and also what strategies she can instill and support that will serve the student not just in the present also but longer-term coping skills for dealing with his siblings at home in the future. Charlotte often described instances that revealed her focused on her students' long-term development. Yet in this example, there are elements of Charlotte's practice that can be associated with Continuum 1 as well. Charlotte's action here suggests a strategy to teach her students how to care for themselves since she can't go home with them, she can only take care of them during the school day. Her actions are focused on fostering her students' development of good habits and that will serve them long-term, and her eyes have adjusted their focus, set further out on the students' future horizon developmentally. Charlotte, like other participants, expressed a thoughtful approach to supporting and sustaining her students' long-term academic, social, and emotional growth, rather than solely spending energy adhering to practices that support short-term academic progress while the students are with her for one school year. The participating teachers conveyed a deep sense of purpose as professionals and a desire to make a lasting positive impact on their students' lives by guiding their learning and supporting their development.

Assessment Practices: Debating What' Best for Students'

The aforementioned example highlighting homework completion encroaches upon a common area of ethical tension that many of the 12 participating teachers described regarding assessment practices. The majority described stressful experiences with parent-driven student grade disputes, pressures to provide make-up work after deadlines had passed, and a great deal of time spent trying to decipher policies and the best ways of handling these situations from a variety of perspectives (i.e., administrators, families, and students). These teachers articulated feeling conflicted about how to best grade student work equitably, and also about providing students with fair and varied assessment of their learning. Underlying these assessment and grading issues was an ethical concern about the importance of the message about whether, in what ways, and to what extent to hold students accountable for their educational performance.

In these instances, the majority of the participating teachers articulated a belief that holding students accountable was important to the students' long-term growth, despite the selfish temptation to avoid short-term stresses and headaches with students, families, and administrators. These teachers articulated a sense of understanding that what might not feel good for students in the moment (e.g., having to repeat or rework assignments, or repeat a course due to insufficient work or a failing grade) likely is beneficial for students' long-term learning and development. Among the high school teachers in this study in particular, this was a major area of focus, reflection, and concern. Five of the teachers (Laura, Arianna, Edward, Brady, and Rebecca) made direct connections to ethical practice. As Laura, who teaches high school biology, explained in her first interview,

You have a schedule and you have to follow that schedule since now they're sophomores, juniors, and seniors in high school. And now we say, "well they're old enough now and

they should be able to do it on their own.” But no one ever taught them and so how can we just say they should know how to do it? And so, I think a lot of the decisions that I make are based on a thoughtful analysis of the things that have gone on in these kids’ lives up into this point. And I said at the beginning, one of the things I want to do is hold them to their accountability. But I think accountable, holding them to their accountability means a lot of different things to a lot of different people. And for me, it means that yeah, maybe the work is not going to be done on time. But it's going to be done, and it's going to be done to their ability. I actively try to teach accountability, because there are deadlines. And if you have a job and you don't meet them, you're going to get fired. So, definitely I think my professional ethics are based on that. (Laura, Interview 1, 10-28-17)

Whether teaching students in lower grades about accountability through completing homework assignments or teaching high school students about the consequences of their actions when turning in work late, these teachers struggled with getting students to understand the rationale of adhering to deadlines. Laura stated that there are a great deal of ethical issues involved in grading for her. She described that she has grown in this area since she began teaching. It had been a conscious decision for Laura to move forward with an approach that focuses on her students’ long-term needs and what she perceives to be the necessary skills to be successful in college and in life after school.

It's just ... they need to be held accountable to some extent, and I've had a lot of trouble thinking about how we hold them accountable. And we don't. We let them come to school late. We let them have their 30% absences. Some teachers don't put in zeros. They put in a 55, and so we are ... doing what we can to get them to pass, but I think in the process of doing that, they are losing accountability. And so, I made the decision that I

was going to hold them accountable, and I gave them a weeks' notice that it was going to happen, and then it happened. And they've responded very well to it. No one has tried to give me 2017 work late. (Laura, Interview 2, 1-27-18)

These examples regarding assessment practices revealed participating teachers' prioritization of students' long-term development over short-term growth, one of their most challenging endeavors. In terms of a rationale for her stance on this issue, Laura explained to her students that

in life, they're going to have deadlines, and if they don't reach those deadlines, they're going to lose their job. And in college, their professors are going to tell them, "Too bad." They're just a number that's paying, and if they don't want to take advantage of the education they're getting, then professors will move on to the people that do, and this is a case where they need to be responsible for their grades. (Laura, Interview 2, 1-27-18)

Laura described an uphill battle trying to get students to understand the connection to life outside the system of their high school. "The kids do not believe us when we tell them, 'When you go to college, it is not going to be like this,' and they act like we don't know what we're talking about." When Laura reviewed her I poem on the subject after her first interview, she stated that it really revealed aspects of her practice about which she been thinking in depth.

I teach
I'm with them.
I've built really strong bonds.
I always hold all of my students accountable
I'm quite flexible.
I will decide.
I'll take their work.
I think but I always hold them accountable.
I will always stand with them.
I'm not well-liked;

It kind of goes against the procedures,
But I do it.
I spend hours every single day
I give up my prep.
I just don't know
I could tell them, 'No'
I'm really good at math.
I think they enjoy that
I often need to use the textbook.
I haven't done this math since high school.
There's not really any decision to make.
If you ask me, I'll stay.

In this exploration of her assessment and grading practices, Laura is able to get to the heart of some of the conflicting tensions inherent in this complicated set of factors influencing her decisions, as well as the students' decisions. Laura recognizes and calls out the district and its policies, which play a role as well.

I think it's a district problem, and it needs to be tackled from all sides. The parents need to be involved, the administrators need to be involved, and the teachers need to be involved. Certainly, I can work with my students, but then as soon as they leave my classroom and they go to another teacher who has different policies in place, its ... (pause) Everything that they learned from me is lost. And we are not uniform. I had a teacher tell me the other day that he ... Two of his students, he doesn't like them, and so he is going to just pass them because he doesn't want them again. And that is ... (pause) It is a truth that happens in our district, and maybe in all districts. And I just ... (pause) I don't know what to say to that. What are we doing for our students if that is ...? "You're a big enough pain in the ass, and we will move you through because we don't want to deal with you again." What life skill does that teach them? (Laura, Interview 2, 1-27-18)

Laura identified assessment, accountability, and grading as the areas of practice that were the most ethically challenging for her. While describing the issues that create such internal conflict, Laura said the largest issue was with the message it sends students about life, one she finds inconsistent with reality. Her desire is to ensure her students are learning to be responsible in the short term. This requires Laura to hold them accountable for adhering to deadlines. Laura is trying to ensure that this translates into real life outside of school. As Laura explained, she sees this as a supportive practice to their long-term development. The alternative is to shield students now from some of these hard life lessons. But after weighing the potential consequences of failing now versus failing later, Laura prefers students learn now in school as kids, when stakes are less damaging as opposed to failing later in college or in the work world where the ramifications are more damaging and longer lasting:

I think that my definition of holding them accountable has changed. Or, it hasn't changed, but I'm bringing it now to a higher level of what my definition of being accountable is. So previously, as long as they did the work, I'm happy that they learned it. But now I'm adding this extra thing to them that, "You have a timeline for which you have to do it." It's my evolution, I guess. I think that I'm realizing that they need to work on a timeline, and it's good for them, and I need to put it in place, and I need to stick by it. And then they'll respond to it. They're going to respond to whatever I tell them ... and students have failed. They will fail. And I'm absolutely sticking by that because they were not able to get it together enough to get the work done, and it's hard. It's hard when they come to me crying, "I have to pass." "Well, I'm sorry. What did you do that proves that you have learned any kind of biology?" (Laura, Interview 2, 1-27-18)

An interesting aspect of the ethical conflicts inherent in assessment and accountability policies and Laura's practice navigating this terrain is that it still includes an aspect of an ethic of care. Laura believes that holding her students accountable is the highest form of care, one that is accompanied by its own set of costs, such as emotional outbursts from students that she has had to overlook:

And yes, so I don't have children, and so it's very hard for me when they get mad. That is something that I have not experienced with a child, where I tell them, "No," and they're mad, and after so many times, you get over it, right? You just know it's the way it's going to be. It's very hard when they're mad at me. They have absolutely gotten mad at me. I've been told I'm a terrible teacher from a student that I spent hours working on her essay with her. And then she came back on Monday and everything was fine. And so, I mean, adults get mad and they stay mad, right? And it's very different with kids. It's like they forgot, and I don't know how that's possible. I didn't forget. You said horrible things to me. But, yes, as it happens and they apologize or, it seems like they just forgot that it ever happened, it's getting much easier for me to say, "Look, this is what it is. I'm not a bad person because of it, but you know, this what you have to do." Yes, I would absolutely say I'm growing in this. And it's not done, but it's ... I'm moving more towards the teacher that I want to be. (Laura, Interview 2, 1-27-18)

Laura is committed to this aspect of her practice given her recognition of how important it is for her students to learn these lessons about consequences and having accountability, despite the toll it takes on her relationally. She openly acknowledged that it would be easier on her in the moment to not hold her students accountable, to go about her teaching day without the extra efforts in this regard, but it is her commitment to their long-term growth and development that

drives Laura to continue to put in this extra effort. This is an additional aspect of an ethic of care: focusing on the bigger picture of what is good for students and their development in the long term. Participating teachers vocalized that this type of caring is not for everyone: It is accompanied by added time spent working with students, extra effort on the teachers' part, and heartache at times when they absorb student's frustrations, insecurities, and lashing out against expectations. The participating teachers in this study acknowledged that not all teachers accept these added responsibilities, but they all share a belief that going above and beyond basic professional expectations in this regard comes with the territory of really teaching students (i.e., being a mentor, making a real difference in students' lives, or changing their life trajectories).

Rebecca, who teaches high school science, thinks a great deal about the messages that passing students who have failed to demonstrate mastery send to students, and she tries to ensure that she is helping her students recognize the bigger picture. This is challenging because it is almost like demonstrating "tough love" as a parent. Rebecca explained that as a parent who is invested in their child, you agree to persevere through the mood swings and outbursts children display when they are held to uncomfortable tasks in the moment because, as the adult, there is recognition that the long-term growth gains are more important than the discomfort of short-term stress. As a teacher, it is more challenging to be as invested with her students in this regard, but the implications for life beyond K-12 school are of the utmost importance for Rebecca's practice. The epiphany of understanding for Rebecca occurred as a student herself, enrolled in biology coursework for certification purposes. She observed the range of reactions among her fellow students, who found themselves failing at midterm time:

I noticed half the students dropped out because they were failing. And the ones who are left, half of them were still failing but still in the class. I wondered why they did not drop

out, given the tuition implications? And now I understand why, because they were trained in that urban system in which I now teach, in which I am a part of the cycle, where as a student, even though I am failing, somebody may increase my grade at the last minute because they can't let me fail. (Rebecca, Interview 1, 10-28-17)

Rebecca's devotion to teaching, something she came into as a second career, stems from her desire to make a difference in the lives of her students. She shared how she had to make many sacrifices to enter the profession, go back to school, and accept a lower salary. As a result, Rebecca described struggling with the aspects of teaching that are undermined by a focus on short-term goals, rather than the long-range growth and development of her students:

And so, for me, from an ethical perspective, the big picture is, I see that we are failing a lot of students. What are we are teaching them about because we are not allowing them to fail? This is the time when failing is instructive because later you have bigger risks. It's like if you fail reading and you don't get to be promoted because you didn't pass that standardized test, then I think it's better we teach them that we have got to go back and learn it now, as opposed to just pushing kids along. Now we are in high school and you have kids who are still reading at the third-grade level. So, that's the bigger ethical dilemma that I see in education. You may be getting more students into college, but more students are failing in college. And once they take on these loans, and they fail classes for the first time in their educational experience, the consequences are higher ... I probably think too much, but it's kind of like a lot of times, the bigger picture is what grounds me to get through, like, the everyday struggle. (Rebecca, Interview 1, 10-28-17)

Overall, this distinction emerged whereby participating teachers often considered not just their students' current needs in the moment but they also seriously contemplated the impact of their

choices on students' development in the future. They aspired to act in accordance with their students' long-term development, rather than settle for short-term gains. Rebecca explained that in so doing, she is making her job harder for herself at times, but she cannot reconcile forgoing this aspect of her practice without compromising this key aspect of her ethical practice. For her, long term-growth and development encompass life lessons that extend well beyond the academic aspects of teaching as well. This is the case for all of these 12 participants, something Rebecca touched upon when she explained that

What I see—like when I'm trying to hold the value, I'm trying to hold this, like ultimately the kids are there to learn, I'm there to teach them. And I think back to taking [education] courses at the time didn't make sense, I'm like, huh, now I realize that's the basis of everything, what are we teaching kids. So, what am I teaching him that he has a caring community and that you're safe and that's what he needs to build his life on and every kid needs something different? So, I look at the bigger picture of what can I teach these kids, because the curriculum, they're going to probably forget. Hopefully some of the life lessons they'll remember and hopefully they'll go out and try and make the world a better place. (Rebecca, Interview 1, 10-28-17)

There are incidents that are challenging to navigate, according to Rebecca, that are a direct result of her ethical stance; they led to becoming embroiled in politics of her school, as well as her district, but she would not forgo these, she would have just handled them differently now, having had more experience. This is yet another area of overlap between these continua: Often teachers in this study articulated their attempts to prioritize their students' long-term development and learning, and often, in the process, they found themselves at odds with the greater community. This could occur at the classroom level, the school level, or even the district level with students,

colleagues, or families in the greater community beyond the school. To summarize, part of these teachers' ethical meaning making involved honoring their commitment as educators to the perceived responsibility to positively influence students' growth and development long term and in ways that address their lives beyond the school community.

Continuum 3: Honoring Individual Needs and the Greater Community

A major element in the entangled ethical understandings of practice that these teacher participants articulated clearly stemmed from the relational aspects of teaching as discussed earlier in this chapter. In Rebecca's view, with respect to professional ethics, "one must figure out the culture of the school and how people are interpreting it and then find out the interpretation one can live with" (Rebecca, Interview 1, 10-28-17). Herein exists another continuum, along which participating teachers described attempting to strike a balance between the needs of their students on one end and the obligations engendered by being a member of a greater educational community on the other, as represented in Figure 4.5. For example, Rebecca described an awareness that she had improved over the past few years with "figuring out what administration wants, being at a level that I am comfortable with, and at a level that students respect as well" (Rebecca, Interview 1, 10-28-17). There were many incidents in which participating teachers revealed that they find themselves conflicted: precariously perched between their desire to meet the needs of a particular student for whom they are an advocate, and pressures to comply with the directions, advice, or opinions of other members of the professional educational community. These participating teachers reiterated many times that maintaining the established relationships with their students is, first and foremost, their priority. This is where the teachers' loyalty tends to be: They aspire to keep their students' trust and respect. They aspire to honor the relationships established with their students. At times, teachers experienced moments

in which they were pulled between students' needs and the need to honor the views of other adults in the greater educational community. This was manifested as the views of the administration at a particular school, parents' views, a school policy, colleagues, or other support professionals. Teachers expressed the difficulties in striking a balance between these sometimes-opposing ends of this continuum, represented by an individual student's needs on one end and the voices from the educational community at large on the opposing end of this spectrum. Similar to the two continua previously described, participating teachers in this study fell at different points along the continuum, with the majority leaning toward ensuring they meet the individual needs of their students over honoring the various needs or viewpoints of others from the greater educational community. Yet, that is not to overlook that most teachers described an awareness of the importance of recognizing and honoring others involved in the educational community (e.g., administrators, colleagues, policies, families). Finding this balance between this tension was one of the ways in which these teachers made sense of their ethical practice.

This is evident in Charlotte's description of the importance of:

doing what's best for all the people involved, including family, friends and/or the classroom of students, something that can be simple and complicated at the same time.

There is also an aspect of staying centered, cutting out the noise and the negativity and staying positive, just doing one's job and just being a good person when no one is looking (Charlotte, Interview 1, 9-16-17).

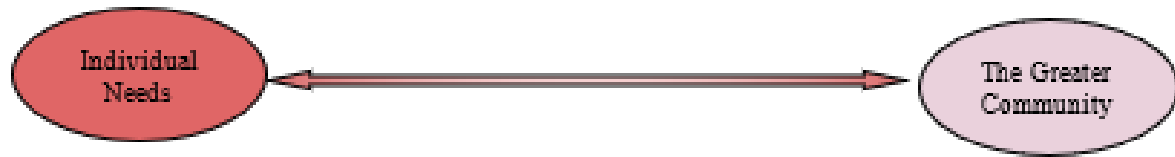
Individual Needs as Opposed to the Greater Community

Figure 4.4 Continuum from meeting individual needs to honoring communal needs

Similarly, Alana touched upon this notion of honoring all of the relationships bound together in the ecosystem of the school, something she expressed as an important part of ethical teaching:

It is a humanistic approach, a model which is heavily built upon relationships and an understanding that if you have a relationship with somebody then you are more likely to listen to them, because you care about them...because it's about relationships and shared responsibility, a collectiveness that some people have and some people don't have.

(Alana, Interview 1, 9-25-17)

Alana's ethical focus emphasized people she engages with every day in her classroom over policies. Her approach was focused on relationships and her priorities were on understanding others' needs. This humanistic approach placed value on people and relationships, rather than emphasizing issues such as obedience or conformity. This resonates with Macmurray (1964), who stipulated that "Teaching is one of the foremost of personal relations" (p. 17). Associations to the ethic of care can be seen in what Alana described as a relational view of ethics. Both Charlotte and Alana fall towards the communal end of the tension between individual needs and the greater community continuum regarding ethics. Participants described how there were ethical aspects that emerged when trying to prioritize whose needs. They described repeatedly how

challenging it was to determine which students' needs were most important to honor at specific times. One of the difficulties that was expressed can be found in the pressure felt by participants to arrive at clear cut right or wrong answers. Instead, participants felt so often their approach depended, on the differing circumstances they faced. In this study, the one constant was that teachers tended to honor their relationships. First, they felt most compelled to honor those relationships with their students. Challenges often emerged when this desire to honor their relationships with students was at odds with the relationships or the perspectives of other adults within a school, within the educational community, and within the larger district. This translated into these teachers portraying a sense of being pulled in two different directions.

Olive's descriptions of these competing tensions paint a picture of an educator who tries to balance the influences coming from her school community with the esteem she possesses for her individual students. On this continuum, she fell somewhere in the middle. Like so many other teachers, Olive's ethical decisions play out in her classroom. Olive provided accounts in which she felt compelled to choose between what is best for her students and "what the parents want or what the curriculum says." Olive emphasized that these balancing act "is a little risky" but described this as a process that first starts with her own internal sense making. She always began with an examination of her own feelings, thoughts, and observations. Once she is clear on her position, Olive described incorporating other's feelings and thoughts and her attempt is always to negotiate the external demands into her approach, even if it is sometimes just to acknowledge them. For Olive these external demands come in the form of the curriculum, parental expectations, or needs of the others involved:

That's my job beyond my job, that's my true higher calling—if I want to be effective with this child, I have to forget about these things and I have to really focus in on what I

think, what I feel, what I see, what I observe, what they've shown me that they need it. So, we have this obligation underneath in order to reach all of the kids and build this relationship with the kids where we can really teach them and to observe them and to understand them in order to do so. And we all know we can talk about multiple intelligences all day long and different learning approaches and that's true, but yet we've got one curriculum, right. And so sometimes that's difficult for me, but morally I believe that my job is to reach the child and boost the child as much as possible. That's—that is a professional ethic that I'm behind 100%. Like whatever it takes, but sometimes that can be really tricky. It could be really tricky. (Olive, Interview 1, 9-28-17)

For Olive, there is a “job beyond her job.” She, like other participating teachers, was adamant that most situations in which she tried to advocate for a particular student became complicated quickly and were never as straightforward as she initially anticipated at the outset. Olive described how what at first appeared simple, very quickly became complex once other adults (e.g., parents, principals, support professionals) got involved. In her statement, Olive references the personal and professional continuum: She referenced the reality that it is “difficult for me, but morally I believe that my job is to reach the child,” despite the professional tug she felt to ensure that she honors the direction provided in the curriculum. Often these continua intersected in teachers' ethical decision making, as this example highlights. There were multiple continua at play, even when these teachers reflected upon and explained their thinking, when they weighed their choices, and unpacked *why* they leaned towards some, and away from other options.

Meg provided another exemplar of how to navigate and make sense of these tensions. Meg expressed how she consciously tries to make decisions “for the better,” a phenomenon that

required her to weigh her ideal outcomes if she could ignore the policies, competing needs, or other factors preventing her optimal decision. Meg described how she always tries to make decisions and enact practices that are geared towards optimizing her students' learning needs. Meg also described the key times in which this was not possible, events that loom large and weigh heavily both in her heart and in her memory. These moments caused internal turmoil due to feelings of letting her students down, of not uphold her responsibility to doing all that is necessary to support her students, the central duty as a teacher in her view. Meg explained that these moments were caused by her own actions, in which she felt she caved to the pressure she felt and observed being exerted by a colleague, student's parent, or district leader. She also explained her way of navigating this, an approach that now includes more patience, something she has gained throughout the many years spent dealing with these situations over the course of her career:

If I can't get what I think is right then I lay the groundwork to ensure it can eventually happen, because although all things do not happen when I want them to happen, sometimes that wait time is not necessarily a bad thing. So even though I think something might be right, maybe that waiting time is supposed to happen so something better can happen. I think instead of looking at choices as bad or worse, I look at it as, I'm setting it up for a better outcome when it eventually happens. (Meg, Interview 1, 11-5-17)

In these instances, Meg stayed true to what she saw as the solution or the best course of action, yet she also acknowledges that she compromises in these particular situations. As one of the most experienced teachers in this study, Meg shared that she had to learn patience. When she first began teaching, she was less tolerant, less patient, and over time she shared that she had to learn how to be more patient, and to "play the long game." In order to achieve her goals, Meg

had to be more realistic about what can be accomplished. This included adjusting her timelines on when significant progress would be visible in her uniquely-abled learners. It also included being more collaborative and realistic about other adults. Coming to terms with differing levels of commitment amongst other professionals too many years for Meg. Her frustrations in others' lack of commitment are still there, but after years of dealing with them openly and with little success, she actively hides them now unless she is with her close colleagues who know her well and share in her level of commitment to meeting students' needs. Meg shared that making ethical decisions is now for her one of realistic acknowledgement, after years spent trying, as Meg said, "perhaps too strongly" to effect positive change.

Meg was reflective about how she took a much firmer, clearer position on right and wrong, when she started in the profession. Meg felt she was not as capable of perceiving or noticing the more subtle approaches others took in situations. This included a less developed ability to hear the more subtle aspects of information colleagues shared, or the more nuanced ways they navigated situation with principals, parents, and support providers they agreed were not providing quality support to students. Earlier in her career Meg characterized herself as not as patient and certainly more apt to see issues in a less-nuanced manner. Meg has taught for 20 years, and she has learned that she cannot ignore the opinions of other adults, even if they have much more limited interaction or knowledge of the student in question. For Meg, this knowledge has come from learning through firsthand experience that adults need to help one another and need to support and provide guidance to each other. Meg's statement also highlights her sense of efficacy as a teacher. Meg implies and acknowledges that she has power to affect outcomes for students positively in the future, and she is aware of how to make this happen in subtle ways that may go unnoticed by others if she is careful and plays the game, in the sense that she can go

under the radar in her efforts to get the desired outcome that she is striving for in terms of student growth and learning. Meg's example highlights another crossing of two continua: The nature of the description evokes long-term growth and development when Meg referred to a "setting up for a better outcome" that will occur down the line "when it eventually happens."

Incidentally, when she first entered teaching, Meg described being accused by a parent of abuse, of locking her student in a closet in her classroom. After an extensive investigation, she was cleared, since there was not anything in her classroom that locked, especially a closet. This seriousness of the situation left a big impression on Meg. She communicated with families regularly, she felt they trusted one another, and since she operated always with students' best interests as her priority, she felt very hurt and angry to face an accusation of abuse in this incident. For Meg this was the first recognition of her own naïveté. Meg described how she had such a positive relationship with this student and her family—they communicated almost daily about the student's progress—so Meg articulated feeling very hurt that the parent would do such a thing. It was Meg's principal who supported her, the district union representative who guided her through the process, and her superintendent who helped her navigate this incident who legally helped to protect her professionally. That incident caused Meg to recognize that the other adults in the educational community are important.

While Meg also described incidents with other adults in the educational community for whom she does not respect professionally, her approach is to work around fewer effective educators quietly, almost covertly, and she successfully avoids direct confrontations generally. Meg falls in the middle of the continuum, right in between the greater community and the individual needs' foci on this continuum. Two incidents illustrate the balancing elements. First, especially when something is bothering her—when Meg is frustrated with the focus on external

measures of student progress for instance, especially in a special education setting—she looks to other adults who help ground her view. She then implements adjustments to her practice:

So, I wonder if I spend less time on the grade output emotionally and spend more time on the positive emotional stuff. And that's what helps me make the change when I get a positive praise from an administrator or another teacher, somebody in the teaching world, somebody in the college teaching world, somebody who gives me something that goes, "You can keep doing this." And I put less emphasis on the grading. I use that as a guide only, not as a—what's the word—end all be all. I could send a homework, a file folder of homework of a tests home and five out of the 10 grades are failing. That doesn't define me as a teacher. It means something went wrong. (Meg, Interview 2, 1-13-18)

Meg has learned to avoid beating herself up emotionally and she has increased her value of other professional adults as supporters of each other and as thought-partners. Meg also shared how these relationships with other adults have increased her confidence in communicating her expertise and opinions as a special educator. This means redefining what success looks like for her colleagues with regard to her special education students at times. Even in high stakes individualized education planning (IEP) meetings, she has ventured as far as to respectfully challenge others professionals' assessments of students needs and educational placements when she does not feel that they serve her students' growth and development. In the incident that follows, Meg expressed her doubts about a struggling student whose skills are substantially lower than the rest of her class. Her concerns center on her student's readiness for moving to the next grade. Meg's concern in this situation was focused around whether pressures to advance this student were in the student's best interest.

I'm not saying to be ready in comparison to the person sitting next to him. He'll never be that person. It will never happen. But for him, I need to make sure he's ready to move forward. And so, I think that's probably something to bring up as that I am able to individualize very well. I don't look at it as everybody needs to be reading, everybody needs to be comprehending, everybody needs to be doing math, everybody needs to be able to write their name perfectly or at the same level...but you need to go from here to there moving forward. (Meg, Interview 2, 1-13-18)

Meg went on and clarified that beyond the student's performance and education needs there is more to consider:

So ethically, I'm doing my part. Morally, I'm doing my part ... if I push this any further and go to the administration about it, I will have to be ready to fight and I don't think it's going to get changed. So, I'm bowing out of that ... Ethically, that's where I need to make sure every one of my students is having, is given the chance to move forward from their starting point. (Meg, Interview 2, 1-13-18)

Here, Meg referenced both her professional role (i.e., “ethically” she is doing her part) as well as her personal sense of what is right (i.e., “morally, I’m doing my part”). She acknowledged these internal tensions she felt, a push and a pull between her personal and professional sense of responsibilities to do what is best for the student. This scenario can be represented on the first continuum as well as the third continuum, illustrating how the ethical scenarios teachers often face overlap on multiple continua. The nature of how teachers’ experience and navigate ethics in practice are rarely straightforward or one dimensional. Rather they are complicated, just as two continua at play at once prompt Meg to think not only about both her personal and professional

beliefs, but also her allegiance to the various stakeholders at the school and district level, coming together in the IEP meeting. These relationships are important to her, and they are part of how she is able to work to achieve results for students over the years, so she feels pulled toward them and showing her loyalty to them, in addition to what she believes is best for her student in this scenario. As other incidents repeatedly revealed in this study, teacher participants' rarely experienced ethical dilemmas that could be represented solely on a single continuum.

Furthermore, meaning, it seems, cannot be made without thoroughly understanding the context in which events unfolded. Right and wrong were often debatable for all 12 teachers, and multiple truths were articulated depending on the people involved, their perspectives, and the context. Participants had a much easier time and were more comfortable making sense of ethical issues as they pertained to scenarios that emerged in their practice rather than providing concrete definitions or established ethical rules.

A case in point can be found in Alex's articulated view that ethics in teaching is signified by a series of questions that she asks herself. She utilizes these questions both in the moment about "the small stuff" and then again later at times when she has a chance to pause and reflect more deeply about the greater meaning of her practice. Alex expressed that she must always slowly examine and take into account aspects of loaded topics—for example, academic expectations, parent involvement, gender, and relationships—in order to determine the ethical aspects of a given situation before determining which course of action she will take. It is in Alex's position on these very topics that she revealed comprise of her ethical stance for her teaching practice. Alex was careful to note that she does not always act in alignment with her own personal beliefs on these topics because there are expectations of the profession that she is also beholden to. So, she will carefully weigh her options, thinking a great deal about what is

ultimately going to foster positive growth for her students. Table 4.1 provides examples of the type of questions that guide Alex's meaning making and that she herself raised in her interviews regarding her ethical practice.

Table 4.1

Alex's Questions that Reflect her Communal Focus of Ethical Practice

Judgment based on "parent involvement"	Academic expectations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do we treat some families differently based on whether they participate in school activities? • Do we communicate with them differently? Is the frequency of communication different? • Does this judgement trickle down to how we think about the children? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we decide on expectations? • What kind of attributes do we choose to assign expectations? • IEP? Socio economic levels? After Care?
Conversations about children/families	Relationships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do we discuss a child within their hearing? Do we discuss a child in front of another child? • Discussions about children and families in other settings with colleagues: How do we portray children and families to our colleagues which may exacerbate pre-judgement? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do we form relationships only with certain parents? • Do we consider parents as our allies? • How we engage with those parents whose communication style we like? • Do we view parents differently because they send in more supplies? • Prepare home lunch for their children?
Gender	Responsible conversations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we treat girls and boys differently? • Do we have different expectations from boys and girls? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do we talk negatively about a colleague in their absence? • Do we tell a colleague something despite not knowing if it is a fact?

Alex admitted that she tends to disregard most other adults' opinions regarding what is best for a student's development, perhaps due to her extensive career as an educator. She is careful to clarify however that she respects her principal and will seek out feedback and solicit her thoughts

and advice regularly. On this third continuum, representing the tensions that range from a focus on individual needs versus the greater community, Alex has little difficulty prioritizing the needs of her individual students above others in the community. Alex is also one of the most experienced teachers in this study, and her confidence in her own decision-making is a rarity. It is not that case that she has a lack of regard for others' opinions; she does value collaboration with other support professions, teacher colleagues, administrators and family members. However, she is more resolute than most participants in this study that she knows what's best for students. She tended to describe the importance of keeping a low profile, going about her day with her students and her efforts quiet, under the radar for the most part.

During my first interview with Alex, she provided an example of an ethical question for teachers, based on a scenario presented by her principal at a faculty meeting in her own school, that there is shortage of paper. "Am I going to take some paper from the office when I know there is a shortage because I have noticed people taking the paper? How can you do that when you know that there isn't any paper? Why would you take someone else's and not think about it" (Alex, Interview 1, 9-29-17)? Alex provided the parallel example in another field, since her husband works in the business, and they regularly travel and have expensive dinner meetings, a practice she admonished him for at home. Alex can see nuances; however, she does not tend to waiver in her opinions as much as some of the less experienced teachers in this study. Alex is more resolute and confident in her strengths as an educator, and she opened up about her track record taking risks. She is comfortable with taking risks that benefit her students and acknowledged the potential consequences of her actions that include disciplinary action or even losing her license.

By contrast, there were participating teachers who articulated that there were times in which they had to lean toward the other end of this continuum, to focus on individual needs in order to be productive for the community ultimately. Participating teachers in this study described how the costs of caring for students is physical and emotional, and they described how this takes a toll on them as well as their own children and family, a phenomenon (discussed in Chapter 5) that has potential implications based on this study's findings.

Continuum 4: Ideal Outcomes as Opposed to Worst Case Scenarios

Consider the analogy that when flying on a plane, flight attendants doing the safety demonstration often instruct passengers that the oxygen mask will automatically appear in front of you and you should pull the mask towards you, place it over your nose and mouth, and if you are travelling with a child or someone who requires assistance, to be sure to place your mask on first, and then assist the other person. In this scenario, there is an inherent or implied reality that you must decide to care for oneself first, in order to save someone else. In an idea world, it would be possible to save both individuals simultaneously, but in the real world, it is often the case that one must choose. Similarly, often teachers in this study tried to strive for the ideal outcome in any given situation, rather than reverting to the reality that one must often choose to prioritize one above others. There were even circumstances that called for an even more desperate approach, in which participating teachers simply tried to avoid the worst-case scenarios in a given context.

The Dalai Lama (1999) emphasized that education is much more than imparting knowledge and teaching skills to students; teachers help students become attuned to the needs and rights of others. Participating teachers in this study often revealed conflicts around protecting students' rights, working towards social justice, and promoting not just tolerance but

appreciation of racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, religious, and ability differences amongst students. They often described situations surrounding these issues as those which presented ethical implications. It was while describing such situations that participants engaged in a comparison between what ideally could transpire versus a worst-case scenario in any given situation. Figure 4.5 illustrates the two ends of the spectrum that participating teachers considered when feeling torn between what they hoped would occur versus what they feared might transpire in the given situations they described.

Ideal Outcomes and Worst-Case Scenarios



Figure 4.5 Ideal outcomes in opposition to worst case scenarios

Emma described herself as a social justice educator, something other teachers in her school have expressed surprise at her stance at times. She explained:

I try to make it easy-breezy and, like, try to not make it seem like I'm being, I guess, overly sensitive about something, but I know now that there's a lot of work to do on a lot of the White teachers that I work with. And that is something I keep in the back of my head all the time, all the time. Projects I bring up, things we can do at a grade level. I'm always suggesting—like, Black Lives Matter week is coming up, and I already suggested some activities to do. Whether or not they're going to do it, I'm not sure, but I did suggest it. I think that a lot of the teachers are obsessed with following this curriculum map and I

am not, and I'm okay with someone questioning me about it. I'm okay with, like, going against the grain, and they're not. So, for me, ethically, that's not something that I'm going to be, like, afraid of doing, you know, like this subject is important and all the lessons that I've done are important. And I think that ethically, for me, I'm willing to take some risks on getting recommended versus some of the teachers that are not. They're not willing to take those risks or are uncomfortable teaching those issues so they show BrainPOP videos, instead. You know what I mean? That's what's going to happen.

(Emma, Interview 2, 2-3-18)

Emma explained that she has already played out the worst-case scenario and considered what might happen if she were to offend a student, their family, or her colleagues. She has left one school to take another position already and expressed that she is not afraid to move on or sacrifice her tenure, advocating instead for teaching under the radar as much as possible. She is clear that she is not opposed to teaching on the verge of getting fired, something that she experienced in her prior school where students were not treated as she felt they should have been. Like all the teachers in this study, Emma believed that teachers' primary responsibilities center on promoting the well-being and learning of their students. Most agreed that teachers have the ability to simultaneously advocate for their students and support the mission of their schools, but when schools stray from operationalizing their mission, it often places teachers in positions to make tough choices in order to honor both. In Emma's case, if putting students first translated into losing her teaching position or sacrificing tenure when she played out the worst-case scenario, she quickly pointed out she can get another position in a school that would likely be more consistent with her personal moral beliefs.

Likewise, Meg described her own meaning making of an incident with one of her students in which she articulated both her hopes for the student as well as the various worst-case scenarios inherent in the array of options she had she chosen from with regard to how to respond to the situation. Meg is comfortable with redefining what success looks like for her uniquely abled students but expressed doubts about her students' readiness for the next grade, knowing the realities of the teacher's approach towards students with special needs at the next grade level, as well as the services he should have been provided but wasn't, despite Meg's constant advocacy. The student's parent already pressured her to advance this student in the first IEP meeting, and Meg felt this was not in the students' best interest.

I'm not saying to be ready in comparison to the person sitting next to him. He'll never be that person. It will never happen. But for him, I need to make sure he's ready to move forward. And so, I think that's probably something that I am able to individualize very well. I don't look at it as 'everybody needs to be reading, everybody needs to be comprehending, everybody needs to be doing math, everybody needs to be able to write their name perfectly' immediately for you. You need to go from here to there moving forward. So ethically, I'm doing my part. Morally, I'm doing my part ... if I push this any further and go to the administration about it, I will have to be ready to fight and I don't think it's going to get changed. So, I'm bowing out of that ... Ethically, that's where I need to make sure every one of my students is having, is given, the chance to move forward from their starting point. (Meg, Interview 2, 1-13-18)

Meg described how she has learned to weigh the consequences of her advocacy very carefully and consider whether those actions will translate into her ideal outcome—getting the student

what he needs—or inadvertently creating unintended consequences. Meg articulated a clear stance that her role is to provide students and families with the relevant information but that they have a right to make their own decisions, even if she disagrees. For her, the worst-case scenario is that if the student is moved ahead prematurely to the next grade, he can always be moved back, so she decided not to press the issue, since it's not worth it. His needs can still be met and her view was that perhaps the family needs to see his experience in a demanding context in order to come to terms with what he needs in order to learn more effectively.

Laura shared an anecdote about a high school student who approached her about his desire to wear a wig to school, asking her if he should do it. For Laura, this decision was tough because she wanted her student to feel her support of his growing awareness of his sexual identity and she wanted his courage to be open accepted positively. However, she was also realistic about the tenor of the school's level of acceptance for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender students, based on prior experiences, statements, and jokes made among teachers and administrations, as well as students. In Laura's ethical decision-making process, one option—the student sharing his identity in this way—could be worse than some of the other alternatives as she played out as worst-case scenarios in her mind, all of which included students making a spectacle out of him. He was already taunted as odd, as a special education student, and many students' comments pointed out the way in which he was different and the way he carried himself. In this instance, Laura did not want her fear of the unknown, or fear of the worst-case outcome, to drive what she advised the student. What she told him was:

It's absolutely your choice, and I don't know if it's something ... If it's a joke or if it's something that you're considering doing personally for a long term, but I need you to think about what the reaction is going to be from the students in either case. They could

think that you want to dress like a woman, and I said, "If that's what you want, then I think that's great. But you need to consider what the reaction is going to be and how you're going to handle that" (Laura, Interview 2, 1-27-18).

His response, after a small amount of time, was, "I think I'm going to think about it, then." The student was very receptive to this, and asked Laura for help in how to find ways to honor himself without drawing unwanted negative attention to himself from others. He did not feel comfortable talking with his family about this, and likewise, he did not want to talk with any counselors at the school. For Laura, she described this as "a good conversation, and I feel like I was as supportive as I could be, and he knew I was supportive. I just hope that I didn't deter him from doing it, if he really does want to start dressing like a woman" (Laura, Interview 2, 1-27-18). However, she was realistic about the school culture and didn't want to see her student, who was already in a fragile place, be ridiculed, so they focused on identifying spaces in which acceptance may be more prevalent, such as when he hopefully goes to college.

As part of this meaning-making endeavor, public perception emerged as one of the concepts that weighed heavily on participants as they described contemplating possible worst-case scenarios. This took the form of both actual situations they experienced or witnessed firsthand, through witnessing or hearing accounts of what their colleagues experienced, and through imagined situations that they conjured up themselves. Even news stories, which they had little more than read or heard about briefly, would influence these participating teachers, some of whom were impacted extensively when taking into account public perception. They acknowledged that teaching is risky at times and that breaking rules can have serious consequences. This is evident in the case of Alex:

Well, there were things that I have done which were unethical, but I would do them again. Things like taking food to the kids' houses for example, the teenager's house whose mother had just died and they have no food. And how it would look for a teacher—a female teacher to go to a boy—two boys living on their own, teenagers ... unethical professionally, but they had no food. I would go to jail for that. You know what I mean. (Alex, Interview 1, 9-29-17)

Alex shared that she has done this repeatedly in different contexts. One of her students had to forfeit a trip to go to Six Flags, and because the entire grade went, Alex had to stay behind with him. So, at lunch, she took him in her car (as nearly all the students normally did) for lunch off the school' grounds. As Alex described:

I didn't really think about it at that moment, we just went, got lunch, came back and distributed some of the lunches, and that day—there was a sub-principal, the principal was out, so there was a sub from the main school. And I found out that he went and told the main boss that I have taken a student in my car to get lunch. So, I got called in and I said yes, I did that and he asked, “did you know that it's against policy?” and I said yes, I knew that. I mean I did, but I didn't think about it when I—so I said yeah, I knew, but this is—can I explain the situation? And he said, I'm sorry, but it's not acceptable, you can't do that. It's a liability issue and you just can't do it. So, she said I'm going to let you go with a warning, I'm not going to write you up, but please don't do that. And of course, after that I did it again. (Alex, Interview 1, 9-29-17)

However, what Alex did not realize until a few weeks later was that one of her female coworkers was having sexual relationships with students in the school, a news story that she then realized the principal knew at the time. This left a major impression on Alex:

It was a shock. I never ever imagined a teacher doing something like that. But again, it happens, there are sexual predators, but to me it was just so shocking. But then I thought about what I was doing and I thought, oh my goodness, somebody could have accused me off the same things and what will be my defense, how could I prove anything otherwise? So that's scary, that's a scary thought. But I mean these kids were in really dire situations I couldn't ignore being hungry. (Alex, Interview 1, 9-29-17)

This factor can be seen in detail in this chapter in Edward's narrative that follows, as he is an exemplar of this aspect of ethical consideration along the continuum that stretches from ideal outcomes to worst case scenarios. This is illustrated in vivid detail as he conjured up the notion of a judgmental public, sitting watching the five o'clock news, making evaluative verdicts about the innocence or guilt of a teacher charged with having an inappropriate relationship with a student. As mentioned in Chapter 3, Edward described feelings of tension when navigating the need to have positive relationships with students, but also the necessity to keep clear boundaries. Edward revealed a great deal of his ethical meaning-making process when he described the issue at hand, which was how to best navigate what he characterized as competing expectations. At the heart of his teaching are the relationships he has built with students that he valued highly. Yet, he expressed a competing desire to ensure that that he can keep a safe distance from these same students. He provided a detailed account of his thought process for avoiding the situation altogether. Internally, Edward revealed that he is clearly able to see these issues from multiple perspectives. These perspectives include (a) his students' perspectives, (b) his own perspective as the teacher, (c) the professional expectation to establish positive teacher and student relationships, and (d) the outsiders' perspective, who might judge from afar as "the public." The club he sponsored was recognized with a trip, yet immediately Edward focused on the fact that

seven of the eight club officers are female Edward decided it was too risky to go on this trip with students.

He shared that he does keep in touch with his students through text but by using the Remind app so they do not have access to each other's number. He shared with students that they were getting honored, but withheld any details regarding dates and times of the event.

So, I went, got it, took pictures of it, sent it to them. They were like, teacher why didn't you take us? I was like oh I'm sorry. I didn't know you guys would be interested. I would have definitely taken you. And then one of the girls was like, I know you do want to take us. (Edward, Interview 1, 10-2-17)

Edward admitted she was right and explained his thought process in further detail:

Like yeah, when you go to the game I had to drink, I mean who goes to the ball park and doesn't drink, I can't do that with my students there. Two, I'm driving my own car. I'm not putting you guys in my car. Number three, its summer break so that means I have to go get all these approvals from everybody to take you guys. I don't have time for that. It's my break time because I didn't even do summer school. I want to enjoy my summer with my kids. Or like you could have told my mother; my mom knows you. She could have allowed me to go with you. I was like yeah, that's really good. I didn't think of that. (Edward, Interview 1, 10-2-17)

He often described situation in which what he is thinking is not revealed to students, instead he plays ignorant with students.

In my mind I'm like yeah, no way. If your mom is not going, I'm not going with you.

The other one is already 18 but still you're my student. So, you can make your own

decisions yes, but you're still my student so in the eyes of the public you're still my student. Nobody is going to care that oh, she is 18 that's why. If you're still my student, I'm in charge of you. I have to protect my students so that's why. And they were not happy about it but I told them hey, I have to do what I have to do. I have to think about my three kids. I mean I don't want to lose my license just because of something that I could have avoided. Had they asked the school to take them, will the school say yes? Of course not, there's no adult will allow me to have it so there is no way I was going to ask for it. So, why even waste your time? Yeah, so it's those things that normally if I do something, I try to look at it as an outsider. (Edward, Interview 1, 10-2-17)

Edward explained his thought processes, which were further illuminated by the contrapuntal tensions of the shift in voice from "I" to "you" to "they." Edward provided an account of the blood donation club for which he is the advisor winning a trip to a minor league baseball game.

Edward's explanation for his decision stems from how he looks at all scenarios that arise in his professional practice from multiple perspectives. He considers: (a) how another teacher or administrator might view and likely understand a scenario with a student, (b) how "the public" would view the same student scenario, (c) how, as a parent himself, he would view a scenario if it were his own daughter involved, and (d) how the student directly involved likely views the situation. Ultimately, Edward is the first to say that it hinges on the context, and it can be different each and every time. When torn, Edward tends to default to the side of caution, prioritizing the judging "public view." His stated rationale for this is that he must "protect his license" above all else, for his family's sake, and he described that he is explicit with his students when situations and scenarios arise— "that it is not personal" but necessary. For Edward, fear of the worst-case scenario wins over his hopes for the ideal outcome. Edward describes this

position as something he is not always proud of, but through self-reflection, discussion with trusted others, and a number of critical incidents that took place during his first years of teaching, it is the path he has chosen to handle conflicting goals.

Contrapuntal analysis further revealed the tensions apparent in Edward's explanation of the complexity of the situations that involve interaction with students. He portrayed the majority of his students as in need of a father figure and that they often seek attention from him as a male teacher that is known in his school community as caring and compassionate. Edward's perception of a judging public is real in his mind and represents the cases he himself has either witnessed or those which he has heard about first hand. Edward is not the only participant who has learned through another teacher's mistake; Alex, Charlotte, and Laura similarly made decisions about their own ethical conduct based on coworkers' missteps specifically around navigating the need for relationship boundaries with students. The more distanced cases of teachers who have either been accused or who have been convicted of having inappropriate student-teacher relationships loom large. The possible judgement and the chances of getting into trouble is a reality for these participants and they incorporate this into their decision making.

Edward provided an example in which he revealed the tensions inherent in being a male teacher, trying to build rapport with students and keep them at a distance. His mentor helped him more effectively prevent such situations by setting up some strategically delivered warnings such as:

Just remind them. Remind them that you married, remind that you have kids and they do that *all the time*. So, I joke with them "You're going to get me fired" and "I don't want to get fired. Don't walk in here coming and hugging me. People are going to start asking

questions.” You know when you joke about that more and more, it kind of sticks to them like yeah, “he doesn’t like to be hugged.” (Edward, Interview 1, 10-2-17)

Edward is very deliberate about his goal: His intent is to create a natural boundary that students will respect but that does not hurt their trust or negatively impact the bond that he has developed with his students. Edward has again found a middle ground between his own personal position that there should be no physical contact with students (the stance he takes as father of three daughters) and the reality that building trust and establishing connections with his students are important. He is able to adhere to policies in his district that discourage physical contact between teachers and students. The nuanced challenges that gender plays in his relational interactions with students can be seen in advice provided by an experienced female teacher:

“Be careful with these kids. These kids are not here for help.” And after she told me that, I started picking up things ... all these kids ... before they come to my room, they are wearing makeup. They have the lipstick on. I never paid attention to it until she brought it to my attention. So, she started telling me what things to do and she is the one who told me “hey, bring up to your wife, because, it’s going to stick in their head and that will help cushion or break what you say.” (Edward, Interview 1, 10-2-17)

Edward’s process reveals the tensions he experienced building and maintaining positive student relationships, his largest area of ethical conflict in his daily practice according to him.

Likewise, Charlotte revealed her ethical meaning making regarding how to establish and maintain appropriate student boundaries. Charlotte shared how she adheres to clear and cautious professional boundaries, but this was not always the case. Charlotte learned to navigate this and balance the tensions to care for her students and the need to adhere to school and district policies. At play for Charlotte was when she witnessed an unfortunate scenario that took place with her

colleague. This was meaningful to Charlotte because of what *could* have happened, and this was based on what *did* occur to her friend and colleague. A fellow teacher sent a child in her class to walk to the office with his older brother from another class to sign out for the day. But instead of walking to office, the siblings walked home, without official permission or knowledge of school personnel. Charlotte explained that while the parent did not have a problem with this, the Department of Child Protection (DCPP) opened an investigation, and her colleague was censured until the case was closed, which took a few months. Charlotte recounted that her colleague and friend, for whom she has a great deal of sympathy, was really affected emotionally by this because she meant no harm. Charlotte never really considered the ethical concept of non-maleficence prior to this incident. She took it for granted that families and administrators assumed that teachers always tried to avoid or minimize the harm caused by actions by them. Charlotte's fellow teacher made a decision to trust the brother because she had him in her class previously; he was reliable and many times he would come, pick up his two sisters, walk to the office, and wait in there. But on this day for whatever reason, they just walked home. Charlotte emphasized:

She meant no harm. This is not something where she was completely negligent but in the eyes of the law and from a legal standpoint, it was considered some kind of negligence. That negligence/ abuse is a painful, hurtful moment for someone who really meant no harm. But the legalities and the paperwork and the policies are so strictly enforced that you can't do that ... everything is okay, case is closed. Now we're all like, we're all up in double security which is great because now all the kids are truly safe. We're not saying oh, that's your uncle okay, yeah, go. We got lax and so now an unfortunate situation

created higher security, more information and, you know, an environment that is truly more secure for the kids. (Charlotte, Interview 2, 1-18-18)

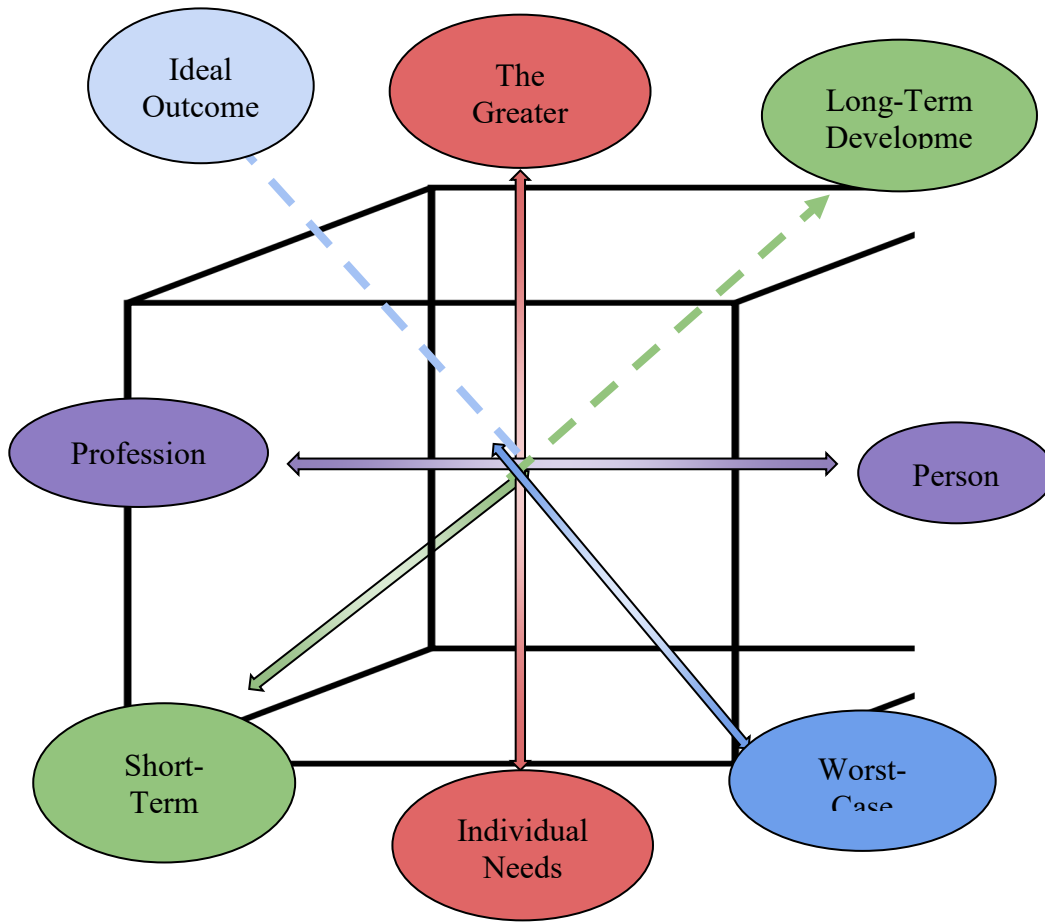
Dynamic Forcefield of Ethical Tensions

I have represented in Figure 4.6 how these multiple sets of competing tensions described in this chapter come together (i.e. each of the four continua) at particular times of internal conflict that participating teachers experience when making sense of their ethical practice. They can be illustrated together within a three-dimensional cube encapsulating the interplay between two or more of the continua in any given context. I used this matrix (Figure 4.6) as a tool and mapped how participants articulated understandings of their ethical dilemmas to determine intersecting spots and overall movement as they came to decisions, resolved feelings, thought about their perceived options, or determined their future actions. How many continua were at play varied at any given time, and there were times in which these continua crisscrossed, depending on the different stakeholders involved, the events that unfolded, and how participants engaged in meaning making. Participants differed in their approaches, and even when similar contexts, policies, and continua were at play across participants, the varying nature of the situations and the unique players involved highlighted the contrast in outcomes and conclusions from participants.

Once I began charting teachers' considerations, trends of movement became identifiable. These movement trends do not suggest that decision paths were the same across participants or themes of ethical dilemmas. Figure 4.6 outlines the four intersecting continua present during ethical meaning-making process and provides a means of capturing the decision path. Where considerations fall within the cube can help characterize the weighting of the factors influencing

the participating teachers' decisions. These continua intersect for participants, all in particular ways, but they can also cluster in various circumstances with different contexts.

Figure 4.6 Matrices of continua of the ethical meaning-making process



In many of the situations described by the participating teachers in this study, there was rarely only movement along one continuum at play. More often, multiple continua of tensions were at play simultaneously. Most of the participants in this study described a meaning-making process that embodied the complicated nature of navigating the ethical responsibilities of teaching that included multiple tensions at once based on the varying contexts in which they taught. It was evident that personal versus professional tensions were represented and ongoing

while the participant was also contemplating the dimensions of what could be important for student's long-term well-being, not simply short-term learning and growth.

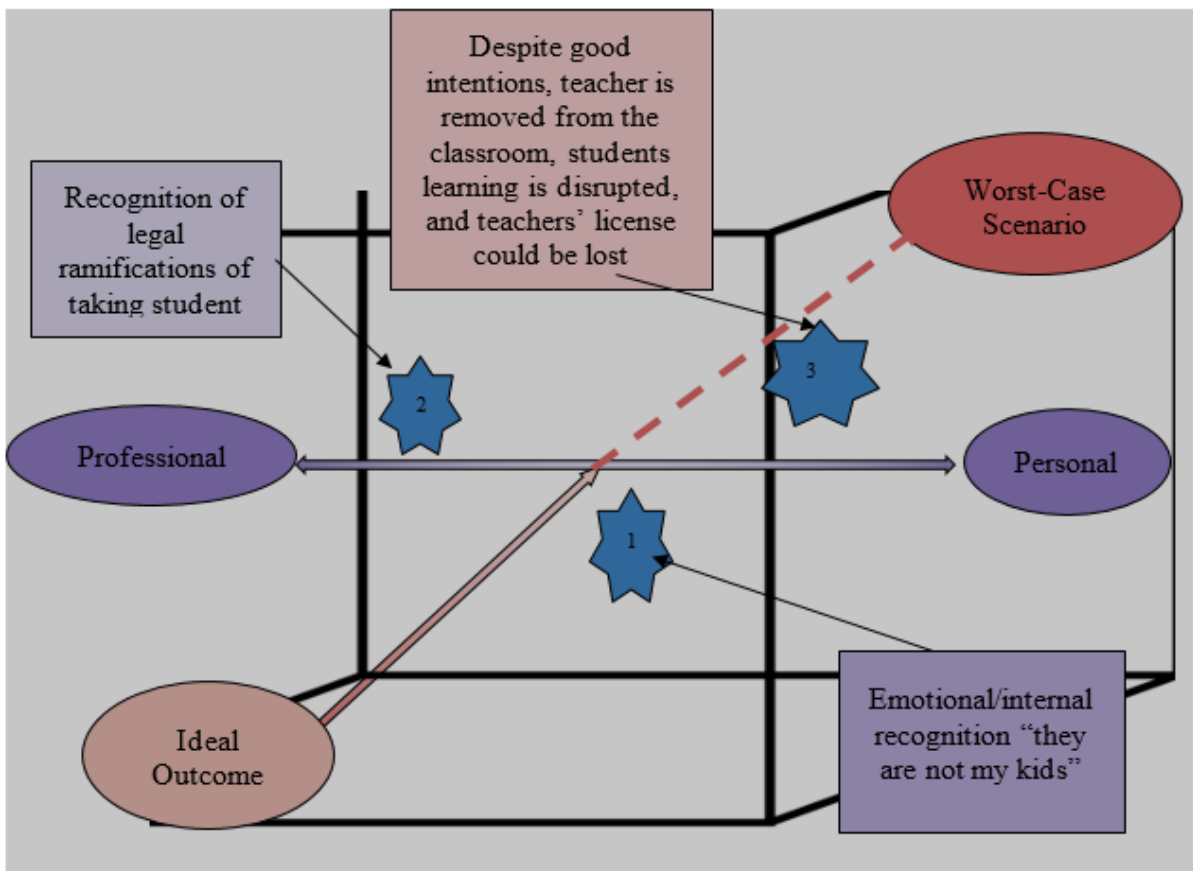


Figure 4.7 Charlotte's ethical meaning making of relationships mapped

Charlotte's meaning-making process of problematizing how to establish and maintain appropriate student relationships is mapped in Figure 4.7 to reflect the different continua identified and how they intersected, overlapped at times, and how untangling them was as intricate as a ball of tangled yarn. Mapping each of the participating teachers' decision-making processes in this study was pivotal. Decisions did cluster around certain ends of some of the continua at play. This was also mediated by the variety of circumstances in which the participating teachers contemplated their potential decisions. These continua played together,

intersecting at different points depending on the varying contexts, the participating teachers' identities, beliefs, and experiences, and the range of political, sociocultural, and relational systems in which they existed and operated.

The evidence presented thus far is best supported by an illustration of one of the participants' engagements in meaning making process along the various continua of competing tensions that are navigated. Figure 4.8 displays a graphic representation of the ways in which these tensions are situated as Charlotte described experiencing them in daily practice. As Charlotte explained, like most other teachers in the school, she empathized with her colleague for making a simple mistake that she too could make easily as well. Yet she explained the growth and change of perspective: "We got lax and so now an unfortunate situation created higher security, more information and, you know, an environment that is truly more secure for the kids" (Charlotte, Interview 2, 1-18-18). There is a sense that she recognized that this is how things should be, that professional ethical guidelines (and policies to support them) to better protect both students and teachers if all in the community of the school followed them.

Just as Edward described his rationale for his decisions and strategies to avoid being alone with students, Charlotte's meaning making departs from her earlier focus on solely care for students. She had come to recognize the importance of honoring guidelines of the profession and how these play out in the real context of her practice. Edward recognized that students cannot always be trusted to be honest, and to avoid any allegation of inappropriate interaction between students, it is best to never be alone with them, in order "to protect his license." The distinction exists for Charlotte as well who described wanting to provide emotional support for her students but with the protection of getting signed parental permission to go take a child for a haircut, for instance. According to Charlotte, she will always go above and beyond as a caring teacher or else

she would prefer to find another profession. It is not that Edward does not care, but he has carved out for himself guidelines and practices that keep boundaries in place, based on fear of potentially negative external perception. Edward can identify a variety of alternative solutions in his case (e.g., he could have asked his students families for permission to take them on the trip) but chose to forgo these in favor of “playing dumb” with his student who questioned him about the decision to forgo the trip altogether.

I am not going to put myself in that position. Let me look at it from the public view.

What will the public say? So, I protect that license first. And I tell the kids, I'm like, “sometimes it's not anything about you” or “it's not like a personal attack, but it's just, that's how it is.” Sometimes you have to protect you and I have to protect me. (Edward, Interview 1, 10-2-17)

Edward was born and raised in another country and culture, and often described having to ask his wife and colleagues for guidance on cultural norms in the United States. His overarching ethical meaning making included a distanced view, the perspective of the outsider, and a judge of his behavior as it could appear without the specific personal or professional knowledge of his values, moral beliefs, or professional record of ethical conduct. Edward preferred to protect himself and preserve his reputation and his license. He makes ethical meaning of his professional practices very carefully after considering a host of factors, including policies, his students' needs, administrator's views, family members potential reactions, his own view as a parent, and the legal implications of his actions.

In sum, there are a host of ways in which ethical meaning is made across teacher participants that vary based on scenarios and contexts. Overall there are a series of four continua that intersect and together help represent the ways participating teachers made meaning of ethical

practice. First, there is a continuum that represents at one end, professional, and at the other end, personal. Second, there is also a continuum that signifies how teachers can focus on *short-term* results on one end with regard to students' academic learning, emotional, interpersonal, and developmental needs versus students' *long-term* development and growth in these same domains. Next, there is a range across a continuum that spans a communal versus an individual orientation to ethical practice for teachers. Finally, there is a conceptualization of the *ideal* outcomes in any given situation versus *worst case* scenarios imagined along a continuum as described by participants regarding how they made meaning of ethical practice. These can be illustrated together within a three-dimensional cube encapsulating the four continua. Mapping participating teachers' meaning-making process in their described narratives helped to delineate how they deliberated and came to make sense of ethical practice.

In this chapter, I explored how charting these teacher participants' considerations along the four continua come together in certain contexts. By highlighting participants and their ethical considerations, noting their decision points, and mapping them, in a definitive flow that took shape and some patterns began to emerge reflecting a grounded theory of these teachers' ethical decision making.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Implications

I began my study looking to better understand how teachers make meaning of ethical practice. As described in Chapter 4, the way in which the 12 participating teachers in this study made meaning of their ethical practice was far from simple. While their meaning making was complicated by the differing scenarios they faced and the various school contexts in which they worked, there were trends that emerged. Overall findings suggested that these teachers have the ability to weigh what is best for students within the competing tensions represented on four continua (see Figure 5.1). To summarize, the first continuum represents, at one end, a professional orientation of ethics and, at the other end, a more personal moral orientation that informed ethical practice. The second continuum signifies how teachers made sense of students' *short-term* versus *long-term* development and growth with regard to students' academic learning, emotional, interpersonal, and developmental needs. The third continuum is one in which teachers felt torn between honoring the needs of an individual student versus the pull towards the needs of the greater community. The fourth continuum represents how these teachers navigated the desire to contribute toward *ideal* outcomes in any given situation versus avoiding the *worst-case* scenarios. These four continua were often intertwined, muddy, and played out recursively for participating teachers. Not every continuum was at play in every circumstance, but often, two or more continua were represented and weighed into participants' ethical decision making. What is particularly fascinating is the manner in which many of the participating teachers were able to avoid binaries while navigating these tensions in order to make decisions they could justify. This is not to say these decisions were easily made nor did participating teachers feel good about all of their decisions. Their confidence in their decisions at times was lacking, but even in these moments, they could clearly articulate their meaning making of ethical practice and unpack the

issues that were at play. Given these participating teachers possessed an array of personal moral orientations and worked in varied school contexts, it is not surprising that they experienced pressures differently.

Personal versus Professional Responsibility



Short-Term Growth to Long-Term Development



Individual Needs as Opposed to the Greater Community



Ideal Outcomes and Worst-Case Scenarios



Figure 5.1 Four continua of competing tensions

The participating teachers in this study employed a balanced approach to mediating the tensions they encountered in their educational practice. These participating teachers made decisions that ultimately prioritized what is best for the student, even when more than one

continuum of tensions intermingled and further complicated their decisions about how best to proceed.

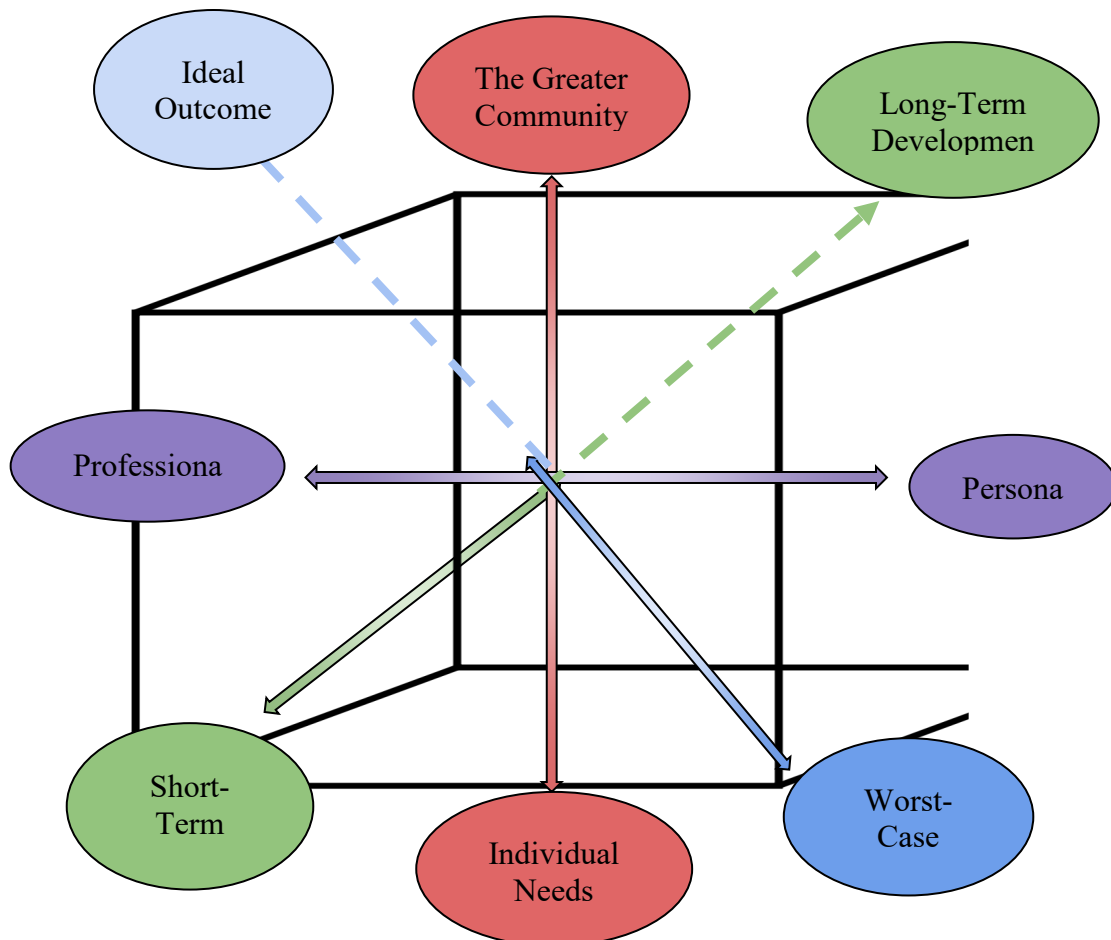


Figure 5.2 Matrices of continua as a forcefield of tensions

In the last part of Chapter 4, one participating teacher's meaning-making process is mapped to help to delineate how she deliberated and came to make sense of daily ethical practice. Figure 5.2 brings together the various continua in a three-dimensional representation. By charting each of these teacher participants' ethical considerations along the four continua, I was able to better understand how the various continua come together in certain contexts. By highlighting a participant's decision points, I illustrated the dynamic forcefield of tensions that

took shape, which varied based on context, participants' growth and development, and students' circumstances. Some patterns began to emerge about how these tensions played together in different ways at various times. Findings from this study indicated that meaning making may begin in a space that is internal to the person, framed by her personal sense of morality, but it then moved along the different continua to encompass both internal and external tensions and understandings that inform professional practice and help these participating teachers determine course of action in any given situation. This study led to forming a theory of these teachers' ethical decision-making process—essentially how these teachers considered and enacted ethical practice. The multiple sets of tensions that teachers navigate and face daily are represented on these continua, and they come together based on the unique situation, participant, multiple stakeholders involved, and their varying contexts. Not every continuum is at play in every circumstance, but often multiple continua are at play simultaneously complicating the nature of teachers' decisions. Unlike moral distress, characterized by a reaction to a situation in which there are moral issues at hand, but which have clear solutions where the problem is external constraints that prevent following moral beliefs, ethical dilemmas teachers described in this study had no clear solutions. Instead, these teachers faced making choices between equally unfavorable alternatives, and usually on at least two sets of tensions simultaneously.

Before discussing some implications of these four continua, however, the importance of care and its role in ethical practice must first be examined more closely to better understand how it undergirds all aspects of these teachers' practices. Ethics in any profession are, by definition, about shared understandings, communally agreed upon principles of engagement, codes of involvement that guide actions, and set rules of participation that ensure safety and well-being, productivity positive learning and development. Lowenstein's (2008) conceptualization of ethics

emphasized maximizing good and minimizing harm and suggested that ethics are an attempt to think critically about human conduct, determining what is right and wrong, what is good and bad.

Reframing Personal versus Professional Understandings

The previous chapter discussed how these teachers came to understand ethical practice and enact decisions that honor what is best for the student. By reviewing the interviews and critical incidents of study participants, I came to recognize that the way participating teachers made meaning of ethics in daily practice was framed by their personal moral understandings of what it means to be a caring ethical educator, as well as their sense of obligation to enact in daily practice standards they recognized to be part of the profession. This study's findings also illustrated that this understanding was impacted by the situational and contextual tensions pulling participants in different directions. This personal/professional tension has implications for rethinking teacher education and professional development.

When I began reviewing participating teachers' interviews using Gilligan's *Listening Guide*, I began to see patterns that tended to indicate that meaning making began in a space that is internal to the person. These are framed by one's personal sense of morality but then moved along the continuum representing multiple external tensions, most often represented by a set of professional obligations to which participating teachers often felt beholden to honor (e.g., teachers must show equity, fairness, and inclusivity). Given the ways in which a personal sense of morality framed professional ethics for some of the teachers in this study, it is clear that this is still a grey area for many, and the reality is that there is no one right answer. Those working in teacher education may benefit from recognizing this reality. As Hutchings (2016) suggested when Educational Testing Services featured a series on professional ethics,

We, as a profession, need to shift away from the idea that our personal sense of ethics—driven in large part by our upbringing and our life experiences—is enough to help us navigate all the situations we face in the classroom. Even the expectations and norms that evolve in each school vary so much that they alone can't serve as the sole guide to our decisions. And along with the need for collective understanding of the challenges we face as professionals, we need to acknowledge the inherent risks—ethical, practical and often legal—teachers face on a daily basis. (Hutchings, 2016)

The findings of this study suggest that Hutchings is correct in that personal experiences are not enough to navigate the risks that teachers face every day, nor are the mere creation and existence of policies and regulations. These policies are created to protect both students and teachers as well as other professional staff, but the degree to which the 12 participating teachers felt pressured to adhere to policies varied by incident and by school in this study. That being said, given that the historical rationale for most teacher regulations rests in the reality that teachers work with particularly vulnerable clientele, the importance of rules must be recognized (Strike, 1990c). While many of the teachers in this study acknowledged the importance of rules to guide conduct and recognized the intent behind rules are to protect both students and teachers, they ultimately described following rules as something mainly to do to ensure protection in the event of potential grey areas. As Strike (1990c) explained, there is a deeper rationale for rules beyond covering oneself, mainly because “Children rarely know when they are being dealt with unethically. Even when they do, they are limited in their ability to characterize their complaints, and enforcement mechanisms are not available to them without the cooperation of parents and administrators” (p. 207).

Many countries currently lack codes of ethics, laws, and policies to help teachers navigate daily ethical terrain (French-Lee & Dooley, 2015; O'Neill & Bourke, 2010; Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2016; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2010). Additionally, for those nations where codes of ethical and professional conduct exist (e.g., those outlined in Chapter 1), teachers still struggle with navigating and abiding by these principles based on situational differences. In this study, the tensions described by teacher participants with regard to their personal moral understandings and their perception of conflicting profession obligations reflects this reality. Professionals undoubtedly have a responsibility to make decisions and enact principles that extend past their personal objections, yet teachers in this study felt conflicted about doing so for a number of reasons explained herein. As Gilligan and Attanucci (1988) first posited, often following rules and policies representing tends to represent the justice stance and are often pitted against the care approach. In actuality, the findings of this study show that most teachers are making decisions that employ a more integrated approach that incorporates aspects of both care and justice. Building on the work of Gilligan and Attanucci (1988), Adams (2015) explored the relationship between the morality of justice and the morality of care, proposing, as found in this study, that they are intertwined. Perhaps this explanation helps to unpack why Kohlberg's (1981) six stages, while foundational in the field, are insufficient to explain how teachers navigate ethically charged situations of practice. Similarly, it may be unsatisfactory to use a theory of moral development to account for teachers' ethical meaning-making process.

As revealed by the data in this study, some participating teachers seemed to be guided by their internal personal norms, while others gravitated towards acting on an external professionally dictated set of norms for conduct. Participants described their understandings of professional ethics as being largely based on the way they were raised and their desire to help

their students be successful. Teacher participants' perceptions of ethics at times gravitated towards the personal end of the personal/professional continuum and aligned with what Wueste (1994) found and observed: Many people gravitate to what he labeled a private morality versus a public morality. Even with a relatively small sample size in this study, these teachers' personal orientations regarding ethics represented and echoed many of their views regarding the ways they approach the professional challenges associated with ethics. Reflective practice opportunities offered through school and district professional development programs could provide a space to examine personal versus professional ethical stances, and various approaches to classroom scenarios that could be beneficial for practicing teachers.

Implications for Pre-Service Teacher Education Programs

This study suggests potential implications and recommendations for pre-service teacher education programs. For example, given the reality that teachers don't necessarily make distinctions between what is moral, professional, and ethical as delineated in the literature, it can be debated whether such delineations are useful in practice. For pre-service teachers, a more structured approach to engaging with ethical principles is warranted. Hutchings (2016) provided a helpful reminder that as a profession, our personal sense of ethics is not enough to help us navigate the demands teachers face, given the variability of school contexts and expectations. None of the participating teachers in this study cited memories of addressing ethics generally or specifically in a stand-alone course or through a more integrated approach. My recommendation is to offer more professional development opportunities that purposefully explore reflective practice while contextualizing and integrating the blend of both personal moral beliefs and professional ethics as they evolve and emerge in daily practice. Results of this study suggest that ethical teachers' ethical decision-making process is a combination of the ability to personally

know and reflect upon their beliefs and step beyond these beliefs when student needs warrant such action.

Additionally, principal/supervision and leadership programs must dedicate more time to cultivating awareness, active modeling, and teaching leaders how to cultivate ethical school cultures that support ethical reflection. Presenting ethical case studies and scenarios to teachers offer opportunities for examination, critical dialog and alternatives to navigating ethical challenges. It is expected that in such scenario discussions, a result might be that there is a lack of agreement on what are the best approaches. Alternatively, there might be consensus that regardless of case, all depend on a variety of factors, the context, the situation, and who are the teacher and students. This must be explored collaboratively in both school contexts as well as leadership preparation programs. There is added value for teachers, administrators, and school support professionals exploring multiple paths of action and the implications of cases to debate in professional development initiatives such as professional learning communities.

The teachers in this study varied in their certification pathway, but regardless of traditional or alternative route, no course addressed ethical issues, an all too common trend, according to Maxwell and colleagues (2016), a reality that must change in teacher preparation. After conducting a survey in five countries—the United States, England, Canada, Australia, and the Netherlands—Maxwell et al. (2017) found that only 24% of initial teacher education programs required a stand-alone ethics course compared to significantly more requirements in other fields (e.g., 91% of doctoral dentistry programs [Berk, 2001], 63% of neuroscience programs [Walther, 2013], 50% of medicine programs [Lehmann et al., 2004], and 50% of business programs [Christensen et al., 2007]). Only engineering was lower than teaching at 17%, according to Maxwell and colleagues (2016). Notably, Maxwell et al.'s sample expanded upon a

study done in 2007 by Glanzer and Ream that found that among 151 teacher education programs, only 6% required an ethics-related course, indicating there has been an increase in the last 10 years. However, Glanzer and Ream (2007) found much higher percentages of ethics courses at the time of their study in other fields such as nursing, social work, journalism, business, engineering, and computer science, where one third to one half of programs and majors required at least one course fully devoted to exploring the ethics of the profession.

Both Maxwell and colleagues (2016) and Glanzer and Ream (2007) were careful to include religiously affiliated institutions, given respondents from these institutions were more likely to perceive courses as being related to ethics, even if it wasn't necessarily labeled as such at religious institutions. Similarly, characterizations of ethics being integrated or blended into everything at the institution were more frequent at religiously affiliated colleges and universities. Integrated approaches are a slippery slope at best. While professional sequence course credits are often limited, instructors may be difficult to find, and because creating a new course on the ethical issues of teaching takes time and research, the endeavor to offer a fully devoted course in the ethics of teaching should be a higher priority. Ethical preparation for teachers is a responsibility that should not fall fully on local school districts entirely. At the very least, it should be a collaborative initiative between teacher education programs and school districts. In teacher education program coursework, the greatest area of overlap currently between university faculty and local schoolteachers and administrators is during the clinical component, when student teachers are supervised on site in local schools. However, to say that this integrated approach is where ethical responsibilities are addressed would be presumptuous at best. Teacher education clinical experiences are often treated as the "catch all" courses that culminate in evaluative measure of all program goals and candidate dispositions. Recent additions, such as the

edTPA—a portfolio to evaluate teacher competencies in planning, implementing instruction, assessment, and feedback practices—further cramp what are often brief seminar courses with limited credit allowances. Alternatively, addressing ethical practice and teachers' ethical responsibilities could be addressed through the edTPA in a more structured way.

Maxwell and Schwimmer (2016) conducted a review that further revealed another problematic issue regarding ethics and teacher education. They highlighted trends in students enrolled in teacher education programs, specifically work done with the defining issues test (DIT), mentioned in Chapter 2 (i.e., a validated standardized test of moral reasoning). Multiple studies revealed that students enrolled in teacher education obtained lower scores than their peers from other professional programs (Bloom, 1976; Chang, 1994; Cummings, Dyas, Maddux, & Kochman, 2001; McNeel, 1994; Yeazell & Johnson, 1988). Theories that possibly explain this troubling trend include a lower average age amongst teacher education students when compared to students in law and medicine, lower average overall GPA in teacher education students when compared to students in these same professional domains, and the suggestion that teacher education programs provide less opportunity for critical thinking in coursework than other professional programs (Cummings, Harlow & Maddux, 2007; Cummings, Wiest, Lamitina, & Maddux, 2003; Cummings, Maddux, & Cladianos, 2010). These findings suggest that the reverse should be true, that teacher education programs should be even more inclined to require at least a course in ethics for aspiring teachers. This study did not include any assessment of ethical reasoning such as the DIT, and while the sample size was small, the participating teachers' ability to engage in ethical meaning making was evident throughout. There was little doubt of their moral reasoning abilities, although it begs the question of what would be different had they encountered a course in their teacher preparation program at an earlier point or at the very least if

they had experienced an integrated approach to ethics in teaching? The participating teachers in this study attended a variety of university-based preparation programs for teaching, and none reported any structured ethical preparation during their preparation programs, regardless of the mode of delivery, whether in the form of a course, integrated approach, or otherwise. Teacher education programs need to seriously reconsider this reality and would be wise to make strides to address teachers' ethical dilemmas intentionally and directly through coursework at the preservice stage of their education.

More Research: Affordances and Constraints

There is a dearth of research in the teacher education literature on pre-service or practicing teachers' ethical preparation or professional development linked to any positive teacher-student outcomes or reduction in negative incidents of lying, cheating, or abuse. Research in this area is clearly necessary. Similarly, there is an absence of research comparing the effects of teachers who have had a course in ethics versus those who went through programs with an integrated approach to teachers' ethical preparation, as compared to those teachers who lacked any ethical preparation. Likewise, little has been evaluated internationally comparing ethical decision making across professional fields. Grossman and colleagues (2009) investigated how people are prepared for professional practice in the clergy, teaching, and clinical psychology and found that teachers have fewer opportunities than the other two groups to engage in organized discussion of their practice, even though these three professions share similar challenges. Participating teachers in this study had numerous critical ethical incidents that they recorded daily. In sum, there are a plethora of potential areas of investigation that may well add to the existing cross-professional perspectives and research involving teachers' ethical meaning making.

Who is Responsible for Teachers' Ethical Preparation?

Ten years ago, in New Jersey, Guarneri (2009) compared the professional contracts of nursing and teaching and the severity rating of ethical codes of conduct in the content of the union contract. She found that nursing had a strong severity rating, while teaching has a low severity rating. Guarneri cited research asserting that codes of conduct provide frameworks that assist in making professional decisions, an important function given that “teachers have a responsibility for being temporary guardian for the students entrusted to them” (Guarneri, 2009, p.16). As Barrett, Neal, Stovall and Whittel (2006) claimed, codes of conduct have been proven over the years to decrease the number and severity of cases of inappropriate behavior. Therefore, in addition to further research linking teachers' ethical preparation to a decrease in student cases of harm, more research is necessary to determine if (a) ethical preparation is best left to teacher preparation programs, (b) it is the sole responsibility of the local districts, (c) it is the charge of the teachers' union, or even (d) if the appropriate venue is cyberspace/online via various third-party providers contracted by districts who are held legally responsible when a student is harmed by a teacher.

Recently there has been a proliferation of online modular-based delivery platforms for teachers' ethical preparation. Providers include Educational Testing Services' ProEthica program, NASDTEC Academy, ACE Educational Services, and Educational Development Associates, LLC. There is an array of programming options among all of these providers to cover a host of ethical dilemmas and situations, including anger management, appropriate use of social media for teachers, setting appropriate student-teacher boundaries, educational assessment and testing policies, cultural sensitivity training, sexual harassment in the workplace, and navigating the ethical issues involved in intervention and advocating for special education

services. Increasingly families of victims and advocacy groups are petitioning states and passing legislation to ensure local school districts are not solely responsible for providing this guidance. Instead more and more states are requiring that teacher education programs provide such training to their students in order for candidates to be recommended for certification. For example, the New Jersey Standards of Professional Practice stipulate that teachers need to be able to identify “that their individual actions reflect the entire profession and understand that they are employees vested with the public trust” (NJEA, 2009, p. 60). Recent legislation passed in New Jersey requires teacher education programs to provide training for harassment, intimidation, and bullying, as well as child abuse identification and prevention for prospective teacher education students. This is one example of evidence that policymakers and legislators have recognized that teacher education programs must play a more active role in providing guidance to pre-service teachers about how to protect students from harm, and at the very least report sign of potential abuse to ensure it will be properly investigated.

What is the Most Effective Approach to Ethical Preparation?

Whether in a stand-alone course, through professional development modules, or in an integrated approach to ethical preparation in a comprehensive program, there is evidence to support the benefits of teachers applying ethical concepts to specific cases (Blumenfeld-Jones et al., 2013; Warnick & Silverman, 2011). This could allow pre-service teachers to weigh their personal views, discuss with others similarities and differences of approaches, and evaluate multiple ways to address situations of practice.

There are also programs that tend to focus on cultivating growth in teachers' dispositions as a way of addressing teachers' ethical responsibilities. Johnson et al. (2013) studied a program that focused on ethical responsibilities of teaching both in its curriculum and though embedded

discussions of field experiences. This is a start with respect to providing more formalized instruction for pre-service teachers that is much needed. Since the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) developing its specific Code of Ethics for special educators in 2003, many special education programs have begun to offer more specific guidance for special educators regarding what avenues to pursue when advocating for uniquely-abled best students' best quality of life possible. For the five special educators in this study, as an example, many expressed grave concerns that they have become part of a system that essentially isn't necessarily beneficial for their students overall, a truth they find hard to reconcile ethically. Their personal ethics seemed to be playing into this issue, and yet they described how aware they are of their professional duties and their job descriptions. They do not personally agree with the systems in which they work and yet technically, their professional contract outlines explicitly what their responsibilities are and that they are beholden to enact in this very system. When situations emerged, as they inevitably did for most teachers in this study who experienced a desire to advocate for a student who needed something different from what special education service providers, or families demanded, they tried to stand up and speak for what they perceived to be ethically or morally wrong for their student. As multiple teachers confessed in this study, there were times in which they had to decide in the spur of the moment, and their position was resoundingly that if they could get away with decisions that resulted in a higher education or placements that ultimately led to students' growth or quality of life long-term, they would do it. They didn't choose to follow policy. Rather they opted for what was right for the student. Given that increasing the number of teachers with special education certification is a critical need in New Jersey, more explicit engagement in ethical issues during teacher preparation would be beneficial. These situations contain a host of options regarding how teachers can best navigate advocacy of

uniquely-abled students' growth and increase their quality of life. As disability studies programs proliferate in New Jersey, adding more explicit ethical engagement in curriculum and coursework examination can make a positive difference in their preparation. Having students in all certification areas be involved in these discussions in courses is also critical. Teachers, school leaders and support professionals each play a role in creating environments that are or are not supportive of inclusive education practices.

School Ethical Climate

This preceding discussion raises the questions, how are teachers properly prepared to gauge and positively contribute to schools' ethical climates? Are school leaders prepared to effectively establish and maintain positive, respectful, ethical school climates? Is this also an area that preparation programs leave solely to on the job learning, aside from the cursory educational law course in principal and supervision preparation programs? Very often, teachers in this study described how they might take on formal administration roles in order to have a better chance of cultivating a school community in which they could satisfy their own personal sense of what constitutes a positive environment for students and teachers. Yet often these same participating teachers would reconsider this professional option and settle into a firm stance that they would never go into administration, citing the many situations that arise in which they felt pulled in different directions, and at least, as a teacher, the odds were higher that they would not get caught and could continue to act in accordance with their personal values and sense of what is right for student's with more success. More research is necessary to delve more deeply into this sense of 'undercover' ethical teaching, or teaching on the edge (Alex, Interview 2, 1-30-18). In this study, participating teachers' sense of agency was an element that surfaced in relation to the ethical dilemmas that they faced, and the implications of this are worth further exploring because

rarely did participating teachers in this study share their ethical dilemmas with principals. They reported in moments in which they felt torn between two courses of action, it was uncomfortable position to be in and feared others' judgment. They only chose to share with people in their life that they felt very comfortable, typically family members or personal friends or a very trusted professional colleague. They feared others' perceptions. Often, they were hesitant to share that they did not know which option was best. School administrators were viewed as those individuals who uphold and enforce school policies, and therefore not the members of the community that they could share their desire to consider bending or breaking a rule even for the ultimate benefit of a students' development or quality of life.

Yet, a word of caution: It is also critical to avoid overstating this Robin Hood characterization or falling into a tendency to romanticize teachers' decisions or meaning making of their choices and the outcomes. A balanced approach is critical in that there were also moments of confession: Participating teachers were very straightforward in their admission that "as long as the stakes are not too high," they will make decisions in favor of a personal sense of morality and choose a course of action that honors personal beliefs about what is right in the long-term with respect to supporting students' growth and future development, above school or district policies or colleagues' opinions. Quite a few of the participating teachers in this study admitted freely that when push came to shove, they would act in favor of students' best interests in numerous ways, even when professional stakes were high, but there are still limits that they describe as having had to learn the hard way through experience, always with accompanying scars on their identity as teachers. These teachers described various situations: (a) ones in which there is sometimes space to make decisions to honor personal beliefs and resist the structures in place, versus (b) situations in which there is very little space in which to do anything other than

abide by system policies and legal rules or else face the consequences that translated into not having a teaching position. Only their own experience or the experiences of someone trusted and close to them professionally appears to have really taught these teachers how to distinguish their ethical choices from one another. If teachers could come together professionally to share these processes and encounters with one another in an intimate, focused, and purposeful setting, and reflect and pass along the wisdom gained through these experiences, much would be gained.

Augmenting teachers' professional development opportunities to encourage them to reflect on these realistic or real ethical dilemma scenarios in a professional context with their peers would be greatly beneficial for practicing teachers. This would ideally take place within in-person in small-group settings in a course facilitated by professors who have scholarly ethics backgrounds. It could potentially also be engaged in through an online course or through a professional learning community or teacher affinity space (Plein, 2018). Comparing and contrasting strategies for dealing with ethical challenges could provide an opportunity for teachers to become better acquainted, collaborate more, and build trust with one another locally or across vast geographic spaces, making ethics in education a "glocal" community endeavor across state and national boundaries. Sharing approaches to ethical scenarios, and to critically evaluating various ways in which to respond and proceed would be beneficial for pre-service teachers, as well. This could be delivered through a course prior to entering the profession. Additionally, there is value in addressing and reviewing ethical scenarios during the first few years of professional teaching. New Teacher Induction Programs could provide professional development opportunities to engage teachers in this pivotal stage. There are a host of potential benefits including increasing teacher retention, since half leave the profession by the five-year mark nationally. While this study's small sample size prevents generalizations, there are many

teachers who are akin to those in this study that would benefit from this examination of ethical practice in the first few years of teaching. For instance, even the participating teachers who espoused definitions that fell towards the professional end of the personal/professional continuum can benefit from engaged reflection with colleagues who contemplate cases and scenarios and who might advocate for approaches other than their own preferred courses of action.

How does Gender Factor In?

There were two teachers in this study who articulated a resolute and unwavering sense of ethical teaching as upholding a set of expectations espoused by the school, the district, or the teaching profession, rather than engaging in any contemplation of possible conflicting personal values. These teachers described the role of teacher very much as a public figure, representing both the high school and the district in the way of conducting oneself. These two participating teachers were the only male teachers in this study. Professional ethics for these teachers included many rules and responsibility of the position, but they also acknowledged that there is an intuitive aspect to knowing what's right and what's wrong. What emerged with these two participating male teachers specifically was an articulation of the importance of serving as a role model for students as part of the teachers' role. This resonated with Campbell's (2008b) steadfast claim that with the other tasks involved in teaching comes an inherent role as student guide to being a better person, a moral human being. For Gilligan, all of humanity, both men and women, can participate in feminine ethics, essentially proposing that to be a better human is tied to embracing both the masculine and feminine aspects of the role of teaching, including the dispositions such as care giving that has historically been assigned to women in the education sphere. Since gender and feminism are broad spectrums, more discussions are necessary to assist

pre-service and practicing teachers unpack their perspectives on topics that ultimately help frame ethical practice. Furthermore, since not all feminists endorse care ethics, it is important to explore the variations in approach to morality, ethics and gender. Therein lies the heart of why professional development for practicing educators must include discussions about ethical stances, standards, and how teachers approach ethical case studies differently. Addressing how gender issues relate to ethical stances with pre-service and practicing teachers is likely beneficial for teachers on either ends of the first continuum, and all points in between, of this personal/professional continuum. Identifying the multiple tensions at play in any given situation and how to effectively deal with these tensions practically is a complex but a worthwhile endeavor, given the host of ethical quandaries present in teachers everyday interactions in the classroom.

An Ethic of Self Care

As described in Chapter 4, an ethic of care repeatedly framed participants' objectives, understandings, and undergirded their sense of professional responsibility to their students. It can be reasonably stated that given the interpersonal nature of teaching, and the inherent need to focus on relationships between teachers and students, the ways in which teachers define themselves in terms of care are important to note (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2010; Tirri & Husu, 2002). Teachers are ultimately responsible for being responsive to another individual's needs, not simply in the context of a solitary individual at a time, such as in the case of psychologists or counselors. By contrast, teachers are typically providing direct care for 20 or more individuals daily for upwards of 10 months in a given year. Like other helping professionals, the toll taken for providing individualized care can be daunting and taxing for the care provider. In this study, many participants described struggling with the tensions of serving as caregivers *professionally*

and the demands of *personally* being a caregiver to their own families and themselves. The teachers in this study articulated the stress and exhaustion associated with the constant need to provide care for students, especially for students who come to school with a plethora of complicated needs and a lack of support or resources. This manifested for participants in this study in the forms they specifically noted as experiencing at times sleep problems, fatigue, illness, post-traumatic stress, weight gain, physical injury due to students, general and specific anxiety, and depression at times. Participating teachers in this study described that each day the demands for expression of empathy, sympathy, compassion, time spent being available to listen to students were endless. In this way, an ethic of care was often described as a burden they carried, with a negative spin: Teachers in this study described that there were many moments in which they experienced a sense of depletion, exhaustion, being unappreciated, and dismissed and treated sometimes as glorified babysitters, the ultimate manual labor, service industry worker, and far from a professional educator.

Whether new to the profession or experienced in terms of having spent a number of years teaching in multiple school contexts, teachers described the taxing nature of serving as a caregiver without receiving a return of care, being cared for, even in the form of thanks or appreciation expressed by students. One implication of this described state is that perhaps there is some credence for providing teachers with preparation for how to handle burnout prior to entering the profession as well as professional resources for providing self-care during their professional service. The benefits to the field of education for providing more proactive guidance and education in burnout goes beyond economic savings associated with fewer sick days, lower health care costs, and the long-term cost savings of preventing 50% of teachers leaving the profession by year five. Providing ongoing support in this area costs far less in the larger scope

of the teacher supply pipeline and far outweighs efforts spent sustaining the revolving door of those professionals leaving the profession every few years.

Teachers in this study repeatedly raised the need for self-care as an ethical problem based on the belief that their ability to help students is compromised when their physical, mental, or emotional health is less than optimal. This tension can be found along the first continuum between personal and professional, as well as along the third continuum representing the pull felt between individual needs and the needs of the greater community. Participating teachers described how challenging it is to work in a profession in which there are constant demands to sacrifice their own needs in order to meet the needs of others. These tensions emerged regularly, and caused feelings of frustration, disappointment, and dissatisfaction. Many participating teachers described failed attempts to meet goals they set to better attend to their own needs. Many described falling into a mode that including having a short temper, snapping at students, and operating in a general state of elevated tension. What began as what these participating teachers described as a temporary state of being often extended into a longer mode of operating amidst constant stress and feelings of failing to meet their personal needs. This included teachers' felt need to prioritize grading assignments and planning lessons over getting a good night of sleep on a regular basis. This occurred because the school day was spent attending to students', colleagues', and administrators' needs, which took precedence over their own planning and other professional responsibilities. Participating teachers explained how this often leaves this individual professional work for home, causing family/parenting and self-care time to be sacrificed on a regular basis, leading to further feelings of guilt, disappointment, and dissatisfaction with profession. Many of these participants confessed that after being through this cycle of negativity multiple times, they question if teaching is a good fit for them or their

families, or whether they are just not cut out for the profession, blaming themselves for a lack of ability to carve out more defined boundaries between personal and professional responsibilities. Any severe or prolonged stress (Soderfelt & Soderfelt, 1995) can affect the psychological state of human service workers. Maslach and Jackson (1981) defined burnout as a syndrome of emotional exhaustion and cynicism that occurs frequently among those who do “people-work” of some kind (p. 99). The tug often described in this study associated with providing care for students included a phenomenon that created both internal and personal tensions for participating teachers and their families. One tension articulated was the balancing act teachers described in which they are charged with both taking care of their students all day at school, while also be responsible for the needs of their own families. In the early years of teaching someone inevitably lost, and most described the loser as their personal partner, spouse, children, family members, and friends, not to mention themselves, as their own personal needs came last.

Surprisingly, teachers in this study repeatedly described this as a daily ethical dilemma, not simply a work–life balance challenge. As caregivers, they expressed often experiencing a crisis between caring for others at the expense of caring for themselves. This seems to become more heightened when they have children of their own, and as caregivers they are pulled in two directions, between meeting the needs of both children at home and at school. In these situations, they described their own personal needs often falling to last place in their priority list. The quest for balance between communal and individual caregiving responsibilities emerged as one of the largest areas of challenge described by the teachers in this study. While less experienced teachers experienced heightened sense of this dilemma, more experienced teachers described experiences these challenges just as often. The difference for more experienced teachers was the progress they had made developing coping skills over the years. As an ethical issue, there was a sense of

feeling torn, not between a clear right (i.e., each of my students deserves the time they need from me to be cared for and nurtured) and wrong but rather between two rights (i.e., my own children deserve my full attention even after a full day at school where I have been a caregiver all day to 28 children). Practically speaking, it should be possible and realistic to take care of others, and also take care of oneself, but as Zellmer (2004) posited, this is skill acquired through learning, practice, ongoing reflective practice and the collaborative support of others. This again could be an opportunity to form working groups, ways in which to support each other as professionals and as social influencers of one another.

Setting Limits Could Be Translated into More Effective Teaching

Participants described ways in which they daily engaged in an act of negotiating with and allotting their time and energy to themselves, with their families, with their students, and with their school principals. Some teachers described failing at their attempts to avoid physical exhaustion and emotional overload. They confessed they planned to move schools soon, in hopes of it getting better or, if not better soon in another school context, then moving into working with students in a capacity other than teaching in a school setting with upwards of 120 students each semester. Subtle resonances emerged through the recurring words they used so often about the ethical challenges of “staying caring.” None of the teachers in this study wanted to become what they saw in some of their colleagues—teachers who once cared but who have become preoccupied “widgets in the educational machine,” teachers who are there to deliver content rather than whose purpose is to inspire, encourage, and champion students in their discovery of life and its mysteries, uncovering essential knowledge of themselves as learners, and bolstering students confidence and passion for lifelong learning.

In the many repeated pauses and inconsistencies in utterances among participants in this study, I began to take note of the utter disappointment participating teachers experienced when they set out with a goal to prioritize self-care practices and failed to adhere to it. The disappointment in their feeling of lack of self-discipline was palpable. Participants discussed failed attempts and steadfast plans to attend to personal responsibilities to be a better caregiver with an articulation of knowledge that practicing self-care led to being the best teacher they could be. Activities such as going to the gym, seeing a therapist or chiropractor regularly, or simply setting a timer each day to ensure they leave school at a particular time to more smoothly shift to family duties, to spend time with their spouses and children were goals, were often neglected and unmet. These teachers shared their early failings and never differentiated the personal/professional distinction in these moments. To them, failing as a teacher meant failing as a human being, something that they described they could not leave at work to be dealt with on Monday morning. Their personal lives were being reflected in their teaching and growth in their personal life, and finding more serenity in their personal life was also reflected—as they put it—in becoming a better teacher and finding more balanced everywhere. Teachers in this study described feeling angry all the time and not being able to articulate why because they were trying to do the right thing and take care of everyone and get everything done for everybody.

When recognition set in that they had compromised themselves, teachers in this study saw that they had failed to prioritize or take care of themselves. They then experienced anger recursively returning to the self-disappointment for compromising their values. These teachers often articulated a belief that as they became more experienced in the profession, their understandings of what it means to be an ethical teacher evolved in this space of disappointment and self-reflection. Teachers then described a recognition that their ethical duty is to give their

best to their students (e.g., energy, attention, knowledge, support) rather than “phoning it in” something they cringed at observing in colleagues. However, the keen awareness set in that their ethical duty to give their best to their students only is possible when first prioritizing their needs first, just like parents are instructed to reach for the oxygen mask on an airplane and apply it to themselves first before treating their child.

What I came to understand is that taking care of themselves personally and physically took on an entirely transformative message in this context. Eating well, exercising, getting enough sleep, and applying balance in their lives became a way of being an ethical teacher and way of modeling a balanced life. In this way, these teachers then honored their students' best potential by being capable caregivers first to themselves and thereby modeling this ethic of care to others. There was a marked difference in development between novice and experienced teachers in this regard. Novice teachers blamed others, pointed to their school context, and blamed the school leadership. More experienced teachers acknowledged the contextual constraints of working in schools, but they consistently took responsibility for their role in what some participating teachers referred to as a negative cycle. These teachers reported that they still struggle with setting limit and sticking to them. While none felt there are any easy answers, they learned over time to better prioritize self-care through interactions and discussions with mentors and more experienced teachers. The largest area of growth was setting limits between caring for students and saving energy to care for children at home; the division between work and home responsibilities with regard to care was most challenging.

Experienced teachers described learning how to set better limits as one of the most challenging aspects of teachers' ethical practice for caring teachers. These teachers shared that the affective aspects of guilt, frustration, and exhaustion are difficult to overcome when habits

form and breaking negative patterns is a very slow process, especially with regard to learning to avoid taking emotional baggage home with them. This finding suggests that given the realities of teaching being a caring profession, perhaps more time needs to be devoted to pre-service and practicing teacher's development of self-compassion as a practice and avoiding burnout. Barak et al. (2001) found that burnout is often related to level of inexperience and is also associated with workers who tend toward perfectionism or generally high standards and ethics for care of clients, in teachers' cases, toward students.

Other Professions: Strategies that Address Self-Care

In the teaching profession, teachers are the most isolated from one another, and school cultures often fail to provide counseling for teachers to help cope with the daily stressors associated with working in a caring profession. As Neff and Germer (2013) explained, in caring professions, compassion must be applied as a healthy attitude towards oneself and a strong sense of one's strengths and limitations. Neff and Germer (2013) posited that self-compassion is comprised by (a) a mindfulness or being open and present to one's own suffering, (b) self-kindness, and (c) a recognition of the common experience of suffering inherent in the human experience applies to oneself first and foremost. Helping teachers to navigate the boundaries between personal and professional care would help alleviate the often-grey area of when to stop, hold back, even simply to practice better self-care in order to serve as a more effective caregiver. Little is legislated for teacher's self-care. Union advocacy in this area is restricted historically to hours worked and number of students allowed in a classroom with one teacher, and this is further delineated only in public schools. Only recently are practices such as meditation, yoga, and physical exercise encouraged or mandated, and primarily for the betterment of students. The advantages of prioritization of such practices in schools for teachers are numerous.

My Own Interrogation

At one point during this study, I approached my critical friends about the following issue, asking about the line between when one hears and dismisses what participants are saying versus when one listens and delves into why it is an ethical issue in their estimation. After listening closely and attending to how these teachers talked about their lives, their work and their relationships, it became evident that ethical practice is complex. Participating teachers consistently described the challenging aspect of enacting an ethic of care, one that requires boundaries with students, colleagues, and administrators that are oftentimes difficult to establish and even harder to maintain. These teachers shared how difficult it is to turn “on” and “off” the commitment to caring for so many individuals in their lives. Adhering to relational boundaries in both the public and private spheres of their lives simultaneously was exhausting in itself, given the practiced time it took to develop this boundary-drawing as a habit or skill. Figley (2002) coined the term “compassion fatigue” and suggested that this syndrome differs from burnout in that it is associated with a faster onset and recovery. There were times in which I made connections between participants’ comments and stories and this concept of compassion fatigue, and I discussed this with my critical friends seeking clarity if it is indeed an ethical issue, or simply a professional challenge anyone faces when working in any of the many caring human service professions.

After closely analyzing the interviews in which participating teachers described the ongoing struggle to maintain what they perceived to be a healthy balance between meeting the responsibilities of serving as a caregiver for so many children, and attending to their own needs for rest, exercise and companionship with other adults, the subtle emotional resonances that emerged in many of their narratives were noticeable and noteworthy. In terms of my own

meaning-making of this, it was the aspect of this study that I challenged and interrogated myself as a researcher the most. I tried to constantly return to the question of whether this was an ethical challenge or simply a work-life balance issue that any committed individual could face in any profession. At other times, I would return to these data and discuss with a critical friend. They would encourage me to consider the ethical implications of what participants had shared as valid and as a critical part of their ethical meaning-making experiences. Ultimately, I settled on the position that if my participants had enough open-ended space provided by me as a qualitative researcher with their perceptions, observations, feelings, and meanings, then what they said in their interviews could and should be trusted as valuable insights.

Conclusion

The results of this study suggested that how teachers make meaning of and enact ethical practice depends on how they perceive and respond to multiple sets of competing tensions. These tensions can emerge at various times, in different ways depending on the context of the school or the dilemma, the teachers and students involved and are at play for teachers during the day as ethical issues arise frequently. The four continua developed out of the data collected and analyzed using Gilligan's Listening Guide. The first continuum represents, at one end, a professional orientation of ethics and, at the other end, a more personal moral orientation that informed ethical practice. The second continuum signifies how teachers made sense of students' *short-term* versus *long-term* development and growth with regard to students' academic learning, emotional, interpersonal, and developmental needs. The third continuum is one in which teachers felt torn between honoring the needs of an individual student versus the pull towards the needs of the greater community. The fourth continuum represents how these teachers navigated the desire to contribute toward *ideal* outcomes in any given situation versus avoiding the *worst-case*

scenarios. In order to assist teachers in the process of navigating ethical practice, considering these sets of tensions and how they interact with one another to complicate teachers' decisions could provide useful for setting expectations for pre-service teachers and providing practicing teachers with professional development to support their ongoing learning in this area. Overall this study contributes to the ongoing base of knowledge regarding how teachers navigate rule-based and care-based orientations towards ethics and how they make meaning of and enact ethical practice. In addition, the study design employed in this endeavor showed that adding coding to Gilligan's *Listening Guide*, and charting participants decision points across continua assisted in problematizing the dilemmas these participating teachers faced in their professional practice. In sum, what emerged is the reality that rarely are teachers able to adhere to absolutes, nor are they able to view or respond to issues as black and white. Rather these participating teachers daily navigate a complex array of competing and overlapping tensions, and do their best to make meaning of and enact ethical practice within the ethically grey areas.

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Appendix A: Code of Ethics of the Education Profession

Preamble

The National Education Association believes that the education profession consists of one education workforce serving the needs of all students and that the term 'educator' includes education support professionals.

The educator, believing in the worth and dignity of each human being, recognizes the supreme importance of the pursuit of truth, devotion to excellence, and the nurture of democratic principles. Essential to these goals is the protection of freedom to learn and to teach and the guarantee of equal educational opportunity for all. The educator accepts the responsibility to adhere to the highest ethical standards.

The educator recognizes the magnitude of the responsibility inherent in the teaching process. The desire for the respect and confidence of one's colleagues, of students, of parents, and of the members of the community provides the incentive to attain and maintain the highest possible degree of ethical conduct. The Code of Ethics of the Education Profession indicates the aspiration of all educators and provides standards by which to judge conduct.

The remedies specified by the NEA and/or its affiliates for the violation of any provision of this Code shall be exclusive and no such provision shall be enforceable in any form other than one specifically designated by the NEA or its affiliates.

PRINCIPLE I: Commitment to the Student - The educator strives to help each student realize his or her potential as a worthy and effective member of society. The educator therefore works to stimulate the spirit of inquiry, the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, and the thoughtful formulation of worthy goals. In fulfillment of the obligation to the student, the educator--

1. Shall not unreasonably restrain the student from independent action in the pursuit of learning.
2. Shall not unreasonably deny the student's access to varying points of view.
3. Shall not deliberately suppress or distort subject matter relevant to the student's progress.
4. Shall make reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions harmful to learning or to health and safety.
5. Shall not intentionally expose the student to embarrassment or disparagement.
6. Shall not on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, national origin, marital status, political or religious beliefs, family, social or cultural background, or sexual orientation, unfairly--
 - a. Exclude any student from participation in any program
 - b. Deny benefits to any student
 - c. Grant any advantage to any student
7. Shall not use professional relationships with students for private advantage.
8. Shall not disclose information about students obtained in the course of professional service unless disclosure serves a compelling professional purpose or is required by law.

PRINCIPLE II: Commitment to the Profession - The education profession is vested by the public with a trust and responsibility requiring the highest ideals of professional service. In the belief that the quality of the services of the education profession directly influences the nation and its citizens, the educator shall exert every effort to raise professional standards, to promote a climate that encourages the exercise of professional judgment, to achieve conditions that attract persons worthy of the trust to careers in education, and to assist in preventing the practice of the profession by unqualified persons. In fulfillment of the obligation to the profession, the educator--

1. Shall not in an application for a professional position deliberately make a false statement or fail to disclose a material fact related to competency and qualifications.
2. Shall not misrepresent his/her professional qualifications.
3. Shall not assist any entry into the profession of a person known to be unqualified in respect to character, education, or other relevant attribute.
4. Shall not knowingly make a false statement concerning the qualifications of a candidate for a professional position.
5. Shall not assist a non-educator in the unauthorized practice of teaching.
6. Shall not disclose information about colleagues obtained in the course of professional service unless disclosure serves a compelling professional purpose or is required by law.
7. Shall not knowingly make false or malicious statements about a colleague.
8. Shall not accept any gratuity, gift, or favor that might impair or appear to influence professional decisions or action.

Appendix B: Association of American Educators Code of Ethics for Educations

PRINCIPLE I: Ethical Conduct toward Students

The professional educator accepts personal responsibility for teaching students character qualities that will help them evaluate the consequences of and accept the responsibility for their actions and choices. We strongly affirm parents as the primary moral educators of their children. Nevertheless, we believe all educators are obligated to help foster civic virtues such as integrity, diligence, responsibility, cooperation, loyalty, fidelity, and respect—for the law, for human life, for others, and for self.

The professional educator, in accepting his or her position of public trust, measures success not only by the progress of each student toward realization of his or her personal potential, but also as a citizen of the greater community of the republic.

1. The professional educator deals considerately and justly with each student, and seeks to resolve problems, including discipline, according to law and school policy.
2. The professional educator does not intentionally expose the student to disparagement.
3. The professional educator does not reveal confidential information concerning students, unless required by law.
4. The professional educator makes a constructive effort to protect the student from conditions detrimental to learning, health, or safety.
5. The professional educator endeavors to present facts without distortion, bias, or personal prejudice.

PRINCIPLE II: Ethical Conduct toward Practices and Performance

The professional educator assumes responsibility and accountability for his or her performance and continually strives to demonstrate competence.

The professional educator endeavors to maintain the dignity of the profession by respecting and obeying the law, and by demonstrating personal integrity.

1. The professional educator applies for, accepts, or assigns a position or a responsibility on the basis of professional qualifications, and adheres to the terms of a contract or appointment.
2. The professional educator maintains sound mental health, physical stamina, and social prudence necessary to perform the duties of any professional assignment.
3. The professional educator continues professional growth.
4. The professional educator complies with written local school policies and applicable laws and regulations that are not in conflict with this code of ethics.
5. The professional educator does not intentionally misrepresent official policies of the school or educational organizations, and clearly distinguishes those views from his or her own personal opinions.
6. The professional educator honestly accounts for all funds committed to his or her charge.
7. The professional educator does not use institutional or professional privileges for personal or

partisan advantage.

PRINCIPLE III: Ethical Conduct toward Professional Colleagues

The professional educator, in exemplifying ethical relations with colleagues, accords just and equitable treatment to all members of the profession.

1. The professional educator does not reveal confidential information concerning colleagues unless required by law.
2. The professional educator does not willfully make false statements about a colleague or the school system.
3. The professional educator does not interfere with a colleague's freedom of choice, and works to eliminate coercion that forces educators to support actions and ideologies that violate individual professional integrity.

PRINCIPLE IV: Ethical Conduct toward Parents and Community

The professional educator pledges to protect public sovereignty over public education and private control of private education.

The professional educator recognizes that quality education is the common goal of the public, boards of education, and educators, and that a cooperative effort is essential among these groups to attain that goal.

1. The professional educator makes concerted efforts to communicate to parents all information that should be revealed in the interest of the student.
2. The professional educator endeavors to understand and respect the values and traditions of the diverse cultures represented in the community and in his or her classroom.
3. The professional educator manifests a positive and active role in school/community relations.

Appendix C: Nomination E-Mail Form (to Possible Teacher Participants)

Dear (name),

I am writing to invite you to participate in a research study about the way's teachers make meaning of and describe enacting professional ethics.

I am a doctoral student at Montclair State University and I am conducting research investigating how teachers recognize ethical issues and make meaning of these situations. I am looking for participants for this study who have taught for one year or more and I am contacting you for participation in this study. I am looking for teachers from an array of certification areas, backgrounds, and experiences.

This research would involve two interviews and the recording of critical incidents over a two-week time period of your choosing. Selected teachers will participate in two 60-90-minute interviews, on ways do teachers make meaning of and describe enacting professional ethics, one at the beginning and one at the end of the study, and two weeks of recording critical incidents for roughly one hour per day in the Fall 2017 semester.

Teachers may benefit from this study by engaging in guided reflection on their practice. Participating teachers will also receive a certificate from Montclair State University for 12 hours of professional development credit.

If you are a teacher who would consider participation in this study, have questions, or would like more information, please contact me at daceyc@montclair.edu.

Thank you for considering participation in this study. This study has been approved by the Montclair State University Institutional Review Board.

Charity Dacey, Doctoral Student,

Teacher Education and Teacher Development, Montclair State University

Appendix D: Consent Form

Please read below with care. You can ask questions at any time, now or later. You can talk to other people before you sign this form.

Study's Title: The Grey Areas: A Qualitative Study about the Ways Teachers Make Meaning of and Describe Enacting Professional Ethics

Why is this study being done? The purpose of this study is to uncover the ways in which some teachers make meaning of incidents that call into question their ethics. We intend to unpack and problematize teachers' ethical decisions that arise in professional practice and how they make meaning of them. A good deal of research has examined how in other fields, such as law and medicine, there is generally agreement on basic and established ethical principles, and yet for teachers there is a lack of a common ethical ground for entering professionals. Professional education organizing bodies (e.g. the Council for Accreditation of Education Programs [CAEP]) articulate the importance of teachers' dispositions such as honesty, integrity, and an understanding of professional but little is still known about how teachers describe enacting professional ethics. We are trying to understand how some teachers make meaning of such incidents that call into question their ethics.

What will happen while you are in the study? How much time will it take?

1. Individual Initial Interview (approximately one hour and a half). An initial individual interview will be scheduled in September 2017. We will ask you questions about how you think about decision making and professional ethics, what informs this, and what experiences as a teacher that you have had with any ethical considerations.
2. Critical Incidents (two weeks, approximately 10 hours). We are interested in understanding your ethical decisions that arise as a teacher. For a two-week period, we will try to get a sense of what daily moments or incidents you may notice that spark associations or questions about ethical practice and how you make meaning about these incidents or events by having you record them in a format of your choice that is most convenient for you.
3. Individual End-of-Study Reflective Interview (approximately one hour and a half). We will conduct an end-of-study interview. We will ask you a series of reflective questions about your recorded critical daily incidents and experiences as a teacher with respect to meaning making and enactment of ethical practice. Finally, we will provide you with an opportunity to ask questions and discuss any issues relevant to the study.

Risks: No study is without risks. The risks associated with this study are common to those you might experience as part of your professional practice.

- You may feel overwhelmed, frustrated, or confused while participating in this study. If this happens you can ask for a break or express your concerns to the researchers. The researchers will work with you to ease any pressure or confusion brought on by your participation in the study.
- You may feel that you must participate in the research aspect of this project to be compensated. You may choose to complete the tasks for compensation only.

Benefits: You may benefit from this study by engaging in guided reflection, which may contribute to your development as a professional educator. Reflection is a common professional development experience used in teacher development. In addition, you may feel a sense of pride knowing that you are contributing to the research base of the teaching field.

Compensation: You will receive a certificate for 12 professional development hours from Montclair State University.

Who will know that you are participating in this study? In the reporting of findings, only members of the research team will know that you are in this study. We will use pseudonyms and your name will not be linked to any presentations or publications. We will keep who you are confidential according to the law. You should know that New Jersey requires that any person having reasonable cause to believe that a child has been subjected to child abuse or acts of child abuse shall report immediately to the Division of Youth and Family Services.

Do you have to be in the study? You do not have to be in this study. You are a volunteer! It is okay if you want to stop at any time and not be in the study. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer. Nothing will happen to you. Should you choose to withdraw from the study you will still receive a certificate for professional development hours prorated by length of participation.

Do you have any questions about this study? Please contact primary contact Charity Dacey (daceyc@montclair.edu, 862-202-6189) or principal investigator Kathryn Herr (herrk@montclair.edu, 973-655-5170).

Do you have any questions about your rights as a research participant? Please contact the IRB Chair, Dr. Katrina Bulkley (reviewboard@mail.montclair.edu, 973-655-3021).

As part of this study, it is okay to audiotape me:

Please initial: _____ Yes _____ No

It is okay to use my data in other studies:

Please initial: _____ Yes _____ No

Statement of Consent

I have read this form and decided that I will participate in the project described above. Its general purposes, the specifics of my involvement, and possible risks and inconveniences have been explained to my satisfaction. I understand that I can withdraw at any time. My signature also indicates that I am 18 years of age or older and have received a copy of this consent form.

_____	_____	_____	_____
Print your name here	Sign your name here	Date	
_____	_____	_____	_____
Name of Primary Contact	Signature	Date	
_____	_____	_____	_____
Name of Principal Investigator	Signature	Date	

Appendix E: IRB Approval Letter

Jul 5, 2018 11:09 AM EDT

Ms. Charity Dacey
Dr. Kathryn Herr
Montclair State University
Department of Educational Foundations
1 Normal Ave.
Montclair, NJ 07043

Re: IRB Number: IRB-FY16-17-644

Project Title: SS Ways Teachers Make Meaning of and Describe Enacting Professional Ethics

Dear Ms. Dacey:

After an expedited review:

6. Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes.
7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Montclair State University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved this protocol on July 5, 2018. With the implementation of the new 2018 MSU IRB Policy and Procedures, non-federally funded expedited studies no longer have an expiration date. Instead we will ask that you complete an Administrative Check In, every two years, updating our office with the status of your research project. Your check in date is August 9, 2020. We will send you a reminder prior to that date.

This study is now closed to enrollment.

Please note that you will no longer be required to submit a Modification to add or remove personnel from your research team, unless you are changing the Principal Investigator. As Principal Investigator you are required to make sure all of your Research Team members have appropriate Human Subjects Protections training, prior to working on the study. For more clarification on appropriate training contact the IRB office.

If you are changing your study protocol, study sites or data collection instruments, you will need to submit a Modification.

When you complete your research project you must submit a Project Closure through the Cayuse IRB electronic system.

If you have any questions regarding the IRB requirements, please contact me at 973-655-5189, cayuseIRB@montclair.edu, or the Institutional Review Board.

Sincerely yours,

Katrina Bulkley
IRB Chair

