PORTRAIT OF MORAL AGENCY

by

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Abstract

Over the past several decades, secular schools in North America have been expected to impart moral education to students. An array of approaches, strategies, methods, and philosophical and theoretical orientations for doing so are promoted in education literature. Two, in particular, have also been politically endorsed in Ontario, Canada—character education and community service. Yet, there remains discrepancy among teachers’ practices, knowledge, awareness, and intentions. Anecdotal reports indicate that relatively few teachers provide a consistent and comprehensive moral education, and those who do, act primarily on their own initiative and at their own discretion. Previous empirical evidence suggests that teachers who are moral agents conceive of, enact, and reflect on a personally developed form of moral education, which is embedded in the moral and ethical dimensions of school and classroom life, curriculum, and pedagogy. This single-case study aims to broaden and deepen the scholarship of moral agency as moral education, by exploring the question How does a teacher, who prioritizes the moral education of students, envision, enact and reflect on that moral education.

Positioning myself as a conduit, within what is often considered to be a closed-door culture of teaching, I metaphorically opened one teacher’s classroom door and exposed her practices. The result is a uniquely comprehensive and genuine portrait of
moral agency, which details the use of a variety of strategies and methods for imparting morality. These include intentionally modelling moral behaviours, conduct and dispositions; fostering relationships with and among students; creating a classroom community; delivering virtues lessons and messages; encouraging discussions of a moral nature; nurturing self-discipline in students; providing opportunities for community service; and assessing students’ social and moral development. The harmonious co-existence of these strategies and methods within one classroom and one teacher’s practice; the complementary and supportive way in which the teacher makes use of them; and their independence of any particular philosophical or theoretical orientation for moral education, represent the main insights of this study. These insights suggest that moral education in a secular classroom might be more comprehensively understood and promoted as moral agency.
Firstly, I acknowledge with great appreciation my thesis committee, Professors Elizabeth Campbell, Dennis Thiessen and John Wallace. As highly regarded scholars of education, each has contributed to my academic work, over several years of pursuing a doctorate degree. Elizabeth, in particular, has been an invaluable guide since my second Master’s degree course, and simply cannot get rid of me. She believed in me when I did not believe in myself, and always applied the right balance of support and pressure to move me forward. I remember sitting with Elizabeth and my mother, an accomplished educator herself, celebrating and barely able to take a breath after graduating with a Master’s degree. “You should really think about doing a PhD”, Elizabeth said. All I could think of was, “Good grief!” Needless to say, I have learned to heed all of Elizabeth’s advice. I am also grateful for her friendship.

Secondly, this research project has been so thoroughly enjoyable because of Terry, my research participant and partner in generating the understandings and insights you will read in this report. Terry is a genuine, humble and soulful person, and a moral exemplar for adults and children alike. I am a better person for knowing her. I thank her also for having the courage to allow me into the classroom, and for the openness and honesty with which she discussed her practices. I am also grateful to the 15 students who shared grade four with me, and made me feel part of their community.

Finally, I am blessed with a family who provides much love and support. My three children rarely received sympathy from me when they were overwhelmed with homework. We often kept each other company, though, at coffee shops or a library, while we worked through our own piles. The stories of their classroom experiences that
they shared with honesty and sensitivity, helped to shape my general interests in the moral dimensions of schooling. My husband, David Rosenberg, is a superb writer. He taught me how to use commas and quotation marks sparingly, and that I can begin a sentence with the word “and” (or any other word for that matter) if it is the best way to express what I would like to say. I never did have the courage to do so in my academic work, however. For reading everything I write, and always letting me be the person I want to be, I thank you most deeply.

Any errors or omissions that remain in this dissertation are my own.
Foreword

September 10, 2008

Today is the start of a new term at school. I arrive early to class and get settled. As the other students enter the room, I observe them. One man strides in full of purpose and sits opposite the professor’s chair, but does not look up. I decide that he is likely shy, rather than aloof. Two women continue a conversation they began in the hallway. They laugh nervously and find seats opposite each other in the horseshoe of tables. Most, however, quietly glance around and smile unassumingly as we make eye contact. Just before the start of class, a large man enters the room. I am immediately drawn to his broad smile as he returns mine, and the candid enthusiasm of his expression. I am happy when he sits beside me. We exchange only passing comments as the Professor introduces the course for the next 90 minutes.

When our break finally arrives, I can no longer contain myself. I must know who and what this man teaches. His reply is simple: “I teach my grade-eights how to live a good life and be good people”. My astonishment must be obvious, as he continues to explain. “Of course, I use geography, history, science and math to do that, but I am mostly concerned that they learn compassion”. Barely regaining my composure, I nearly shout, “You are a moral agent to your students!” Now his face registers astonishment at the unfamiliar label I have given him.

Despite having observed and interviewed several teachers who were considered moral agents, I had not, as yet, met a teacher who so authentically and intuitively identified with this role. Whether brought together by fate, luck or merely coincidence, we realized in that brief exchange how much we would learn from each other.

As I read and write about moral education for children; as I parent my own children and communicate with their teachers; as I dialogue with teachers who are fellow students, friends and relatives; as I listen to my children discuss what they like and dislike
about their teachers; and as I spend time in classrooms, I am more and more aware that unsung heroes walk among us, teachers who make a positive impact on the person their students will become. Such teachers do not need to be instructed by others on the pro-social and moral values children should be taught to embody. They do not need to be told that they should enter into trusting and respectful relationships with their students. They do not need policy to infuse their practices and the learning environment with ethical values and moral principles; and they certainly do not need a formal program to show them how to foster students’ social-moral growth and development. My vision for this dissertation was born from these observations, experiences and beliefs. I wanted to find such a teacher, and create an opportunity for that teacher’s practices to inspire and be instructive to others.

Good teachers put snags in the river of children passing by, and over the years, they redirect hundreds of lives. Many people find it easy to imagine unseen webs of malevolent conspiracy in the world, and they are not always wrong. But there is also an innocence that conspires to hold humanity together, and it is made of people who can never fully know the good that they have done. (Kidder, 1989, p. 313)
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Dedication

To my late father, Dr. H. Allen Gardner

A rainbow person (Gellman, 1996)
Chapter 1: Introduction

In their book, entitled *The Students are Watching: Schools and the Moral Contract*, Sizer and Sizer (1999) identify four mechanisms that perpetuate, from generation to generation, the moral code on which civilized life depends and by which society prevents descent into barbarism—the family (or clan), religion, media, and education. In the past, family and religion shared the primary responsibility for imparting morality to the young. Today, both mechanisms are considered private, with neither parents nor religious leaders held publically accountable for children’s moral development. In the past, media has been limited in reach and restrained in content. Today, it is boundless, and often replete with immoral and unethical messages (Ryan & Bohlin, 1999; Sizer & Sizer, 1999). To offset and respond to the perceived diminishing of positive moral influences and increasing of negative moral influences, the fourth mechanism, education, has become progressively significant. North American schools are both pressured and compelled to provide a moral education for their students (Arthur, 2008; Hamberger & Moore Jr., 1997; Leming, 2001; Lickona, 1991; Lickona & Davidson, 2005; Narváez & Lapsley, 2008; Ryan & Bohlin, 1999; Setran, 2003; Stengel & Tom, 2006; Wynne & Ryan, 1997).

Although moral education was always considered part of the responsibility of schooling, secular approaches emerged in earnest in the 20th century. By the latter half of that century, North American classroom teachers were exploring an assortment of variably successful approaches (Balch, Saller & Szolomicki, 1993; Joseph & Efron, 2005). Character education, in particular, grew to dominate the late 1980s. Teachers were attracted to this behaviourist approach to virtue ethics, which endeavoured to
cultivate and habituate intellectual and moral virtues (Carr, 2008; Ryan & Bohlin, 1999). Its direct methods coincided with leading conceptions of teaching and classroom management, specifically education as the transmission of knowledge; learning as passive acceptance; and classroom management and discipline as behaviour control (Ryan & Bohlin, 1999; Watson, 2008). Watson (2008) notes, “[Character education] did not require a rethinking of the whole educational endeavour. Whether transmitting values or math skills, the education process of telling, modelling, explaining, practice and correction would be the same” (p. 178). Thus, implementation could be achieved in a seamless, efficient and timely manner. In addition, there was a growing system of support for teachers, including the publication of related books, magazines, learning resources, and materials; the emergence of four large character education organizations in the United States; the establishment of college and university centres dedicated to character education; and the growing prevalence of keynote conference addresses on character education. Ryan and Bohlin (1999) summarize this growth as follows: “What was once a modest movement has become a thriving industry” (p. xv). Finally, character curricula could be externally developed, pre-packaged, and provided to teachers in a format ready for delivery in the classroom. This facilitated a consistent approach throughout schools and school boards, and did not overly tax teachers’ time and energy.

Many character education programs have been developed and commercially promoted, and are currently used in classrooms throughout North America. Yet, despite claims made by sponsors that these programs impact students’ characters, there remains a lack of supporting empirical evidence. Some evidence has, in fact, demonstrated otherwise (Berkowitz, Battistich & Bier, 2008; Leming, 2008; Nucci & Turiel, 2009).
Further, many education stakeholders have levelled a variety of challenges, criticisms and concerns regarding character education as a philosophical and practical approach to moral education (Davis, 2003; Fenstermacher & Osguthorpe, 2000; Joseph & Efron, 2005; Kohn, 1997; Nucci & Turiel, 2009; Watson, 2008). This includes Dewey (1959), who references a prior incarnation of character education:

> The influence of direct moral instruction, even at its very best, is comparatively small in amount and slight in influence, when the whole field of moral growth through education is taken into account... the development of character through all the agencies, instrumentalities, and materials of school life. (p. 4)

The larger moral field to which Dewey refers includes, teachers’ attention to the range of moral dimensions associated with teaching, learning, and classroom life. Empirical studies have reported that some teachers knowingly, intentionally and systematically embed moral values of respect, honesty, fairness, inclusiveness, justice, kindness, compassion, care, integrity, trustworthiness, tolerance, empathy and courage in the everyday business of establishing rules, rituals and routines; managing events and activities; disciplining students; creating and maintaining a classroom community; forging relationships with and among students; attending to students’ particular learning needs; implementing pedagogy and group work; and helping students develop good character and a sense of social responsibility (Campbell, 2003a, 2004; Campbell & Thiessen, 2000, 2001; Fallona, 2000; Richardson & Fenstermacher, 2000, 2001). Dewey (1959) suggests, “The teacher who operates in this faith will find every subject, every method of instruction, every incident of school life pregnant with moral possibility” (p. 58). Such teachers intertwine moral and academic instruction, and are thought of as moral agents to their students.
Other teachers, however, seem oblivious to the moral dimensions of teaching, learning and classroom life, and inadvertently overlook them or purposefully exclude them from their practice (Joseph, Bravmann, Windschitl, Mikel & Green, 2000; McCadden, 1998; Richardson & Fenstermacher, 2000, 2001; Simon, 2001). Some may even behave in morally problematic ways that are interpreted as unkind, unfair and disrespectful (Campbell, 2003a). These teachers are unlikely to provide students with a moral education that is positive, and are not thought of as moral agents. The practices of most teachers likely fall somewhere between these two extremes of intentionality or purposefulness and obliviousness or coincidence, as most teachers presumably have some level of moral awareness and some desire to transmit moral messages to students.

This range among teachers’ awareness and purposefulness regarding moral education is assumed to be a significant factor in the successful delivery of character education programs. A program in the hands of a teacher who is limited as a moral agent may be analogous to a math program in the hands of a history teacher. It is unlikely that either of these teachers can deliver the respective program effectively and to its potential. A character education program delivered in the classroom context of a moral agent teacher, however, is more likely to be fully expressed, and may be considered a strategy that enhances and enriches the teacher’s more comprehensive and pervasive moral education. This inference is supported by the work of Richardson and Williams (2000), who determined that students in a classroom with a strong moral orientation are more aware of goals related to character development. Thus, I believe the key to addressing moral education in schools lies not in particular character education programs, per say, but in nurturing teachers as moral agents, so they are able to consider a variety of
philosophical and theoretical perspectives, and applied and practical approaches to the moral education of their students. Weissbourd (2003) notes, “The moral development of students does not depend primarily on explicit character education efforts but on the maturity and ethical capacities of the adults with whom they interact” (p. 6). Further, I believe that teachers who are already moral agents to their students can offer valuable insights, perhaps the most valuable insights, to both inspire and instruct other teachers on how to provide a moral education.

Little is really known about the strategies, practices and implementation processes that teachers already use in providing moral education (Berkowitz, Battistich & Bier, 2008; Schuitema, ten Dam & Veugelers, 2008). There are several reasons for this, including the traditionally private and individualistic nature of teaching; minimal exposure to the moral dimensions of teaching and learning in teacher education programs; relatively few empirical studies that inform this aspect of teaching; and fears related to discussing morality in a public context (Arthur, 2008; Barrow, 2000; Campbell, 2008a; Colnerud, 2006; Halstead & Taylor, 2000; Howard, 2005; Narváez & Lapsley, 2008; O’Sullivan, 2005; Richardson & Fenstermacher, 2001; Ryan & Bohlin, 1999; Schwartz, 2008; Simon, 2001; Sockett, 1993; Wynne & Ryan, 1997). These variables contribute to maintaining disparities among teachers’ practices related to moral education, as they keep hidden and inaccessible the practices of moral agent teachers, prevent critical examination of the practices of non-moral agent teachers, and do not provide a forum for collaborative reflection and discussion.

Motivation for this empirical work is derived from these beliefs and observations. I wondered: How does a teacher, who prioritizes the moral education of students,
envision, enact and reflect on that moral education? This primary research question was explored through four subquestions, which guided the collection of data.

1. What is the teacher’s vision for the moral education of students? How is this vision conceived?
2. What is the content of the teacher’s moral messages and lessons?
3. What strategies does the teacher purposefully or coincidentally, directly or indirectly, and formally or informally use to impart moral messages and lessons?
4. How does the teacher assess the effectiveness of the moral education he or she imparts? How does this relate to the teacher’s vision for the moral education of students?

These subquestions are fully developed in Chapter Three and explored using single case-study methodology, which is outlined in Chapter Four. It is important to emphasize here that the questions guide a study of morality that is knowingly, purposefully, directly and formally taught to students by the teacher, and of morality that students are coincidentally, indirectly and informally exposed to by way of the teacher’s dispositions, conduct and behaviour, and by way of the classroom environment. There has been no attempt to evaluate what the students may actually understand or internalize from these lessons and messages. This would be an important follow-up study, but is beyond the scope of the present study.

Inherent in these questions are five basic assumptions. Firstly, morality can be taught and learned, as it is explicitly and implicitly transmitted by others. Explicit transmission may involve direct lessons and disciplinary actions (Lickona, 1991, 2004; Ryan & Bohlin, 1999; Watson, 2003; Wynne & Ryan, 1997). Implicit transmission may
occur through relationships with others and social environments (Dewey, 1959; Hansen, 1998, 2002; Jackson, Boostrom & Hansen, 1993; Noddings, 2002, 2005). Secondly, understandings and applications of morality are socially constructed in context (Horn, Daddis & Killen, 2008; Nucci, 2001, 2009), as individuals are exposed to nuances, complexities and dilemmas inherent in a variety of life situations. Thirdly, all acts of teaching and learning, and all aspects of classroom life have a moral core, whether or not that core is acknowledged and made visible by the teacher (Hansen, 1993; Jackson, Boostrom & Hansen, 1993; Oser, 1994). Fourthly, this moral core can be identified and empirically studied (Jackson, Boostrom & Hansen, 1993). Lastly, the practices of moral agent teachers can also be empirically studied, and meaningful insights revealed (Campbell, 2003a). I return to these assumptions throughout this report, often indirectly, as they contributed to the theoretical foundation of the study.

In seeking answers to my research questions, I position myself as a conduit within a culture of otherwise closed doors and too little time for professional collaboration. I understand my research role as metaphorically opening the classroom door of a teacher, whom I identify as a moral agent (criteria provided in Chapter Four), and exposing the moral education she imparts to students, for others to see. Consequently, the knowledge and insights gleaned from this study have been intellectually, psychologically, spiritually and emotionally distilled by me. Who I am, as a person, is thus relevant to how others are able to interpret and relate to the portrait of this teacher. My voice is heard throughout this report, alongside hers. In the following two sections, I provide some context for it.
My Journey

I have never been a teacher of children. Until recently, my experience in the classroom was limited to my student days; and my experience with children to parenting my own. My first career was in the quantitative world of laboratory genetics, as a technologist and later a college professor. In these roles, I operated on moral autopilot, giving little conscious thought to the moral dimensions of my practice or my personal and professional conduct. I began graduate studies in educational administration. Somewhere along the way I developed an intense interest in the moral dimensions of the classroom. I have reflected on my background to help me understand this interest and justify my position as a researcher in this highly interpretive area of study. Four broad experiences seem relevant. They are discussed below, in no particular order, as they have consciously and unconsciously informed the orientations and perspectives that are the lenses through which I filtered the morally salient elements of classroom life and teaching practice, and by which I analyzed data and represented understandings and insights.

Near the beginning of a Master’s Degree in Educational Administration at The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, I participated as a research assistant on a qualitative study called *The Moral and Ethical Bases of Teachers’ Interactions with Students* (Campbell, 2003a, 2004; Campbell & Thiessen, 2000, 2001). This study is discussed in the Literature Review. At the time, there was no obvious connection to my skills, knowledge, background or interests, a point made embarrassingly evident when, at team meetings, I asked such questions as *what is your
hypothesis, what are you trying to prove, how are you going to measure the variables, and what are the variables.

Observing and interviewing classroom teachers exposed me to qualitative methods of investigation, which I found exhilarating, satisfying and eye-opening. In addition, I was deeply moved by the efforts of many of the teachers to attend to their students’ personal needs, and social-moral growth and development. This was not always the case, however. One teacher was disturbingly inadequate in this regard. I believed then, as I do now, that her conduct and practices encouraged a psychologically precarious learning environment, in which negative behaviours and dysfunctional relationships appeared to be fostered. This created for me a moral dilemma between my duties and obligations as an impartial researcher, and more personal and categorical moral values related to protecting and nurturing children, and sharing knowledge with those in need, namely the teacher. The personal, emotional and intellectual aspects of these experiences remain with me, and have guided this dissertation both conceptually and methodologically.

The second influence is motherhood. I have three children who attended three different schools with rotary systems. Each child has had a variety of teachers exhibiting a range of moral and ethical awareness, from enlightened to ignorant to indifferent. The stories of teachers toward the latter end of this continuum are cause for concern. They indicate unacceptable behaviours and practices that are disrespectful, unfair, unkind, insensitive and rude—simply unethical. Examples of such situations that my children recounted over several years include the following:
• My son’s language arts teacher rolled her eyes whenever my son raised his hand to ask a question.

• My daughter’s science teacher did not mark tests, quizzes and written assignments herself, instead entrusting this crucial aspect of teaching and learning to students of another class.

• Several teachers regularly yelled at students, both in front of an entire class and individually, but publicly, in the hallways. Rarely were my children the target, but they were aware and almost always upset by this authoritarian display of power and disrespect toward their peers.

• Group punishment was used in response to the misbehaviours of one or a few students. For example, my son’s class was denied a pizza lunch that they had won in a school-wide contest, and my daughter’s entire class served a detention after school.

• My daughter’s history teacher discontinued her group presentation to the class saying, “This isn’t working. That’s enough”. My daughter is a serious student who prepared well for this presentation. There was no indication to her that it was not going well, and no explanation for why it was stopped. She was never given an opportunity to show the rest of the work that she had prepared.

• This same teacher regularly changed the nature of projects after they have been assigned and after my daughter had begun to work on them.
• My daughter’s drama teacher assigned a test on material that had not been taught. She simply gave the students a stack of papers and told them to learn the information, without context or guidelines.

• My son’s homeroom teacher told a child to “shut-up”.

In these class environments, I noticed that my children expend much energy to manage feelings of frustration, anger, unhappiness, anxiety, insecurity, powerlessness and inadequacy, and to socially manage the fallout among their peers. Compared with their experiences in classes where teachers seem to be morally enlightened and conduct themselves and their practices accordingly, it became apparent to me that having to expend energy in this way compromises the learning potential and academic achievement of my children; their sense of self and self-confidence; and their emotional and social wellbeing. These are also morally laced issues. With the benefit of my children’s perspective, this discrepancy of moral awareness among teachers, which I have also previously noted, became personally unacceptable, and fuelled in me a desire to work toward increasing the moral awareness of classroom teachers.

Graduate school has provided a third influence. Aside from the obvious opportunities to read and write about applied morality in education, for the past 12 years I have taken courses with and participated in seminars with teachers and school administrators. Invariably, as I reveal my research interests they readily offer related anecdotes from their own experiences. I am always pleasantly surprised by their enthusiasm and willingness to engage in such dialogue with me. Never have I been questioned on the relevance of my work. This seems to be intuitively understood by these educators, who recognize their profession as a moral endeavour to make a positive
and holistic contribution to the growth and development of children. I have begun to interpret this as a need and a desire for educators to discuss morality and ethics in relation to their practices, classrooms, students, and schools. They have indicated that there is currently little opportunity to do so through pre-service or in-service programs, or more informally with colleagues. Part of the justification for my study, and the potential application of my results stem from these encounters.

Finally, I am a practicing liberal Jew. While I struggle with my faith in God, five central beliefs of Jewish moral philosophy and ethics have, nevertheless, influenced my moral compass and ethical orientations. As Schwartz (1983) has said, “Faith orientation and moral judgment are interlocking pieces in one’s overall development as a human being” (p. 23). First, it is believed that humans are created in the image of God. Humanity, therefore, supersedes all claims, and universal love is the standard for human relationships. Second, humans possess the divine spark in the form of conscience and moral reason. As such, we are each capable of God’s compassion, justice, mercy and love. Third, as a free people, Jews are obligated to extend their moral capability and assume ethical responsibility. In other words, it is not enough to have a moral character and moral reasoning skills. One must act on this for the benefit of others. Fourth, oneself is the point of reference for relationships, interactions, and experiences with others. The Biblical imperative “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Lev 19:18, Masoretic Text), and the corresponding Rabbinic law “What is hateful to yourself, do not to your fellow-man” (Cohen, 1975, p. 214) are relevant as ethical principles only if one possesses a good character. This ancient wisdom is contemporarily referred to as The Golden Rule, and popularly expressed as treat others as you would want to be treated. Finally, situated
between relativism and absolutism, Judaism embodies both the ability to reflect on what is permissible, reasonable, and tolerable in a particular context, and the imperative to judge what is morally intolerable, regardless of context (Borowitz, 1979; Cohen, 1975; Kravitz & Olitzky, 1999; Rossel, 1975; Sohn, 2007; Telushkin, 1994). Many of these beliefs are not exclusive to Judaism, and are more generally humanistic. They are reflected in the ethical perspective that frames this study, as discussed below in secular language.

These four experiential influences are emotional, intellectual and deeply personal, and have re-directed my professional and academic interests. Yet, I have wondered in the past if I have wandered too far from home. As I crossed the threshold of my first research classroom many years ago, however, the moral dimensions came naturally and easily into focus. I saw expressions of moral values in the teacher’s conduct, behaviours and language; in the classroom’s physical space and culture; in the relationships students had with the teacher and their peers; in the teacher’s pedagogy; and in the teacher’s academic and non-academic goals for students’ learning, growth and development. Initially, I thought I had become a different person, transformed. As I reflect on these experiences in the context of this current project, I believe now that I was growing into myself, awakening and becoming fully expressed as an educator, academic, mother and Jew. In sharing my journey I acknowledge, accept and embrace the subjectivity in this study, and agree with Glesne and Peshkin (1992) who state:

My subjectivity is the [italics in original] basis for the story that I am able to tell. It is a strength on which I build. It makes me who I am as a person and [italics in original] as a researcher, equipping me with the perspectives and insights that shape all that I do as researcher, from the selection of topic clear through to the emphases I make in my writing. Seen as virtuous, subjectivity is something to capitalize on rather than to exorcise. (p. 104)
Ethical Perspective

This study is primarily inductive, and does not aim to impose a particular ethical theory or be framed as such. It is, however, influenced by my personal ethical perspective regarding right and wrong, and good and bad, which, while not determining what I should hear, does help me to listen (Sanger, 2001). Coinciding with Jewish moral philosophy and Jewish ethics, my perspective is pluralistic, and thereby includes the theories of virtue ethics, objective principles and care ethics, primarily, and consequentialism to a lesser degree. Each is briefly discussed below.

Virtue ethics is rooted in Greek philosophy, and credited to the work of Aristotle. As such, it is often referred to as neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics. Contemporary advocates include philosophers Philippa Foot and Alasdair MacIntyre. Based on a conception of virtues and vices as character traits, qualities, dispositions and habits, virtues are considered to be desirable and vices undesirable. Virtues represent goodness, righteousness and excellence, and vices represent their antitheses. Both are embedded in human character and humanity, as opposed to cultural, societal, institutional or professional norms. They are considered to be universal, with virtues of honesty, compassion, truthfulness, fairness, courage, moderation and generosity highly regarded in the literatures, customs and norms of the majority of world cultures (Fenstermacher, 2001). Individuals are thought to acquire virtues and achieve a virtuous character by associating with virtuous people (Fenstermacher, 2001), and through direct inculcation and instruction (Lickona, 1991; Wynne & Ryan, 1997). Virtues enable one to act according to the highest potential of human goodness, and to live a noble, admirable and

Further, as a normative theory of moral conduct virtue ethics is agent-based (Carter, 2002). The moral status of a particular action or decision is determined by the character of the person performing that action or making that decision. For example, a person who is reputed to be honest is assumed to be telling the truth and not lying. In turn, actions taken and decisions made are also informative of one’s character. A person who habitually tells the truth and avoids telling lies is perceived to be an honest person; a person who performs acts of kindness toward others is perceived to be a kind person. “That is, one's character is easily discerned by attending to one's habits. We say a person has good character when that person habitually acts in a manner determined to be virtuous” (Leming, 2001, p. 63). Virtue ethics has informed scholarship on moral agency (Campbell, 2003a, 2004; Campbell & Thiessen, 2000, 2001; Fenstermacher, 2001; Richardson & Fenstermacher, 2000, 2001; Sockett, 1993), teacher’s moral manner (Fenstermacher, 2001; Richardson & Fenstermacher, 2000, 2001), and character education (Lickona, 1991, 2004; Lickona & Davidson, 2005; Ryan & Bohlin, 1999; Wynne & Ryan, 1997). These sources are highly relevant to this current study and are noted throughout this report. In particular, they have helped to shape the conceptual framework, and inform data collection and analysis.

The theory of objective principles is rooted in Kantian deontology, which claims that the rightness or goodness of an action lies in the nature of the act itself. When a free and rational person identifies a right, duty or obligation, acting accordingly is considered morally correct. For example, telling the truth is an obligation and a duty based on the
privilege of knowing the truth. Further, it must be generally agreed that a particular action can be universally applied, either in similar circumstances or as a categorical imperative (Carter, 2002; Hinman, 2006).

In the 1970s, Tom Beauchamp and James Childress advanced objective principles as an action-based theory of ethics that focuses on what individuals do to promote good over bad. Four moral principles—respect for autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice—sometimes referred to as the big four, were proposed as bettering the human condition, affirming human worth, and preserving human dignity, with the assumption that all humanity is a unified entity in a single human world, despite societal, religious, ethnic, cultural, geographic, socio-economic or other demographic particularities and values (Carter, 2002; Goodman & Lesnick, 2001).

Other objective principles have been similarly proposed as guides to living a moral life. Sissela Bok (in Goodman & Lesnick, 2001) suggests three categories so fundamental to group survival that they have been worked out in even the smallest of communities—(a) positive duties regarding mutual support, loyalty and reciprocity for tending to those who are vulnerable; (b) negative duties regarding the avoidance of harm and wrongdoing; and (c) norms of fairness and justice, including equality and rejection of bearing false witness. In addition, The Golden Rule is thought to be universally-binding, with expressions in Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Confucianism, Hinduism, and several other East Indian cultures (Damon, 2005; Goodman & Lesnick, 2001). Isadore Sharp, the founder, chairman and CEO of Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts, credits four decades of global success to a personal philosophy grounded in The Golden Rule, when he states “that mankind shares a deeply rooted instinctive moral sense, that the ethic of mutual
responsibility, caring, and sharing—the goodwill sometimes known as brotherly love—is as universal as selfishness and hate” (Sharp, 2009, p. 81). Acting in accordance with such objective principles is considered to be moral and ethical.

Embracing theories of virtue ethics and objective principles represents a rejection of moral relativism, which embodies the notion that moral codes and virtues are contextual, according to time, place, culture and circumstance; that there is no objective right and wrong, only different points of view; and that there are no universally agreed upon virtues or vices, only behaviours that are acceptable or not acceptable in particular contexts (Campbell, 2003a; Carter, 2002; Goodman & Lesnick, 2004). Moral relativism has generally fallen out of favour in the context of moral education. It is, nevertheless, necessary for me to further clarify my position and circumvent the possibility of confusion that may result from three particular issues. The first is related to the term values. This term, at times, is used synonymously with virtues, morals and ethics. In the context of this study, it is most decisively distinguished from them. Unless preceded by the adjectives moral and ethical, as in moral values or ethical values, values are considered personal preferences, or social constructs and conventions desirable for particular communities, contexts or situations. As such, values are subjective and relative, and require inter-subjective understandings. Leming (2001) states, “When we speak of values we are referring to things or ideas that people hold dear. We may value many different things, from ice-cream to honesty. Some things we may value may have moral significance, some may not” (p. 63). Virtues and morals, therefore, can be understood as a subset of values that are objective and universal, as they relate generally to human welfare and wellbeing regardless of particular social groupings. “When we
speak of morality or morals we are speaking of judgments of responsibility and obligation as they apply to our dealings within a social context that are directly related to consideration of other people’s interests, rights, or wellbeing” (Leming, 2001, p. 63).

Social-cognitive domain theory provides a framework for understanding this distinction between values, and virtues and morals. Briefly, social-moral knowledge is thought to be constructed within three discrete domains—conventional, personal and moral. The conventional domain is concerned with arbitrary, yet agreed upon, uniformities of social behaviours determined by the social systems in which they are formed, including communities, organizations, religions, ethnic cultures, sports’ teams, societies, and schools. The personal domain is concerned with autonomy, individual prerogatives and discretion. In this domain, the boundaries between self and others are delineated, and issues of self-control, personal choice, privacy, and identity are addressed. The moral domain is concerned with the wellbeing and welfare of others. It is categorical, objective, universal and non-arbitrary, such that children and adolescents of diverse cultures, religions and social classes, as young as 2½ years of age, and with autism have demonstrated an ability to differentiate issues of a moral nature from issues which are either conventional or personal (Howard, 2005; Nucci, 2001, 2008, 2009; Nucci & Turiel, 2009). There is nothing inherently right or wrong about actions defined as conventional or personal. General values, therefore, are associated with these domains. Values qualified by the terms moral or ethical, virtues, and moral principles are relevant to the moral domain. Related to moral agency and moral education, this distinction allows one to answer the ubiquitous question: whose morals or values ought
to be taught in secular schools? Values, which are moral in nature, are universally held, and thus, can be justifiably taught and reinforced.

This study is squarely focused within the moral domain, and seeks to uncover expressions of virtue and morality. Yet, I do not dismiss the significance of values that are operational within the classroom and school, as they might impact the development of caring relationships and the moral nature of the learning environment, for example. Values may also be conventional expressions of more inherent moral principles. For example, obedience is generally a conventional value, and not moral in nature. Yet, it may be articulated as respect, fairness and responsibility toward others. Further, obedience may be interpreted as morally wrong if disobedience results in the promotion of care, compassion or justice (Schulweis, 2009). In the first example, the value of obedience is informative as a positive example of what is moral. In the latter, it represents a negative example.

The second potential point of confusion regarding moral relativism is related to the idea of morality as a social construct. Derived from Piaget’s developmental theory and rooted in the progressive education movement, constructivism indicates that children construct knowledge, including moral knowledge, through interactions with their physical and social worlds (Hildebrandt & Zan, 2008). This should not be confused with moral relativism. Each child does not uniquely construct morality (Damon, 2005). Rather, each child develops understandings of how virtues and moral principles are applied and enacted (Hildebrandt & Zan, 2008), based on centuries of human moral wisdom. Adults, as stewards of human morality, help children structure their experiences in a larger moral context that is independent of particular circumstances.
Constructivism is at the heart of several moral education approaches. Those promoting an active role for teachers in directing students’ learning do not tend to foster moral relativism, because teachers are encouraged to reinforce virtues and moral principles. These include contemporary approaches framed by cognitive development and care ethics theories (Hildebrandt & Zan, 2008; Noddings, 2002). Approaches recommending that teachers remain values-neutral, such as values clarification and ethical reasoning, do tend to foster moral relativism by equally valuing all viewpoints that students put forth in discussions, moral in nature or otherwise (Balch, Saller & Szolomicki, 1993). In the context of this study, therefore, cognitive development and care ethics are relevant; values clarification and ethical reasoning are not. These orientations are described in Chapter Two.

The third and final potential point of confusion regarding moral relativism relates to contextual nuances, complexities and conflicts in expression, application and interpretation of virtues and moral principles, which may obscure their essence. For example, one teacher may display fairness by treating all students the same. Another teacher may display fairness by differently accommodating students’ individual needs. Among some cultural groups respect is demonstrated by avoiding eye contact with persons of authority. Among others, respect is demonstrated by maintaining eye contact. Respect and fairness, however, are unlikely to be disputed as worthy moral principles, and various interpretations should not be understood as a relativist argument that challenges them. Vazir’s (2004) doctoral work in a Pakistani school supports these points. Students are taught lessons of goodness and righteousness related to moral values.
of kindness, care and helpfulness, as are students in North American schools, despite culturally different contexts and expressions.

Some situations place virtues and moral principles in conflict with each other, creating ethical dilemmas for which there is no definitive right or good response. For example, honesty may conflict with compassion and sensitivity in situations that involve keeping one’s confidence and avoiding hurtful truths; care may be at odds with justice and fairness when a disadvantaged student receives particular accommodations that are not offered to all students, or inversely, when such a student does not receive special accommodation because it cannot be offered to all; liberty and autonomy may conflict with loyalty and respect for authority; and tolerance may be used to justify disrespectful and unkind behaviours. Yet, the goodness and righteousness inherent in honesty, compassion, sensitivity, kindness, care, justice, fairness, liberty, autonomy and tolerance are not disputed as being objectively worthwhile and compatible with human flourishing, just as harming, manipulating, neglecting, cheating and intimidating others are objectively wrong and incompatible with human flourishing (Campbell, 2003a; Carr, 2000, 2008; Fenstermacher, 2001; Lickona, 1991; Nash, 2002; Noddings, 2002). As Hinman (in Goodman & Lesnick, 2001) notes, we may retain “sensitivity to the contextuality of our moral beliefs and the recognition that moral disagreement and conflict are permanent features of the moral landscape”, but we also retain “the belief that some moral positions are better than others” (p. 100).

My personal ethical perspective is also informed by care ethics or the ethic of care, as it is also known. With roots in the modern feminist movement of the 1970s, this philosophical orientation tempers the male-oriented rationality, by which moral
judgements are made in the pursuit of justice, to acknowledge the role of impulse, attitude, emotion and the subjective in a context of interpersonal relationships.

Distinguished from a virtues conception of care, care ethics is situation-based in its focus on developing and maintaining reciprocally caring relationships. These relationships support the flourishing of several ethical values, including care, love, empathy, kindness, compassion and sensitivity. The moral status of a decision or act, therefore, is linked to the quality of these relationships (Noddings, 2002, 2008). Care ethics is discussed and detailed in Chapters Two and Six.

Finally, consequentialism refers to several ethical theories that are teleological in nature, and thus, concerned with a good or right end. According to these theories, the moral worth of an action or decision is determined by the impartial evaluation of potential consequences or outcomes. A morally correct action or decision produces morally good and right consequences; a morally incorrect action or decision produces morally bad and wrong consequences. For example, lying may be considered right or wrong, depending on the consequences. If lying protects one’s feelings without harming others, it is morally right to lie. If lying harms one’s reputation and does not provide benefit to others, it is morally wrong. The principles or duties by which an action is performed, the character of the person who is acting, and the relationship between actors are not significant factors in determining moral worth, if they are not relevant to potential consequences. Applied more broadly, consequentialists aim to promote the greatest good for the greatest number of people. Strike and Soltis (2009) refer to this as benefit maximization. In relation to utilitarianism, in particular, the moral status of an action is based on its contribution to overall utility, variously defined as welfare and wellbeing, or
pleasure and happiness (Carter, 2002; Driver, 2009; Hinman, 2006; Markkula Center for Applied Ethics, 2006; Strike & Soltis, 2009). Benefit maximization may be expressed by teachers in how they establish and implement classroom rules and routines, for example.

This pluralistic ethical perspective, grounded to varying degrees in these four ethical theories, enables me to cast a wider net regarding moral salience in classroom life and teaching practices (Goodman & Lesnick, 2001). As Sanger and Fenstermacher (2000) observe from their related empirical work:

Any one normative theory fails to capture all that may be morally salient in a given context. Thus, the competitive, monotheoretic model of normative ethics is a poor one for the inquiries into [moral dimensions of teaching] because any one normative theory will only pick out, or focus on, say a benevolent character or a caring relationship or a universal principle of reason as morally salient, leaving other potentially salient features of the context hidden or less richly described. (p. 2)

Despite a wide net, I do not frame this work with ethical orientations stemming from critical theory, as do Freire, Purpel, Greene, Giroux and Apple. In this theory, concepts of Marxism, social power and social justice are applied in the critical examination of authority, political structures, norms, and systems of society and schooling, as they undermine the rights, freedoms and opportunities of non-dominant groups. Rather, my interests in this study lie in describing the classroom practices of a teacher, as they are enacted within existing systems and structures. The systems and structures are not, themselves, critically examined.

*Working Definitions*

Several terms are used throughout this report, which are variously defined and discussed in the literature. In this section, I clarify their use in relation to this particular study of moral agency.
Virtues, Morals and Ethics

In the context of moral philosophy, virtues, morals and ethics are carefully distinguished, as follows: virtues are desired traits and dispositions that define one’s character in terms of goodness, righteousness and excellence; morals are concerned with principles of right and wrong, and good and bad that guide one’s attitudes, motivation and behaviour; and ethics refers to systems or codes of conduct, the philosophical study of morals, and collective and professional interpretations of moral standards (Carr, 2008; Campbell, 2003a; http://wordnetweb.princeton.edu/ Retrieved April 19, 2009). In the applied context of this study, these philosophical distinctions are not overly relevant. Consequently, the terms are used interchangeably throughout this dissertation to represent what is right and good in contrast to what is wrong and bad. Often my choice of term is simply based on how comfortable and familiar a particular phrase may be. For example, the terms moral education and moral agency are more commonly used in the literature than ethical education, virtues education, ethical agency, or virtues agency. Yet in practice, the term moral is often shied away from because of a perceived association with religion. The administrator of my research school, who is an enlightened moral educator, admitted to doing so himself. Generally, there is no deeper significance to how I may interchange these terms. I do tend to prefer the term moral, however, as it seems to cut to the core of our human essence. In addition, I consider the terms virtues, morals and ethics to be synonymous with the terms moral values and ethical values, and I use them interchangeably, as well.
Moral Education

Moral education is understood in its broadest sense, as any opportunity teachers may have to communicate lessons and messages about right and wrong, or good and bad, and any opportunity students may have to learn about right and wrong, or good and bad at school. This includes providing a morally justified education for students, as well as intentionally facilitating their moral development (Noddings, 2008). Fenstermacher, Osguthorpe and Sanger (2009) understand this distinction as teaching morally and teaching morality, a theoretical framework that I adopt for this dissertation. The former may be considered an end unto itself. In the context of this study, however, it is also a means to the latter. When teachers attend to their students’ formal and informal experiences at school, the culture and climate of the classroom, their teaching practices, and their personal and professional conduct, they model and impart moral values of respect, honesty, fairness, inclusiveness, justice, kindness, trustworthiness and courage, among others (Campbell, 2003a; Hansen, 1993, 1998; Jackson, Boostrom & Hansen, 1993; Noddings, 2002, 2008; Nucci, 2001, 2009; Sockett, 1993; Strike, 2008).

Teaching morality represents a more directed approach to moral education that is often associated with character education. In fact, the terms moral education and character education have been used synonymously in the literature (Howard, Berkowitz & Shaeffer, 2004). They are distinguished in this report, with character education being just one orientation of moral education. Though moral education is broadly defined in terms of teaching and learning, this current study necessarily focuses on teaching, rather than learning; on teachers, rather than parents; on school, rather than home; and on the classroom, rather than the school as an institution.
Moral Agency and Ethical Knowledge

The term moral agency has roots in Immanuel Kant’s ideas of rational autonomy, and in Aristotle’s virtue ethics. Both are evident in the moral education literature.

Fenstermacher and Osguthorpe (2000) state:

The actions of the person are the result of the exercise of his or her own intelligence. Agency is accomplished by means of deliberation on proper means and worthy ends. A moral agent is one whose choices can be accounted for by the giving of reasons, and these reasons explain and justify their choices. (p. 9)

In also noting that moral agents are rational and deliberative, Boostrom (1998a) identifies three components of moral agency—choice, vision, and end-in-view. With choice, he echoes Aristotle’s argument that praise and blame can only be determined if the agent has “more than one course of action available, as well as both the authority and the competence to choose which course of action to follow” (p. 181). Among other characteristics, Sockett (1993) notes that moral agent teachers should embody and act on a clear set of principles or virtues. Sanger (2001) states that as moral agents, teachers are responsible for the normative role their teaching and their character can play in the lives of their students. Finally, Lickona and Davidson (2005) qualify moral agency in terms of respect and responsibility. Alluding to both character and action, they suggest that a respectful and responsible moral agent teacher is one who (p. 147):

- Respects the rights and dignity of all persons;
- Understands that respect includes the right of conscience to disagree respectfully with others’ beliefs or behaviours;
- Possesses a strong sense of personal efficacy and responsibility to do what is right;
- Accepts responsibility for mistakes;
- Accepts responsibility for setting a good example and being a positive influence;
- Develops and exercises capacity for moral leadership.

Derived from more applied than philosophical work, Campbell (2003a) brings together these themes in a comprehensive model of moral agency as a *double-pronged state*, in which a professional teacher is a moral person and a moral educator. Moral agency is understood in terms of “both how teachers treat students generally and what they teach them of a moral and ethical nature” (p. 2). This unifies Fenstermacher’s (2001) concepts of moral agency and moral development, which he differentiated as follows: “Moral agency is that quality possessed by a person to act morally. Moral development is the bringing about in others of moral agency” (p. 650). Fenstermacher also notes a connection between moral agency and moral development in stating, “There certainly seems to be some sort of requirement for moral agency on the teacher’s part in order to be well and effectively engaged in the moral development of students” (p. 651). Yet, Fenstermacher maintains a philosophical separation between the two, by differentiating the concepts of teaching morally and teaching morality, with the former relating to his definition of moral agency and the latter relating to his definition of moral development (Fenstermacher, Osguthorpe & Sanger, 2009).

In Campbell’s (2003a) model, the moral person represents one prong of moral agency, encompassing the ethical and moral standards by which teachers personally conduct themselves in the classroom, behave with students, and carry out their professional responsibilities. Embedded in this definition is the assumption that moral professionalism depends on the teacher’s character. Thus, personal morality is linked to
professional practice in the nonconsequentialist argument that students have a right to experience an ethically-conceived and ethically-delivered education. This goes beyond professional rules, codes of conduct, or moral expectations inherent in the role of teaching (Campbell, 2003a); and coincides with the notion of teaching morally (Fenstermacher, Osguthorpe & Sanger, 2009), as an end unto itsel

There is also a consequentialist component associated with this first prong of moral agency, as the teacher who is a moral person indirectly conveys moral messages to students. In conducting themselves according to character virtues and moral principles, teachers are models and exemplars. Campbell (2003a) states, “Teachers, through their actions, words, and attitudes, may be seen to be living by the same principles that they hope students will embrace” (p. 2). This notion of modelling morality provides a bridge to Campbell’s (2003a) second prong of moral agency, the teacher as a moral educator. As a moral educator, the teacher intentionally provides instruction to students, often through spontaneous moral messages, moral and character education programs, disciplinary action, rules, and interactions with students, all of which convey moral values. This prong of moral agency aligns with the notion of teaching morality (Fenstermacher, Osguthorpe & Sanger, 2009).

As moral people and moral educators, teachers demonstrate different degrees of intention, purposefulness and awareness regarding their moral agency. Campbell (2003a) coined the term ethical knowledge to denote the conscious appreciation of one’s state of moral agency. Ethical knowledge enables teachers to apply personal moral wisdom to their teaching practices, by making visible the conceptual and practical connections between their work and their interpretations of moral principles and virtues; and by
making visible the moral complexities, conflicts and nuances of classroom life, teaching practices, and learning goals for students. Ethical knowledge may be observed in how teachers articulate the moral and ethical frameworks that guide their reflections and decisions; in how they understand the influences of their behaviours and conduct on students; in how they interpret their professional obligations, duties, role, and responsibilities; and, in how they envision their classroom environment (Campbell, 2003a).

For the purposes of this study, I build on Campbell’s (2003a) model of moral agency, but with a different focal point. Campbell’s interests lie in teacher professionalism and ethical practice, of which moral agency is proposed as a foundational concept. Although related, my interest lies more in the moral education of children, with moral agency as the organizing concept. Accordingly, I consider moral agency to be an active and purposeful means by which teachers provide a moral education for students, such that moral agent teachers hold as a primary concern the moral development of their students. This places increased emphasis on the moral educator prong as the key component of moral agency, and moral agency as the context within which teachers are moral educators. This does not mean that a teacher who simply delivers a pre-packaged character education program or who gives a discrete lesson on respect, for example, is necessarily deemed a moral agent. To achieve moral agency status, the teacher must also be a moral person, as Campbell (2003a) describes. The reciprocal relationship, however, is not necessarily upheld. Teachers who otherwise conduct their professional practices as moral people, may not necessarily prioritize or see as their role the facilitation of their
students’ moral development, or may regularly miss moments for communicating moral messages and lessons.

This also places a different emphasis on the term ethical knowledge. I understand ethical knowledge similarly to Campbell (2003a), as one’s moral wisdom, intelligence and awareness consciously applied in practice. Yet, given my definition of moral agency as active and purposeful, and more closely aligned with providing moral education, ethical knowledge becomes the knowledge base of moral agency. It represents a key difference between teachers who are not moral agents, oblivious to the moral dimensions of classroom life and practice, and teachers who find opportunities to infuse and encourage morality throughout classroom life and their teaching practices. Degrees of ethical knowledge help to explain this disparity among teaching practices, as well as why some teachers are moral agents while others are not.

Interesting questions emerge from this argument, which speak to this study’s potential applications. These include: Can teachers acquire ethical knowledge? Under what circumstances might this occur? Can ethical knowledge be formally taught and learned as curriculum? Positive answers to these questions are implied by the literature promoting related pre-service and in-service education (Beyer, 1997; Freeman, 1998; Hamberger & Moore Jr., 1997; Howard, 2005; Joseph, 2003; Strike, 1995). These sources assume that the teacher is a moral person. More controversial questions relate to the teacher who may not be deemed a moral person. Fenstermacher (2001) philosophically inquires along these lines, when he reflects on “how fully developed a moral agent must be in order to be good at moral development” and “how morally good a person need be in order to be good at cultivating moral goodness in students” (p. 650).
He also notes, “One’s facility with the methods of moral development may be intimately connected to the depth and sophistication of one’s moral agency” (p. 650). My definition of moral agency claims that a teacher who is not a moral person cannot be a moral educator. While it is hoped that all teachers behave and conduct themselves according to moral values, it is anecdotally reported not to be the case. With so much focus on the moral development of children and the question, *Can morality be taught to children at school?* the irony of the teacher, who has not learned to be a moral person, should not be lost. This line of inquiry is beyond the scope of the current study, but may be an interesting follow-up study, however contentious.

I have discussed the terms virtues, morals, ethics, moral values, ethical values, moral education, moral agency, and ethical knowledge by way of introduction. They are embedded throughout this report, in both the conceptual and empirical elements. The definition and interpretation of moral agency, in particular, continue to be refined as the research results are explored.

Roadmap

Several topics introduced in this chapter are fully developed in the chapters that follow. The legacy of theoretical, conceptual, applied, and empirical work regarding the moral education of children, by which this study was inspired and on which this study hopes to build, is reviewed in Chapter Two. Chapter Three extends the literature review, by abstracting and framing understandings, insights and knowledge according to the four research subquestions. The methodological approach and particular methods of investigation are detailed in Chapter Four. Chapters Five, Six and Seven organize,
present and discuss the research results. Lastly, Chapter Eight revisits the research questions, outlining insights, identifying possible implications of the results, and suggesting further study and future directions.

Several insights that this study might generate were anticipated. While hoping to add to the literature detail on the content of teachers’ moral messages and lessons, and the strategies by which they are conveyed to students, this study also strives to understand what teachers envision for their students’ moral education and their own moral agency, and how teachers assess the moral education they provide for students and their efficacy in doing so. Additionally, this study may reveal how combinations of strategies interact within a single classroom, and are dynamically managed by a single teacher. Finally, by framing this study in terms of teaching practice, rather than moral education theory, I hope to generate insights that transcend any particular philosophical or theoretical orientation, and in doing so, to present results that are directly applicable, relevant and accessible to teachers.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

It is generally acknowledged that “education has always been thought to contain an essential ‘moral’ [quotations in original] component” (Straughan, 1988, p. 12). Yet, what constitutes moral education has evolved in the history of North American schooling, reflecting and responding to changing religious, political, sociological, cultural, technological, philosophical, and psychological sensibilities of society (Goodman & Lesnick, 2001; Howard, Berkowitz & Shaeffer, 2004; Leming, 2001; McClellan, 1999). The recent history of moral education in North American schools, from the 1960s to the beginning of the 21st century, is reviewed here to contextualize this study as a product of its time and place, and also to provide a broader perspective on the ideas and themes as they emerged, and in some cases re-emerged. The literature in this field emanates predominantly from the United States, with some representation from Sweden, Finland, Britain, Switzerland, and Canada. While the central trends and themes are relevant to this Canadian-based study, an outline of Ontario’s policies regarding character education in the early 21st century provides further context.

This chapter also includes a review of selected empirical work. Six notable studies, conducted from the late 20th century, helped to redirect the nature of investigations in the areas of moral education and moral agency. Their qualitative methodologies generated new insights and knowledge related to the moral dimensions of schooling, schools, teachers’ professional practices, classroom life, and academic investigation. This body of work inspired and informed the current study theoretically, conceptually and methodologically.
Moral Education in North America: 1960s to 1990s

Toward the latter part of the 1960s, North American society was perceived to be in moral disarray. Attributing factors included the decline of character education and direct moral instruction in public schools, after the Second World War, and the turbulent socio-political environment (Cooley, 2008; McClellan, 1999; Ryan, 1988; Straughan, 1988; Wynne & Ryan, 1997). The Vietnam War and antiwar demonstrations, the sexual revolution and widespread use of the birth control pill, the Women’s Movement, the Civil Rights Movement, the rising rate of divorce and altered family structures, immigration and demographic changes, and the increased use of illegal recreational drugs all diversified concepts of public morality. Home, community, school and religion were no longer seen as a unified or consistent moral influence on children. Teachers, re-evaluating their professional practices in the context of their personal lives, no longer projected a homogeneous ideal of classroom life, or represented the values of society at large. Growing concern for individual autonomy, freedom and rights, and a distrust of authority altered relationships between students and teachers. Fearing accusations of indoctrinating and manipulating the young, teachers became technicians dispensing information, rather than professional educators nurturing the holistic growth and development of students (Balch, Saller & Szolomicki, 1993; Beachum & McCray, 2005; Cohn & Kottkamp, 1993; Howard, Berkowitz & Schaeffer, 2004; Lickona, 1991; McClellan, 1999; Noddings, 2002; Ryan, 1988; Ryan & Bohlin, 1999; Wynne & Ryan, 1997). In addition, the concurrent, unrestricted and far-reaching emergence of the media-driven popular culture was vastly influencing children’s developing values (Lickona, 1991; Sizer & Sizer, 1999), exhibiting many values that were considered “largely
antithetical to intellectual and moral excellence” (Lickona & Davidson, 2005, p. 11).
Ryan (1988) affirms, “What is clear is that there has been an explosion of anti-social
behaviour among the young since World War II” (p. 18). Hunt and Mullins (2005) note,
“The impact of such devaluation of moral education was felt with devastating results in
American public schools” (p. 182).

These and other similar observations resurrected the 17th century fear of decent
into barbarism (Sizer & Sizer, 1999), and renewed an interest in school-based moral
education (Leming, 2001). Public pressure increased for educators to impart morality to
youth (Sizer & Sizer, 1999). “Teachers were called upon to offer a counterweight to the
This re-opened the door to a prescribed form of school-based moral education. Between
the mid-1960s and the late 1990s several formal approaches were attempted (Balch,
Saller & Szolomicki, 1993; Fallona, 2000; Howard, Berkowitz & Schaeffer, 2004; Joseph
& Efron, 2005; McClellan, 1999). The most notable are values clarification, character
education, applications of cognitive development theory, care ethics, ethical reasoning,
cultural heritage, peace education, and social action. Each of these eight approaches is
briefly outlined below.

Through the work of Simon, Raths and Harmin, values clarification dominated
moral education in the 1970s and 1980s. A product of its time, this values-neutral
approach represented a reaction against conventional authority, in favour of individual
freedoms and cultural pluralism (Howard, Berkowitz & Schaeffer, 2004; Kirschenbaum,
2000; Leming, 2008). As such, it assumes that values are a personal manifestation of
one’s cumulative life experiences and feelings. Students, would therefore, require help to
achieve greater clarity regarding their own values, and to develop autonomous ethical
decision-making skills, rather than having the values of others imposed upon them.

Teachers presented to the class a moral or value-laden issue, in an environment that was
psychologically safe for all viewpoints to be respectfully expressed and heard. Over 100
techniques and activities were recommended to stimulate reflection and discussion
through a seven-step valuing process, which involved: choosing values freely and
without undue pressure from peers or persons of authority; choosing values from
alternatives; thoughtfully considering the consequences of each alternative;
understanding what one might prize and cherish; publicly affirming one’s values; acting
on one’s choices; and repeating this process to create a lifelong pattern (Balch, Saller &
Szolomicki, 1993; Kirschenbaum, 2000). One such exercise involved having students
rank the moral importance of ten persons requesting admittance to a bomb shelter.

“According to this method of moral education, a choice is good, healthy, or wise if its
outcome is pleasing to the individual after consideration of the seven fold criteria; and a
choice is bad, unhealthy, or unwise if it fails to meet these criteria” (Hunt & Mullins,
2005, p. 185). Teachers were encouraged to remain neutral and nonjudgmental, in order
to avoid indoctrination and moral imperialism, as the emphasis was on the process of
valuing rather than on particular values.

Critics note, nonetheless, an absence of objective guidance for moral decision-
making. Further, distinctions were not drawn between normative values and ethical
values, or between what one might want to do, and what one ought to do. This often
reinforced moral relativism and controversial values, and encouraged the expression of
individual preferences and desires. The approach was further criticized for the unrealistic
expectation of values neutrality on the part of the teacher, the therapeutic orientation to discussions, and potential breaches of students’ privacy (Leming, 2008). According to Kirschenbaum (2000), however, the major flaw of this approach related to its core assumption that children, like adults, merely needed to clarify their values rather than develop them. In 1988, a report from the United States Department of Education discredited values clarification as an approach to moral education (Balch, Saller & Szolomicki, 1993; Howard, Berkowitz & Schaeffer, 2004; Hunt & Mullins, 2005; Kirschenbaum, 2000; Lickona, 1991; Straughan, 1988).

Meanwhile, conservative and religious segments of the population publicly advocated and politically lobbied for a more traditional, didactic character education program, with conformity to standards of behaviour and good habits. This coincided with a back-to-basics movement regarding academic pedagogy and standards. With support from the United States Secretary of Education, William Bennett, and the work of Lickona, Wynne and Ryan, character education resurfaced in the late 1980s from a previous incarnation that led to the Hartshorne and May study of the early 20th century (Arthur, 2008; Balch, Saller & Szolomicki, 1993; McClellan, 1999; Wynne & Ryan, 1997). Rooted in the Aristotelian tradition of normative virtue ethics (outlined in Chapter One), this behaviourist approach focuses on the direct cultivation and habituation of character virtues, such that acting is prioritized over knowing and desiring (Carr, 2008; Howard, Berkowitz & Shaeffer, 2004). With assumptions that one is born without virtue and that primitive impulses reign over reason (Ryan & Bohlin, 1999), instruction and training are used to inculcate virtue in the young (Bergman, 2007), and to align inclinations, feelings, and passions with reason (Ryan & Bohlin, 1999). Teachers
delivered formalized, structured lessons, often as a *virtue-of-the-week*, to help students understand, adopt as their own, and exhibit in behaviours and actions core moral values related to human rights and human dignity (Arthur, 2008; Campbell, 2008a; Fenstermacher & Osguthorpe, 2000; Hunt & Mullins, 2005; Lickona, 1991, 2004).

Despite valid aspirations and intentions, character education is criticized for assumptions that virtues can be enumerated, directly taught, trained, and assessed (Noddings, 2002); that such direct teaching would rectify the perceived moral deficit of children (Kohn, 1997; McCadden, 1998); that children do not possess virtues until they are taught to them by adults; that there is consensus on what moral values should be taught; and finally, that bad behaviour is a consequence of holding bad values, and not related to social, political and economic forces (Lockwood, 2009). Criticisms are also aimed at the de-contextualized, and overly didactic and cognitive nature of the lessons (McCadden, 1998; Nucci, 2009; Sizer & Sizer, 1999); the lack of consideration for relationships between students and teachers, and parents and teachers (Weissbourd, 2009); the embedded reward structure (Kohn, 1997; Lockwood, 2009; Noddings, 2002); the risk of indoctrination (Boyles, 2005; Kohn, 1997; McClellan, 1999); the persisting influence of fundamentalist Christianity (Boyles, 2005; Kohn, 1997); the failure to consider differences between adolescents and young children; the inadequate recognition of moral dilemmas, conflicts and complexities; and the limited empirical evidence of a lasting effect on behaviour and character (Hartshorne & May, 1930; Leming, 2008; Nucci & Turiel, 2009). Regarding the latter, students often became adept at discussing virtues; yet, there was minimal evidence to suggest that they behaved accordingly while not under direct adult supervision (Fallona, 2000; Joseph & Efron, 2005; McCadden, 1998;
If I successfully teach a child that it is wrong to steal, he will have learned that it is wrong to steal, but that is no guarantee that he will not steal on some future occasion” (Straughan, 1988, p. 9). As one schoolteacher expressed, such lessons encourage students to “talk the talk, but not to walk the walk” (Rosenberg, 2008).

Despite this long list of criticisms and the lack of empirical evidence, and given Joseph and Efron’s (2005) assertion that “character education has the most limited vision of morality and moral education” (p. 532), character education persisted and dominated education policy and practice. Between 1988 and 1998 there were six White House congressional conferences on character education (Ryan & Bohlin, 1999). In 1997 President Bill Clinton challenged all schools in the United States to teach character and good citizenship (Davis, 2003; Kirschenbaum, 2000). This led to a proliferation of programs, which now includes, among others, The Giraffe Heroes Project, The Core Virtues Program, The Learning for Life Program, Character Counts!, Character Matters, CHARACTERplus, The Loving Well Project, Character Education Partnership, and Goodcharacter.com. Character education remains a viable approach to moral education in North American schools, and has recently been fashioned as an organizing concept for comprehensive and systemic school reform, with attention to leadership, policies, practices, school climate and culture, pedagogy, discipline, academic curricula, and stakeholder involvement (Davidson, Lickona & Khmelkov, 2008; Lickona, 2004; Lickona & Davidson, 2005; Ryan & Bohlin, 1999).

In the 1950s, developmental psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg advanced the cognitive development theory as an approach for children to acquire understanding,
reasoning and judgment, and integrate these abilities in making morally right and good choices and decisions (Howard, 2005). In doing so, he expanded on the work of Swiss psychologist, Jean Piaget. Piaget rejected Durkheim’s reductionist belief that children learn morality through inculcation and internalization of values, pre-determined by the particular group to which they belong. Piaget believed instead, that individuals construct morality for themselves, and develop social-moral understanding, reasoning and judgment, as they struggle to arrive at fair and just decisions and solutions. He proposed two stages of moral development, heteronomous and autonomous. Heteronomous morality is related to unilateral respect for authority and rules. Autonomous morality is based on mutuality and reciprocity. Development is represented by a progression from heteronomous to autonomous morality.

Kohlberg’s empirical work suggested six, rather than two, hierarchically-integrated stages of human development: (a) orientation to obeying rules and authority, and avoiding punishment; (b) individualism and exchange, regarding reciprocity in serving one’s own needs and the needs of others; (c) mutual interpersonal expectations and good relations, and third-person perspective; (d) social system and conscience maintenance related to preserving the social order; (e) prior rights and social contract, related to the greatest good for the greatest number; and (f) universal ethical principles, related to preserving human wellbeing and dignity. Moral maturity involves a linear progression from stage one to stage six (Snarey & Samuelson, 2008).

As an approach to moral education in schools, Kohlberg recommended that teachers advance students through these cognitive stages, by providing them with opportunities for personal discovery, and encouraging and harnessing their natural and
intrinsic developmental processes. This was accomplished through a dilemma-based approach, where students were asked to process increasingly sophisticated and complex ethical conflicts. Teachers reinforced moral reasoning and decision-making skills with neutrally facilitated discussions and role-playing exercises. It was a challenge for teachers, however, to accommodate different developmental levels within a class, and to integrate the complex stage theory into the realities of classroom life. Criticisms of the theory and its application to moral education also included: (a) lack of consideration for emotions, actions and cultural variance; (b) gender bias; (c) inconclusive effect on students’ personal or social behaviours; and (d) an over-reliance on interviews, hypothetical situations and reasoning (Balch, Saller & Szolomicki, 1993; Howard, Berkowitz & Schaeffer, 2004; Hunt & Mullins, 2005; Leming, 2008; McClellan, 1999; Schrader, 1993; Straughan, 1988; Strike, 1990; Turiel, 2008; Wynne & Ryan, 1997).

Kohlberg addressed some of these concerns in the Just Communities model, which emerged in 1974 as the most comprehensive application of cognitive development. In this democratic approach to classroom and school governance, students collaborate with teachers, staff members and principals to resolve real-life situations, problems and dilemmas. As such, they engage in ongoing reflection and discourse, plan community projects, generate solutions, and establish rules and policies that reflect shared norms and values. Participation, as the core means of moral learning, supports the development of social, emotional and moral competence and judgement, and a sense of responsibility and care for one another. Kohlberg was directly involved in the establishment of six Just Communities in the United States (Oser, Althof & Higgins-D’Alessandro, 2008; Power & Higgins-D’Alessandro, 2008; Snarey & Samuelson, 2008).
Kohlberg continued to enhance the cognitive development theory as an approach to moral education.

In the last five or six years I’ve begun to look at moral education not simply in terms of what stages in moral reasoning have to say about it, but in terms of all the goals and processes that are involved in moral education. I am now concerned with taking up issues of content as well as structure. I’m interested in dealing with moral action as well as moral reasoning. I am also concerned with dealing with social environments in a more adequate way; dealing with the moral atmosphere or moral climate of institutions. (Kohlberg & Kuhmerker, 1980, p. 87)

Nucci and Turiel, more recently, refined cognitive development theory as the social-cognitive domain theory. Outlined in Chapter One, this theory distinguishes Kohlberg’s single developmental pathway as three separate, but related pathways or domains—moral, conventional and personal. It is similarly recommended as an approach to moral education in contemporary classrooms (Nucci, 2008, 2009; Nucci & Turiel, 2009).

Emerging in the early 1980s, from the fields of psychology (Gilligan, 1982) and philosophy (Noddings, 1984), care ethics, or the ethic of care, responded to the overly masculine, rational, justice-based, and autonomous orientation of cognitive development, by bringing to focus a female perspective of care-giving, and the role of impulse, attitude, emotion, feeling and the subjective in attachment relationships. This context of relationships distinguishes care ethics from a virtues perspective of care. Noddings (in Goodman & Lesnick, 2001) explains, “It is not properly labelled an ethic of virtue. Although it calls on people to be carers and to develop the virtues and capacities to care, it does not regard caring solely as an individual attribute. It recognizes that part played by the cared-for. It is an ethic of relation” (p. 73). Thus, there is reciprocity between the cared-for and the carer. The cared-for has a responsibility to express his or her needs to
the carer, and to give feedback to the carer on the fulfillment of these needs. The carer is responsible for identifying and responding to the expressed needs of the cared-for, in a manner that is attentive, receptive and nonjudgmental. These relationships naturally support the flourishing of several ethical values, including care, love, kindness, compassion, empathy, sensitivity, trust, and respect. The primary concern of care ethics, though, lies in forming and maintaining mutually caring relationships between the carer and the cared-for. Principles, virtues, values, rules, and customs all serve this purpose (Gilligan, 1982; Noddings, 2002, 2008).

Relating this theory to moral education, Noddings (2002, 2008) proposed that teachers personally engage with students to form caring relationships, and utilize their influence in these relationships to teach morality through a four-component model, which includes: (a) modelling moral behaviour and conduct; (b) engaging in authentic dialogue with students; (c) providing opportunities for students to practice caring for others, in the role of carer; and (d) confirming each child’s goodness. Noddings (2010) claims:

In efforts at moral education, effective modelling requires a caring relation; for dialogue to be genuine, such a relation is essential. Practice must be supervised by people who can model expert caring, and confirmation would be meaningless without the personal knowledge acquired in caring relations (p. 148).

This approach is thought to support a more fully human moral orientation for boys and girls, encourage the expression of a range of moral values, aid in the development of satisfying relationships, validate the moral dialogue inherent in female relationships, and create school climates that encourage moral reasoning and ethical behaviour beyond compliance and obedience (Fallona, 2000; McClellan, 1999; Noddings, 2002; Shelby, 2003; Stengel & Tom, 2006).
Despite Stengel and Tom’s (2006) assertion that “[Noddings] explores how a focus on the relational structure of caring can be used to rethink the entire school program, ending the reliance on the academic disciplines as an organizing basis for the school curriculum” (p. 19), schools lacked the resources to maintain a systemic moral climate of relational care (Joseph & Efron, 2005). This approach was also criticized for its inability to account for the full range of ethical values embedded in classroom life, particularly those related to fairness and justice (Strike, 1990). Nevertheless, care ethics is considered a significant orientation to school-based morality, and is a component of Starratt’s (1994) multidimensional ethical framework for schools, along with ethics of justice and critique. Care ethics is revisited in Chapter Six for its relevance to the research results.

*Ethical reasoning* has also been known as ethical inquiry, values analysis and rational decision-making. Influenced by cognitive development theory, and similar to values clarification, it represents an analytic process for solving moral dilemmas that includes acquiring salient facts, producing rational responses to questions, and making judgments. With the assumption that children can be taught a process for ethical reasoning, teachers were instructed to create and lead role-playing and storytelling activities, within the general studies curricula, that encouraged students to investigate values or actions, and imagine alternatives. Teachers found this approach to be time consuming, labour-intensive, and difficult to apply with elementary and middle school students. Further, the purely cognitive nature of ethical reasoning was determined to be ineffective in influencing moral action or behaviour, and ethical reasoning ultimately
suffered a similar fate as values clarification (Balch, Saller & Szolomicki, 1993; Joseph & Efron, 2005).

The final three approaches to moral education—cultural heritage, peace education and social action—are ideologically rooted in ideas associated with the political left, and encompass a range of related curricular orientations, including critical theory, anti-discriminatory pedagogy, liberationist perspectives, anti-racist and multicultural education, and critical democratic education (Campbell, 2008a). As such, they are at times controversial in the context of publicly-funded schooling (Campbell, 2008a; Joseph & Efron, 2005). The cultural heritage approach relies on collaboration between families, the school, and the cultural community to promote the transmission of values and traditions associated with non-dominant ethnic groups. This entails school-based participation in their customs, arts, celebrations and ceremonies. As such, it is appropriately confined to schools with homogeneous populations, for example, those that are Afro-centric, Native American and religious. In addition, the values advanced are not always of a moral nature, often self-serving to reflect that which is important for the community’s sustenance and continuity (Joseph & Efron, 2005).

Peace education promotes responsibility for the well being of humanity and the natural world. As such, it represents a holistic approach that integrates personal behaviours with global and environmental issues. Topics include conflict resolution, peace studies related to war, environmental studies, global education, and human rights. Some warn that this approach risks indoctrination, and may conflict with individual cultural and political values (Campbell, 2008a; Joseph & Efron, 2005).
Finally, *social action* promotes a politicized application of justice, fairness, equity, empathy, and compassion that is distinct from how these moral values are understood in neo-classical virtue theory. Along with their teachers, students are encouraged to become agents of social change, by supporting social, moral or political causes that are of interest to them. This is criticized, however, for the potential to use students as social activists, in the pursuit of agendas that may not advance their growth and development; and for the potential to change the role of the teacher from moral agent to social activist. It also risks providing a forum for personal grievances and agendas that may not be sanctioned by families, the school community, or society at large (Campbell, 2008a, 2008b; Joseph & Efron, 2005). Nevertheless, this approach has taken hold in many schools throughout North America, having influenced a less politicized community service and service-learning orientation to moral education (Hart, Matsuba & Atkins, 2008). It is revisited in Chapter Seven for its relevance to the research results.

Although some of these approaches to moral education share characteristics, they are considered philosophical alternatives based on dissimilar assumptions, beliefs, understandings, and practices. Some overly focus on the processes of teaching rather than outcomes of learning (Balch, Saller & Szolomicki, 1993), or on knowledge of virtues rather than behavioural manifestations of virtues (Fenstermacher & Osguthorpe, 2000); some position themselves as a substitute for creating moral classroom and school cultures (Oser, 1994); some prioritize ethnic values and personal doctrine rather than objective virtues and principles fundamental to human flourishing (Joseph & Efron, 2005); some are overly entrenched in either traditional-paternalistic or liberal-progressive moral authority (Carr, 2000); some are detached from society’s collective moral wisdom,
necessitating teachers and students to *reinvent* morality (Wynne & Ryan, 1997); some ignore the social dynamics in which morality is embedded (McCadden, 1998); and some do not take into account the character of the teachers who are responsible for delivering the program (Sockett, 1993). Nevertheless, these eight approaches continue to inform the moral education dialogue in three thematic areas: (a) the cultivation of virtues, (b) the development of moral reasoning and moral judgment, and (c) the role of emotion and sentiment (Elias, Parker, Kash, Weissberg & O’Brien, 2008; Nucci, 2009; Nucci & Narváez, 2008).

*Ontario: 21st Century*

Public schooling in Canada is the responsibility of provincial Ministries of Education. More recent policy decisions in Ontario, therefore, provide further context for this study. At the end of the 20th century, Ontario’s Education Act declared that schoolteachers would be responsible for teaching values. The Ministry of Education’s 1998 guidance and career education policy document, entitled *Choices Into Action* (http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/discussi/choices.pdf), indicated that students should learn at school to demonstrate self-discipline, cooperation with others, care for others, social responsibility, responsibility for their own behaviour, and thoughtful conflict resolution strategies, among other goals. The 1999 Speech from the Throne highlighted the need to foster principles of tolerance, civility, and good citizenship among youth. In May of 2004, the government took a stand against bullying and violence in schools by providing funds to *Roots of Empathy* (http://www.rootsofempathy.org), a non-profit, award-winning Canadian organization dedicated to fostering emotional literacy, reducing bullying and aggression, promoting pro-social behaviours, developing respectful
and caring relationships, and building peaceful civil societies. This additional funding was intended to expand the K-8 programming in school boards across the province.

These initiatives seemed to coalesce in October of 2006, when the Ontario government launched a character development program for publicly funded K-12 schools. *Finding Common Ground* was part of a larger plan to improve student achievement, and aligned with a newly created position of Chief Student Achievement Officer (http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/success.html). Recognizing that the school environment, academic achievement, and character and citizenship development are inextricably linked in students’ educational experiences, the program aimed to promote the values embedded in each. This was communicated in a document entitled *Finding Common Ground: Character Development in Ontario Schools, K-12* (http://www.curriculum.org/secretariat/december11.shtml; http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/reports/literacy/bookletSummary2008.pdf).

From this guide, publicly funded school boards in Ontario were mandated to create and implement a character development program, with universal attributes that permeate school life, bind stakeholders in a shared cause, and form the basis of responsible citizenship in a just and democratic society. It was assumed that most educators of children already espoused related values, beliefs and principles, and could infuse them into existing classrooms, curricula, extracurricular activities, policies, practices, and interactions with students on fairly short notice, for the following 2007-2008 school year. The government invested two million dollars to support these efforts, and to fund eight character development resource teams. These teams scattered across the province, between February and June of 2007, to initiate regional discussions with
education stakeholders, and to facilitate locally constructed interpretations that would reflect the unique communities of Ontario schools. Twenty-four independent consultation sessions took place in French, English and Catholic school communities. In consultation with their local stakeholders, individual school boards selected and prioritized a set of attributes or values. By the spring of 2007, boards were invited to submit examples of successful practices related to character development. These were published in a Ministry document entitled *Character Development in Action: Successful Practices, K – 12*. This compendium of practices was circulated throughout the province to help further the vision of character development. One year later, each board was required to submit a single-page feedback form, outlining its progress and actions in implementing the program. Most boards met implementation expectations. Eleven boards, however, exceeded expectations by also providing leadership and support to other boards.

Two school boards, in particular, are recognized for their leadership, the Keewatin-Patricia District School Board and the York Region District School Board (http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/success.html). Prior to the mandating of character education in Ontario, the Keewatin-Patricia District School Board identified a need to increase the involvement of students, parents and community members in local schools. In 2005, they formed a collaborative committee, and developed a program of character education around the Seven Grandfather Teachings of Aboriginal Culture—bravery, responsibility, respect, kindness, honesty, humility and wisdom. This reflects the board’s 30-35% Aboriginal population. In accordance with the Province’s mandate, these attributes are reinforced in classroom and school-wide activities, possibly
representing an example of the cultural heritage approach to moral education. Their program also encourages the concept of *pay-it-forward*, where students and classrooms become involved in acts of kindness throughout the community (http://www.kpdsb.on.ca/SFTF/characterdevelopment.asp; http://www.curriculum.org/edu/character/).

Influenced by the book *Character Matters: How to Help our Children Develop Good Judgment, Integrity, and Other Essential Virtues* (Lickona, 2004), the York Region District School Board also pre-empted the Ministry’s mandate. Their *Character Matters* program focuses on developing responsible, caring, and contributing citizens; creating safe and supportive schools; and increasing academic achievement for all students. In support, ten attributes were endorsed—respect, responsibility, honesty, empathy, fairness, initiative, courage, integrity, perseverance and optimism (http://www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca; http://www.curriculum.org/edu/character/). These two Ontario Boards of Education continued to provide leadership throughout the province, even to independent and private schools that are not subject to the government’s mandates, but nevertheless wished to implement a character program of their own. The current study’s research school is a recipient of such support.

In addition to the character development program, Ontario implemented a community service initiative. Every student who began high school during or after the 1999-2000 school year is required to complete a total of forty hours of community service work, in order to achieve an Ontario Secondary School diploma. The students may select from a variety of activities, including:

- Assist a neighbour in need with child care, pet care or elderly care;
• Volunteer at a seniors’ home, soup kitchen, hospital, library, or shelter;
• Organize community events or charitable activities;
• Assist with sports teams or the democratic political process;
• Volunteer through religious communities or places of worship;
• Volunteer at school with fundraising, tutoring, students with special needs, and committees.

These activities are not linked to an academic component, and are expected to be completed independently of schoolwork and on the students’ personal time (http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/124a.html). Thus, at the beginning of the 21st century, Ontario had endorsed by legislation, both character development and community service, as approaches to providing moral education for students.

Empirical Studies

Despite these efforts to provide youth with a moral education, many still believed by the end of the 20th century that North American society was in a state of moral chaos and that public schools were failing to impart morality (Lickona, 2004; Ryan & Bohlin, 1999; Schuitema, ten Dam & Veugelers, 2008; Simon, 2001; Stengel & Tom, 2006; Wynne & Ryan, 1997). “Public concern grew about teen pregnancy, school violence, and other social ills, and a steady stream of articles appeared in newspapers, magazines, and professional journals about the need for more attention to the moral aspect of schooling” (Stengel & Tom, 2006, p. 17). Educators, academics and parents continued to speculate that children learn about right and wrong in school and from their teachers. Yet, there was limited empirical evidence to support how this might be accomplished. The results from quantitative and scientific research, which dominated the study of moral
education since the Thorndike era, were not considered by teachers to be pedagogically helpful. While the goals of these methodologies focused on producing understandings that were generalizable, teaching practice relied on contextual information (Leming, 2008, 2010).

In the early 1990s, a new surge of academic research was inspired by a ground-breaking book called *The Moral Dimensions of Teaching* (Goodlad, Soder & Sirotnik, 1990). Its topics broadly scoped Kindergarten to grade 12 public education in the United States, with discussions of teacher professionalization and professionalism, teacher education, the moral purpose of compulsory schooling, liberalism, moral dimensions of the classroom, the moral basis of relationships between teachers and students, ethics codes, and accountability. This book provided a theoretical foundation for broadly investigating aspects of moral education in schools and classrooms (Campbell, 2008a). Further, its topics and themes provided justification for the use of qualitative methodologies.

Six notable qualitative studies on the moral dimensions of teaching, learning and schooling, and several independent reports generated from them were conducted in the wake of this publication. The six studies include: (a) *The Moral Life of Schools Project* (Jackson, Bootstrom & Hansen, 1993); (b) *The Manner in Teaching Project* (Fenstermacher, 2001; Richardson & Fenstermacher, 2000, 2001); (c) *The Moral and Ethical Bases of Teachers’ Interactions with Students Project* (Campbell, 2003a, 2004; Campbell & Thiessen, 2000, 2001); (d) *Moral Questions in the Classroom: How to Get Kids to Think Deeply About Real Life and Their Schoolwork* (Simon, 2001); (e) *It’s Hard to be Good: Moral Complexity, Construction, and Connection in a Kindergarten*
Classroom (McCadden, 1998); (f) and The Moral Dimensions of Teaching: Language, Power, and Culture in Classroom Interaction (Buzzelli & Johnston, 2002). These studies are described below.

Jackson, Boostrom and Hansen’s (1993) The Moral Life of Schools Project represents breakthrough empirical work on the moral dimensions of the classroom. Over a period of two-and-a-half years, the investigators observed 18 classrooms in six schools of the United States Midwest. Their data identified eight categories of moral influence, by which moral messages and lessons are transmitted to students in the classroom. These were organized into two sets. The set known as moral instruction includes five categories that are “avowedly moral” (p. 3), and thus, relatively visible: (a) moral instruction as independent curricula; (b) deliberate moral instruction within the academic curricula; (c) rituals and ceremonies engendering pride, loyalty, reverence, piety and thankfulness; (d) visual displays with moral content; and (e) spontaneous moral commentary. The second set, called moral practice, reflects the personal qualities, understandings, beliefs, assumptions, and presuppositions of teachers that “embody the moral [italics in original]” (p. 3). Its categories include: (a) classroom rules and regulations, as manifestations of fairness, equity and care; (b) curricular substructures that shape the order, organization and delivery of curricula, as manifestations of truthfulness, trust, honesty, worthwhileness, fairness, and justice; and (c) expressive morality related to teachers’ facial expressions, gestures, body posture, mannerisms, and style, and related to the physical learning environment, such as placement, quality and quantity of furniture, objects, and displays items. Although more difficult to identify as moral in nature, this set’s three categories unconsciously, unknowingly, and
coincidentally pervade all aspects of classroom life, and thus, are thought to have the most potential for an enduring moral impact on students.

Using the project’s data from an all boys, African American, Catholic High School that maintains a focus on moral education and character development, Hansen (2002) further explored the connection between individual classroom environments and the broader environment of the school. Using Dewey’s framework of environmentally-mediated moral learning, Hansen identified school-wide moral influences that parallel the classroom-based categories. These included hallway displays, bulletins, the school motto, programs, and policies that instil responsibility; awards for students who exemplify respect, selflessness, honesty and courtesy; a code of conduct; assemblies, ceremonies, announcements and rituals with values-based themes; and a strong culture of community built around Black heritage, the Catholic religion, and masculine-orientations and experiences. Hansen (2002) suggested that the moral environment of the school “emerges through the combined actions of administrators, teachers, parents, and students” (p. 88), with teachers playing a particularly important role. In addition, Hansen identifies challenges that teachers face in meeting this school’s mission for moral and character education. These include a high teacher turnover rate, the stress of constantly modelling moral behaviours, community and neighbourhood problems with which students must deal, financial difficulties that result in poor pay for teachers, and little direct support from administrators. These results validate attention paid to the broader school context in this current study.

The data from these two studies were primarily observational. Thus, while researchers identified a moral foundation in most facets of school and classroom life, the
extent to which teachers themselves were aware of this and intended to convey moral meanings is unknown. Interviews may have revealed that the classroom layout and rule of no running, for example, were purely for efficiency and safety, respectively, with no moral significance to the teacher or students (Campbell, 2003b). Goodman and Lesnick (2001) note this, with some concern:

Rules that compel children to walk in a line, not stop until they reach their destination, lower their voices in corridors, and keep their hands to themselves may also be perfectly reasonable. But to call these rules ‘moral’ [quotations in original] stretches the term and not harmlessly so. (p. 147)

The extent to which rules and other aspects of classroom life were framed by the teachers’ moral orientations was neither evident nor confirmed in the context of interviews. The Moral Life of Schools Project, nevertheless, provided the first comprehensive taxonomy for how morality is conveyed to students by teachers.

*The Manner in Teaching Project* (Fenstermacher, 2001; Richardson & Fenstermacher, 2000, 2001) was carried out over a three year period, and involved 11 teachers, two principals, and several students, in two distinctly different Michigan schools. Using a framework of Aristotelian virtue ethics, Richardson and Fenstermacher set out to investigate teachers’ *manner*. They define manner as action consistent with relatively stable character dispositions or traits. Yet, interviews, videotapes, group meetings and observations provided a wider range of data related to “how teachers foster or impede the development of moral and intellectual virtues by their students” (Fenstermacher, 2001, p. 639). Six methods were identified: (a) constructing classroom communities characterized by respect, sharing, tolerance, orderliness, and productive work, with rules, duties, classroom set-up, relationships, and behavioural expectations; (b) didactic instruction that directly signifies desired moral conduct; (c) design and
execution of academic task-structures, so teachers may analyze and assess student work in ways that encourage students to think more deeply and imaginatively, and to cultivate an enhanced range of intellectual virtues; (d) calling-out for conduct of a particular kind, directed at a specific student or students but with the intention that others will also hear and learn vicariously; (e) private conversations with students to cultivate virtue; and (f) showcasing students with exemplary behaviour, so they serve as role models for others. Teachers modelling morality was excluded from this list of methods and given separate standing to acknowledge that modelling is interwoven in complex, but undetermined ways, with all six methods, and is significant in the success of each (Fenstermacher, 2001; Richardson & Fenstermacher, 2000, 2001).

These methods broadly conform to Jackson, Boostrom and Hansen’s (1993) eight categories. This is particularly significant given the different lenses these two projects assumed. Taken together, they contribute to a stronger image of moral agency, with the teacher as both a moral person and a moral educator. As indicators of moral messages and lessons, the methods and categories helped me to focus on morally salient aspects of the research classroom and the teacher’s practices.

Members of the research team generated five additional reports from the project’s data. Fallona (2000) evaluated data from three middle school teachers, using a framework of 11 Aristotelian moral virtues. She indicated that the virtues were expressed either visibly or invisibly in the teachers’ manner. Visible virtues were readily observed, and included friendliness, wit, mildness, generosity, magnificence, bravery and honour. Invisible virtues of magnanimity, temperance, truthfulness and justice were more difficult to observe and relied on the teachers’ input. Fallona concluded that it was
possible to observe virtues systematically, and then describe teachers’ manner in terms of these virtues.

Fallona’s conceptual framework was extended in an analysis of two elementary teachers’ classroom management styles (Richardson & Fallona, 2001). To the 11 Aristotelian virtues, Richardson and Fallona (2001) added practical wisdom, defined as reflective experience that enables teachers to know what to do, when to do it, and why it is to be done. One teacher overtly expressed virtues of friendliness, wit, truthfulness, mildness and temperance, justice, and practical wisdom. The other teacher expressed virtues of magnanimity, friendliness, truthfulness, honour, and justice. While their management styles appeared quite distinct on the surface, the two teachers commonly expressed friendliness, truthfulness and justice. In addition, they conveyed virtues to students in common ways, including the conscious modelling of virtuous conduct, direct statements of virtuous expectations, clear and explicit descriptions of appropriate conduct, and calling out for particular conduct. These studies support the connection between teachers’ character and their moral messages, and reinforce Campbell’s (2003) two-pronged definition of moral agency.

It is worth noting that the results from the Fallona (2000) and Richardson and Fallona (2001) studies represent an all-female perspective. This may introduce a bias that does not reflect the manner of male teachers. For example, virtues that are invisible in the manner of a female teacher may be more visibly expressed in the manner of a male teacher; or, the reverse might be true. This is particularly relevant with regard to justice, which is traditionally associated with a masculine orientation toward morality (Gilligan, 1982; Noddings, 2002), and yet, is noted by Fallona (2000) as an invisible virtue among
her female teachers. The relevance of gender in moral agency is signalled by this observation, but cannot be investigated in the present study.

Sanger (2001) investigated two of the 11 teachers for their views of morality, their understanding of their role as moral educators, and the extent to which these influence teaching practices. Data from open-ended, semi-structured interviews indicated the teachers’ rich and complex comprehensions of classrooms as a site for moral development. While they shared a common goal to develop virtuous dispositions among their students, one teacher held a utopian view, based on a caring-liberal model that emphasized respect for individuality and freedom. The other teacher held a communitarian-pragmatic view, prioritizing community norms. Although not opposed, the different moral perspectives may indicate differences in what teachers identify as morally salient and what they emphasize as good, right and virtuous. This insight encouraged a broad and inclusive ethical framework for the current study.

Richardson and Williams (2000) reported on data from student interviews, in an effort to determine students’ perspectives on the moral dimensions of their classrooms. Students from schools with character education programs, and classrooms with a strong moral orientation were aware of goals related to character development. While younger children tended to perceive the role of teachers as conveyers of academic, subject-specific knowledge, middle-school students were aware of teachers’ moral development goals. Girls, in particular, articulated understanding of teachers’ efforts to help students develop positive relationships. This study added a student voice to the literature, and in doing so, provided preliminary insight into the efficacy of teachers’ efforts to foster
morality. It did not, however, directly contribute to the current study, which focuses only on the teacher.

Lastly, Chow-Hoy (2001) related teachers’ perceptions of their practices as moral educators to their school’s espoused philosophy, their principal’s commitment to that philosophy, and the school structures that enable or constrain its implementation. Using document analysis, interviews with principals and teachers, and school-wide observations from two schools that emphasize a range of moral and intellectual virtues, he noted that the school philosophy and principal’s commitment to that philosophy impacted teachers’ emphasis on the development of students’ virtues and social skills. Like Hansen’s (2002) results, these results illustrate a connection between the classroom and the school, in regard to moral education, and validate attention paid to the broader school context in the current study, as a means of situating the participant’s moral agency.

I was a research assistant to the project entitled *The Moral and Ethical Bases of Teachers’ Interactions with Students* (Campbell, 2003a, 2004; Campbell & Thiessen, 2000, 2001). This multiple case study examined the following four elements of moral agency: (a) teachers’ awareness of their role as moral agents; (b) teachers’ knowledge of what they hoped their students would learn with respect to right and wrong; (c) how teachers facilitated this learning; and (d) the ethical dimensions, orientations, and complexities of classroom life. Intensive observations and interviews with 12 teachers in five diverse urban schools in Ontario revealed a range of moral values operationalized by teachers within their classrooms. Most teachers, however, knowingly prioritized respect, fairness, care, and honesty, as broad categories representing several additional moral values, including justice, equity, kindness, compassion, sensitivity, truthfulness, and trust.
Variations of The Golden Rule were often articulated as a general context for conveying moral lessons and messages to students.

Interestingly, one of the teachers in this study was not considered a moral agent, despite being identified by her principal as an exemplary teacher. Her understanding of the moral dimensions of the classroom was limited. She missed opportunities for sending moral messages and teaching moral lessons. Many of the messages she did send were disrespectful, unkind, or unfair. She modelled behaviours that were interpreted as unethical, and was sometimes rude and mean to students (Campbell, 2003a). In presenting this negative case study, Campbell provides evidence that moral agency is not an inevitable state of being for classroom teachers, even those who are otherwise thought of as competent.

The results of this study provided a framework of moral values that seems to define and guide the practices of moral agent teachers. In addition, the model of moral agency as a two-pronged state was delineated. These insights have informed the current study’s conceptual framework, and provided criteria for selecting a suitable participant. The case study methodology and the particular methods of data collection were also drawn from this larger study.

In *Moral Questions in the Classroom: How to Get Kids to Think Deeply About Real Life and Their Schoolwork*, Simon (2001) argues that the American high school curriculum provides ample opportunities for teachers and students to engage in moral, spiritual and existential exploration of issues related to humanity, society and their own lives. Further, she proposes that the curriculum be organized around moral and existential questions. In distinguishing the two, she suggests that morality relates to how
humans should act, or should have acted in situations that involve the wellbeing of self, others, other living things, or the earth. Relevant exploratory questions may include, for example, How can we respond to human suffering in ways that promote dignity? What, if anything, constitutes a just war? How should a society distribute its wealth? Are there scientific discoveries that humans should not pursue? Does democracy result in representative and humane governance? What is the impact of particular technological innovations on the environment? Although related, existentialism inquires into human nature, the mysteries of the universe, and the quality of our physical, spiritual or emotional existence. Exploratory questions that are existential in nature include, for example, What forces give rise to cruelty among human beings? What does it mean to be a good human being? What do I need to do to promote my own health and happiness? What gives my life meaning? How does human life differ from other kinds of life on earth? In working through these questions and others, teachers and students integrate subject areas of English, social studies, biology, and chemistry, for example, while also learning the content within each. Simon (2002) asserts that such exploration supports, rather than detracts from the intellectual and academic goals related to standard curricula.

Yet, three months of empirical work, involving classroom observations, and teacher and student interviews at three high schools, demonstrated that teachers, in fact, discouraged public exploration of spiritual, moral and existential issues, relegating them to individualized homework assignments, at best. When discussions of this nature did spontaneously arise in the classroom, their treatment was superficial and uninformed, rather than sustained and meaningful. Simon (2001) recommends specific strategies for teachers to more fully pursue these opportunities with their students. At the same time,
she acknowledges several school-level barriers that would challenge the implementation of these strategies, including time constraints, large class sizes, pressure to complete prescribed curricula, high-stakes standardized testing, lack of teacher training, solitary work environments, and textbook dependency. Simon (2001) simply advises teachers to do what is possible with their own students and in their own classrooms:

There are immediate steps that teachers, working individually or in teams, can take to improve the situation for their particular students... some practical steps that teachers might take now to infuse their classrooms with meaningful exploration of moral and existential questions. (p. 220)

Simon also advocates for systemic school reforms that would disable any barriers to pursuing moral, spiritual and existential questions with students. In this, however, she does not suggest a role for teachers. This stance is inconsistent with much of the literature on teacher professionalism, which identifies teachers as important agents of school change (Campbell, 2003a; Oser, 1994; Sockett, 1993; Strike & Ternasky, 1993). For example, Oser (1994) promotes “educating teachers in order to be able to create a moral school culture” (p. 97). Campbell (2003a) asserts that teachers have a professional obligation in renewing school cultures. She states, “This prevailing norm within the teacher culture, that restricts teachers from assuming the professional responsibility for promoting moral agency beyond the confines of their individual classrooms, needs to be confronted by teachers themselves” (p. 123). The theoretical underpinnings of the current study coincide with this position. As moral agents, teachers are deemed responsible for actively working with all stakeholders toward school reforms that enable them to provide opportunities for students’ moral growth and development. While a description of the current research school is provided, it is non-evaluative and the study remains focused on classroom practices.
Despite this discrepancy, Simon’s work has informed the current study, primarily in regard to the third research subquestion on moral agency strategies. In providing a model for integrating academic and moral teaching, Simon presents a more specific articulation of Jackson, Boostrom and Hansen’s (1993) category of “deliberate moral instruction within the academic curricula”, and Richardson and Fenstermacher’s (Fenstermacher, 2001; Richardson & Fenstermacher, 2000, 2001) method of “didactic instruction”. Further, and similarly to Chow-Hoy (2001) and Hansen (2002), Simon acknowledges the significance of the broader school context in delivering a moral education, although, with a more negative viewpoint.

McCadden’s (1998) *It’s hard to be good: Moral complexity, construction, and connection in a kindergarten classroom* explores the classroom life of a single, public school, kindergarten class. Interviews with the teacher, selected students, and a teacher’s aide, along with participant and non-participant observations were conducted over an entire school year. From this data, McCadden identified two moral cultures through which students rotate during their school day—organizational and relational. The organizational culture exists inside the classroom, and is created and managed by the teacher through rules, rituals, routines, expectations for orderly conduct, classroom management, and behavioural control measures. The relational culture exists on the playground, and is created and managed by the students, without the influence of their teacher. It entails methods for accessing people and games, building friendships, being accepted, making connections with others, and having fun. Organizational morality creates the *student* and is *accommodated* by the children. Relational morality creates the *person* and is *absorbed* by the children. McCadden further notes that the participant
teacher prioritized organizational morality at the expense of relational morality; the student at the expense of the person; and the act of accommodating at the expense of absorbing. Not only was relational morality not acknowledged within the classroom context, the teacher’s practices often undermined it.

By including interviews and yearlong observations, and uniquely adding student voice, this study provides a most comprehensive glimpse into the primary classroom, but not necessarily its moral dimensions. It is questionable whether the moral dimensions were fully appreciated by the teacher, who did not articulate her practice and classroom life in terms of morality, did not use a moral vocabulary, and did not appear to purposefully and knowingly support students’ moral development beyond obedience and adherence to rules. This calls into question McCadden’s (1998) claim that morality does not just happen in the classroom, but is carefully nurtured by teachers. These results may actually demonstrate that morality did, in fact, occur both in the classroom and on the playground, despite a lack of effort by the teacher in the former setting, and the absence of the teacher in the latter setting.

McCadden’s theoretical orientations related to critical theory and moral relativism differ from my own, as I describe in Chapter One, and from the previously discussed empirical work that has more significantly influenced the conceptual framework of the current study. Yet, his work has been the primary methodological model on which I have based this study. As outlined in Chapter Four, the current study similarly entails a longitudinal exploration of a single teacher’s practices, using ethnographic methods of investigation. In addition, McCadden and I share a common concern for the perceived
monopoly of character education programs in schools, and a common desire to expose a wider range of moral education approaches.

In *The Moral Dimensions of Teaching: Language, Power, and Culture in Classroom Interaction*, Buzzelli and Johnston (2002) report on an empirical and conceptual investigation of the moral dimensions of social interactions between teachers and students. A tripartite framework of language, power and culture was used for a discourse analysis of classroom transcripts, and a content analysis of course syllabi. Regarding language, particular forms of discourse, the use of specific language, and teachers’ choices with respect to the register of their voice represent direct and indirect means of conveying, negotiating and interpreting moral meaning. For example, the use of repetition indicates care and concern for the content and process of an activity, or care and concern for students and the answers they provide to questions. Language may also facilitate or hinder the nature and extent of students’ participation in learning activities, and consequently, their ability to learn. For example, open-ended questions give students voice and encourage engagement. In this framework, language does not narrowly refer to the use of moral vocabulary (Colnerud, 1997, 2006; Sockett & LePage, 2002; Strike, 1995; Van Manen, 2000), but is considered a type of pedagogy.

Power and morality connect around the notion of teachers’ authority. There is a dual nature to authority that is inherent in the role of teaching, distinguished as *in* authority or *an* authority. Being *in* authority represents power over the processes of schooling, and the ability to influence students’ behaviours. Being *an* authority represents power over the content of curriculum, and the ability to influence students’ knowledge. This understanding of authority was used to frame a discussion on the
relationship between power and morality in three key areas of teaching: (a) evaluation and assessment, (b) management and discipline, and (c) ambiguities in student empowerment. The relationship between power and morality is dynamic, re-evaluated and re-conceptualized with each group of learners.

Lastly, the term culture refers to students’ ethnic backgrounds, values, and moral judgments. Encounters of difference were examined as they relate to classroom participation, cultural representation in curricular materials, and identity formation. Consistent with critical theory, the authors note an ethnocentricity of the dominant culture, that impedes the ability of immigrant students to communicate effectively in the classroom, participate fully in activities, contribute meaningfully, relate to cultural references in the curriculum, feel socially included, and identify with representations of their own cultural heritage.

Buzzelli and Johnston (2002) acknowledge that language, power and culture are inextricably intertwined in the classroom, and that considering them separately is simply an analytic tool. Language is used to negotiate power, and is a vehicle for producing culture; power is negotiated to some extent through language and in culturally conventional ways; culture is, in part, expressed through language. They do not, however, acknowledge connections to other moral dimensions of the classroom and teachers’ practices, such as those identified by The Manner in Teaching Project and The Moral Life of Schools Project. Several of these are, in fact, filtered out by the audio-transcripts. Reliance on audio-transcripts to represent classroom life, and the lack of teacher interviews decontextualizes the data. This has resulted in several questionable inferences and conclusions. For example, the authors interpret the teacher’s style of
repeating answers supplied by students as a validation and confirmation of the student. This may also be interpreted as merely validating the answer, and may invalidate or undermine the student who offered the answer. Students might learn from this practice that the teacher will repeat answers that are deemed acceptable, that important information is provided by the teacher, and that it is only necessary, therefore, to listen to the teacher, not to each other. Without contextual information or the teacher’s input, Buzzelli and Johnston (2002) identify this as a positive, moral dimension of teaching. Others may interpret it negatively, as a missed opportunity to foster relationships, ethical behaviours, and an inclusive classroom environment.

As with McCadden’s (1998) study, the ethical orientation of this study, ground in critical theory and moral relativism, is different from my own. Regarding moral relativism, Buzzelli and Johnston (2001) had previously declared, “The notion of a single set of moral values for the classroom is highly problematic” (p. 876). Nonetheless, the moral dimensions of language, power and culture that they explore are relevant to Jackson, Boostrom and Hansen’s (1993) category of “curricular substructures and expressive morality”, and as such, also inform the conceptual framework of this study.

**Conclusion**

Theoretically, conceptually and methodologically varied, these six empirical studies and the independent reports generated from them signify that moral agency pervades many aspects of classroom life and teaching practice. This is supported by the range of themes they have collectively explored, including:

- Visions and goals that teachers have for their students’ moral education (Campbell, 2003a; Sanger, 2001);
• The moral environment of classrooms (Fenstermacher, 2001; McCadden, 1998; Richardson & Fenstermacher, 2000, 2001);

• Particular moral values or virtues operating within the classroom (Campbell, 2003a; Fallona, 2000; Richardson & Fallona, 2001; Sanger, 2001);

• Means by which moral messages and lessons are conveyed to students (Buzzelli & Johnston, 2002; Campbell, 2003a; Fallona, 2000; Jackson, Boostrom & Hansen, 1993; McCadden, 1998; Richardson & Fallona, 2001; Richardson & Fenstermacher, 2000, 2001; Richardson & Williams 2000; Simon, 2001);

• Moral messages embedded in school activities and academic curriculum (Campbell, 2003a; Jackson, Boostrom & Hansen, 1993; McCadden, 1998; Simon, 2001);

• School-level factors that affect the moral education teachers are able to provide for students (Chow-Hoy, 2001; Hansen, 2002; Simon, 2001).

In addition to these, Campbell’s (2003a) interview data add that teachers reflect on and evaluate the success of their moral agency practices, in relation to how they envision their classrooms and students. These themes support the assertion that some teachers knowingly and purposefully provide a moral education for their students within four areas of teaching practice—vision, content, strategies and assessment—and without the use of a prescribed and pre-packaged moral or character program. In addition, these themes are independent of any single philosophical orientation or approach to moral education.

The two chapters that follow apply what has been learned from this review of theoretical and empirical literature to the current study. Chapter Three frames previously
generated understandings, insights and knowledge according to the four research subquestions, by way of exploring what each question entails and anticipating salient data. Chapter Four outlines the methodological approach for this study, and particular methods of data collection that have been adopted and adapted from previous empirical work. While this study hopes to bring fresh insight and cohesion to what may be perceived as a stalled and splintered literature, it is indebted to this extensive legacy of discourse on secular, school-based moral education.
Chapter 3: Framing the Literature

This chapter frames the understandings, insights and knowledge, gained from the range of theoretical, conceptual, applied, and empirical literature reviewed in Chapter Two, according to the current study’s four research subquestions:

1. What is the teacher’s vision for the moral education of students? How is this vision conceived?
2. What is the content of the teacher’s moral messages and lessons?
3. What strategies does the teacher purposefully or coincidentally, directly or indirectly, and formally or informally use to impart moral messages and lessons?
4. How does the teacher assess the effectiveness of the moral education he or she imparts? How does this relate to the teacher’s vision for the moral education of students?

The central theme entailed in each of these questions—vision, content, strategies and assessment, respectively—is explored below. The empirical work described in the previous chapter provided many insights regarding content and strategies, but limited insights regarding teachers’ visions for the moral education of their students, and teachers’ practices for assessing the success of the moral education provided, from either a teaching or a learning perspective. Many of the indicators proposed for vision and assessment, therefore, are gleaned from conceptual and theoretical works in moral education, or from conceptual and empirical work in a broader education context. Regarding the latter, an exhaustive exploration was not possible within the scope of this
study. This is particularly the case for assessment. I acknowledge this limitation and the potential for further work in this area.

*Vision*

There are several nonexclusive definitions of teachers’ visions in education literature. Hammerness (1999, 2006), for example, indicates that vision entails vivid and concrete images of ideal classroom practices that embody teachers’ hopes and cares, and are both cognitive and emotional in nature. Such visions are thought to shape teachers’ attitudes toward themselves and their students; influence teachers’ interactions with students; inform classroom activities, cultures and physical spaces; and provide a yardstick, by which their work as teachers and the achievements of their students may be measured. Kennedy’s (2006) definition is similarly concrete and operational: “Teachers envision their instruction in real time.... a vision with purpose, direction and momentum” (p. 207-208). Kosnik and Beck (2009) include, as well, more philosophical aspects of teaching that guide both general goals and specific ideas about program planning and classroom life:

> Part of having a vision is understanding how the various aspects of teaching fit together; not just the activities within a particular curricular area (such as literacy) but how the program as a whole, the classroom management strategies, the assessment methods, and the type of community form an approach to teaching. (p. 170)

These sources indicate consideration for a range of teaching, learning and classroom elements, which Joseph, Bravmann, Windschitl, Mikel and Green (2000) classify as the needs of learners, the role of the teacher, and the place of instruction.

The moral education literature reveals that some teachers clearly and definitively articulate vision in terms of moral and ethical objectives (Campbell, 2003a). This may
include an immediate aspiration to create a positive relational classroom climate, and a long-term aspiration to prepare students for civil and social engagement (Campbell, 2008a). Buzzelli and Johnston (2002) use the term moral imagination in reference to a long-term “vision of who students can become as individuals, as learners, and as members of society” (p. 125). Similarly, Ryan and Bohlin (1999) indicate that great teachers have visions of their students’ potential that encompasses students’ virtue and character. More specifically in relation to character, Wynne and Ryan (1997) identify diligence and good conduct among the education goals teachers hold for students. Lastly, Coloroso (2005) proposes that visions include what teachers would like students to know about morality, as well as what they would like students to do with that knowledge. Taken together, these definitions indicate the potential for teachers to embrace a holistic vision of their students’ growth and development, which includes and sometimes emphasizes outcomes of the moral education they hope to provide.

How teachers construct such ambitious visions is not clear. Yet, teachers’ cumulative life experiences, both personal and professional, seem to be significant influences (Campbell, 2003a). This may include, for example, family life, religious practice, hobbies, and prior work situations. In addition, the school environment in which teachers currently practice impacts their vision, positively or negatively. This includes cultural elements, such as values that are espoused and/or expressed, norms of behaviour, beliefs, assumptions, relationships among colleagues and with administrators, and the levels of professional collaboration and community engagement; and structural elements, such as procedures, accountability measures, assessment and discipline practices, and leadership styles (Campbell, 1996, 1997, 2003a; Chow-Hoy, 2001;
Hansen, 2002; Kosnik, Beck, Cleovoulou, & Fletcher, 2009; Sockett, 1993; Simon, 2001). It is conceivable that teachers learn, over time, what is achievable and what is unfeasible, and what is supported and what is obstructed in their school, and that they adjust their visions accordingly. This suggests, as Kosnik and Beck (2009) claim, that teachers’ visions are dynamic in nature, modified, adjusted and adapted through new insights and experimentation in different teaching contexts. Yet, Hammerness (1999) believes otherwise, that teachers’ visions are stable and consistent over time. It is likely that there is an element of both stability and change in teachers’ visions. Although this may be suggested by results from the current study, a full appreciation is beyond its scope. Further investigation is warranted, particularly in the context of moral education, within which neither Hammerness nor Kosnik and Beck work.

With limited literature on teachers’ visions related to moral education and moral agency, I have adopted insights from the more general education literature to help recognize the participant’s hopes, cares and ideals for students’ moral growth and development. I have also noted what might be considered concrete goals, and have used the terms vision and goals interchangeably. Indicators that might reveal the teacher’s vision are organized according to three themes that are relevant to moral education: (a) classroom environment and relationships (Campbell, 2008a; Hammerness, 1999, 2006); (b) student and teacher identity (Buzzelli & Johnston, 2002; Campbell, 2008a; Coloroso, 2005; Hammerness, 1999, 2006; Joseph et al., 2000; Ryan & Bohlin, 1999); and (c) student and teacher behaviours (Campbell, 2008a; Coloroso, 2005; Joseph et al., 2000; Wynne & Ryan, 1997). I also include possible origins of the vision, as insights might be embedded in a discussion of the participant’s background.
Classroom environment refers primarily to its culture and climate, and is associated with relationships among the students and with the teacher (Solomon, Watson, Battistich, Schaps & Delucchi, 1996). This is further explored below, in the strategies section. In this context, the teacher’s vision for the environment may be expressed metaphorically as community, family, team, or democracy. It may also be discussed in the context of a particular ethical orientation, such as utilitarianism and deontology. Classroom relationships may be envisioned in terms of social dynamics among the students, care ethics, or citizenship. They may also be understood in terms of roles and responsibilities. Student identity refers to how the teacher envisions each student’s individual growth and development, and character potential. Teacher identity refers to how the teacher envisions his or her role as a professional, teacher, moral agent, and moral educator. For both, identity may be discussed in terms of values, such as self-control, or virtues, such as honesty (Lapsley, 2008). Finally, behaviours refer to what the teacher envisions regarding specific conduct. This may be expressed for students in terms of values, such as listening; virtues, such as kindness; or rules, such as walking quietly through the hallway. It may also be reflected more comprehensively as a Code of Conduct. For the teacher, behaviour may be expressed as policies and procedures, such as conferencing with each student; or teaching practices, such as those associated with the social construction of knowledge. The teacher may also express, more philosophically, ideals of being good, trying one’s best, professionalism, or The Golden Rule.

This range of indicators for identifying the teacher’s vision is summarized in Table 1, entitled Indicators for Vision. It cannot be assumed, however, that vision is visible and observable, or that the teacher’s vision is fully realized in what is visible and
observable. Given the very nature of vision, this is true even with regard to indicators related to concrete behaviours. Thus, this aspect of moral agency is best explored through conversations with the participant, both as formal and informal interviews. The indicators inform questions, such as *what metaphor would you use to describe your ideal classroom*, and help to identify aspects of vision in the participant’s replies to less direct questions or questions on other topics. In this way, the teacher’s hopes, cares and ideals are revealed regardless of what reality might be observable in his or her practices, and in classroom life.
Table 1

Indicators for Vision

**How the teacher envisions the classroom environment and relationships:**
- as a descriptive metaphor (e.g. community, family, team, democracy)
- as an ethical orientation (e.g. deontology, utilitarianism)
- in terms of social-dynamics, care ethics, citizenship
- in terms of roles and responsibilities

**How the teacher envisions student identity and teacher identity:**
- in terms of students’ growth and development, character potential
- in terms of teacher’s role as professional, teacher, moral educator
- in terms of values (e.g. self-confidence), virtues (e.g. courage)

**How the teacher envisions student behaviours and teacher behaviours:**
- as values (e.g. listening), virtues (e.g. kindness)
- as rules, code of behaviour (e.g. walking quietly through hallways)
- as policy, procedures (e.g. conferencing with students)
- as teaching practices (e.g. social constructivism)
- as ideals of being good, trying one’s best, professionalism, The Golden Rule

**Origins of the teacher’s vision:**
- personal background (e.g. family, religion)
- professional experiences (e.g. teaching, other jobs)
- school-level structures (e.g. leadership, discipline and assessment practices, accountability measures)
- school culture (e.g. relationships, norms, assumptions, beliefs)

*Content*

In understanding the content of the participant teacher’s moral messages and lesson, I consider both knowledge and abilities that might be conveyed and nurtured. As the literature review in the previous chapter reveals, these two are often associated with
different philosophical orientations. Knowledge is related to practical moral wisdom, and associated with virtue ethics and character education. Abilities is related to moral reasoning, and associated with cognitive development theories. As the lens for this study is practice, rather than theory, both may be relevant to this teacher’s moral agency.

Character education is the most explicit articulation of imparting moral knowledge. Messages and lessons are organized around a pre-selected set of moral values that are equally prioritized. For example, the Character Education Partnership, a North American-based provider of programs and resources, promotes justice, compassion, honesty, respect, responsibility, and diligence (http://www.character.org/). The Character Counts! Program centres around six pillars of character, including trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship (http://charactercounts.org/). Goodcharacter.com emphasizes trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship for middle school level, and adds justice, honesty, courage, diligence, and integrity for high school (goodcharacter.com). The Core Virtues Program strives to teach respect, diligence, gratitude, and courage (crossroadsacademy.org). Lastly, the Giraffe Heroes Program promotes courage, care, responsibility, and justice (giraffe.org).

More local to this current study, The Character Matters Program of the York Region District School Board of Ontario focuses on respect, responsibility, honesty, empathy, fairness, initiative, courage, integrity, perseverance, and optimism (http://www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca/). The Keewatin-Patricia District School Board, also in Ontario, has a character program developed around Seven Grandfather Teachings of Aboriginal Culture, including bravery, responsibility, respect, kindness, honesty,
humility, and wisdom (http://www.kpdsb.on.ca/SFTF/characterdevelopment.asp).

Finally, the character education program of the Rainbow District School Board of Ontario teaches respect, responsibility, honesty, integrity, fairness, inclusiveness, teamwork, trust, initiative, perseverance, determination, optimism, and compassion (http://www.rainbowschools.ca/programs/CharacterEducation/characterEducation.php).

Scholars also promote particular sets of moral values. Lickona (1991) suggests teaching honesty, fairness, tolerance, prudence, self-discipline, helpfulness, compassion, cooperation, and courage. This list is further refined as 10 virtues in two categories, derived from Aristotle’s concept of the life of right conduct. Virtues relate to either right conduct toward oneself, as with wisdom, fortitude, self-control, positive attitude, hard work, integrity, and humility, or right conduct toward others, as with justice, love, and gratitude (Lickona, 2004). Fenstermacher (2001) identifies fairness, honesty, courage, compassion, truthfulness, moderation, and generosity. Stengel and Tom (2006) endorse six pillars of character, including trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, justice, caring, and civic virtue. In the context of teacher professionalism, Oser (1994) suggests moral values of honesty, courage, care, fairness, and practical wisdom. Finally, Borba (2001) promotes seven essential virtues of empathy, conscience, self-control, respect, kindness, tolerance, and fairness. Although they support this approach to moral education, Wynne and Ryan (1997) caution that a list larger than six to eight virtues will entail overlaps, and not necessarily add to the students’ learning potential.

The literature also indicates that teachers may emphasize certain moral values, as representative of others. Campbell (2003a) identifies fairness, respect, care, and honesty, as they embody responsibility, courtesy, diligence, equality, impartiality, equity,
care, compassion, sensitivity, sincerity, and genuineness, among others. Along with the two lists of virtues identified above, Lickona (1991) and Lickona and Davidson (2005) particularly identify respect and responsibility. “Respect and responsibility are the ‘fourth and fifth R’s’ that schools not only may but also must teach if they are to develop ethically literate persons“ (Lickona, 1991, p. 43). In some cases, a virtues framework is suggested. In the context of nurturing moral self-identity, Lapsley (2008) reviews psychologist Augusto Blasi’s framework of lower- and higher-order virtues. Lower-order virtues relate to situation-specific responses of empathy, compassion, fairness, honesty, generosity, kindness, and diligence. Higher-order virtues are more broadly applicable, and organized into two clusters. Willpower involves virtues that relate to self-regulation and self-control in problem solving. Integrity involves virtues of internal self-consistency, such as keeping one’s word, and being transparent, accountable, responsible and sincere to oneself. Finally, some educators and scholars name a single master virtue as a framework for more general moral instruction. Goodman and Lesnick (2001) identify integrity. Cooper (2010) identifies empathy. A former research participant of mine, who teaches middle school, prioritizes compassion, while another, who teaches high school math, prioritizes respect (Rosenberg, 2008). Lastly, Noddings (2002) promotes relational care, as the organizing ethic that enables and encourages other moral values such as empathy, kindness and compassion.

Although there are apparent overlaps and sometimes only nuanced distinctions among the various moral values, all have been included in Table 2, entitled Indicators for Content, without an effort to categorize further. This represents a different conceptual approach from that of Fallona (2000), and Richardson and Fallona (2001), who
investigated expressions of a set of particular, pre-determined virtues, as part of the Manner in Teaching Project. The current study is inductive, and open to any moral values that may be revealed in the research classroom or expressed by the participant.

The development of cognitive abilities, such as reflecting, reasoning, judging, justifying, and evaluating, and their application for decision-making and problem-solving on issues of a moral nature may also be considered content that the teacher wishes to impart to students. In the Four-Component Model, Rest (1986) proposes four psychological processes for completing a moral behaviour—rational decision-making, moral evaluation, moral choice, and moral fortitude. Rest claims that these processes enable one to recognize the existence of a moral problem or issue, make sound judgments about it, choose and carry out a course of action, and generally maintain a morally good life. Similarly, Straughan (1988) suggests three abilities—moral reasoning, making moral judgments, and justifying these judgements. Narváez and Lapsley (2008) propose ethical sensitivity, ethical judgment, ethical focus or motivation, and ethical action. The differences between these three frameworks are considered nuances, at most, in the context of this study.

As outlined in Chapter Two, the development of such cognitive abilities is thought to occur in a linear progression through hierarchical stages. This theory was advanced by the works of Piaget, Kohlberg, Turiel, and Nucci, among others. Piaget suggested two stages: heteronomous morality, related to unilateral respect for authority and rules, and autonomous morality, based on mutuality and reciprocity. Development is realized when one is able to progress from heteronomous to autonomous morality. Kohlberg expanded this to six stages of moral cognition, with the first three stages
relating to Piaget’s two stages: (a) obedience and punishment; (b) individualism and exchange; (c) interpersonal relationships; (d) preserving the social order; (e) social contract and individual rights; and (f) universal principles (Snarey & Samuelson, 2008). Although comprehensive, this single developmental structure, known as cognitive development theory, could not explain the apparent regression in development at stage four, or the apparent tendency toward moral relativism among older adolescents.

Addressing these gaps, Turiel and Nucci (Nucci, 2001, 2008, 2009; Nucci & Turiel, 2009) subsequently refined cognitive development theory, giving rise to social-cognitive domain theory (or domain theory). While Kohlberg distinguished morality and social convention only at the highest stages, domain theory proposes three discrete domains for all stages of development—moral, social and personal. Each domain sustains a developmental sequence, in which children experience and make sense of social interactions and societal and interpersonal regulations. The moral development of elementary age children is particularly relevant to this study. At this age, children maintain a concept of fairness regulated by a literal interpretation of reciprocity as personal compensation, *tit-for-tat* equality, and sameness. Examples include the equal distribution of resources, the same treatment for everyone, and helping others so they will be helped in return. “One should help because one might also need help one day” (Nucci, 2009, p. 44). Thus, fairness may be used to justify name-calling or fighting in response to a perceived wrong. The children might understand a basic concept of equity, but are generally unable to consistently integrate this with concerns for equality. Further, limited attention is paid to contextual information, until middle-school age. At this time, adolescents also begin to incorporate in their thinking concerns for personal choice and
individual rights. By high school, older adolescents acknowledge moral complexities, and prioritize moral obligations over individual rights and personal choices. For example, it is increasingly understood that one does not have a right to act in ways that are morally wrong, and that it is morally wrong to choose not to help someone in need (Howard, 2005; Nucci, 2001, 2008, 2009; Nucci & Turiel, 2009).

Teachers’ intentions to advance their students through developmental stages, to higher levels of moral cognitive proficiency, might not be directly observable. Instead, this goal might be noted in the use of particular strategies. Strategies are discussed below, but three are noted here for their connection to cognitive development: constructivist activities (Hildebrandt & Zan, 2008), service-learning (Hart, Matsuba & Atkins, 2008; Schuitema, ten Dam & Veugelers, 2008), and conflict resolution and peer-mediation (Howard, 2005). Snarey and Samuelson (2008) claim that moral cognitive abilities become increasingly complex and sophisticated in interactions and experiences with others, particularly when children are encouraged to actively construct ways of thinking about right and wrong. These strategies, therefore, may serve as indicators for abilities content that is being conveyed to students.

While this discussion is primarily situated in cognitive development theory, character educators, Wynne and Ryan (1997), have also recommended skills for cultivating moral character. They include:

1. Identifying behaviour that contributes to a general good;
2. Identifying behaviour that is wrong, harmful, or violates social and moral norms;
3. Being able to think through questions concerning what is right and wrong;
4. Sorting out facts related to situations of a moral nature;
5. Connecting such situations to principles;
6. Thinking through solutions for moral problems;
7. Selecting the most ethical solution.

These echo the suggestions of developmentalists, particularly the third, fourth, sixth and seventh. The third and fourth coincide with moral evaluation, ethical sensitivity, and ethical judgment. The sixth and seventh coincide with rational decision-making and moral choice.

Table 2 displays this range of indicators for moral content, according to knowledge and abilities. Some of these indicators may be visible in observations. For example, one may observe the teacher delivering a didactic lesson on respect, or encouraging the students to problem-solve a moral issue. Others may be revealed during interview discussions, and therefore, inform interview questions. Related to knowledge, for example, one may ask, *Was there a particular moral value you were hoping the students would connect with when you...?* Related to abilities, one may ask, *What do you hope the girls will gain from independently working to resolve their fight?*
Table 2

Indicators for Content

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge of virtues, moral values and principles</th>
<th>• a set of equally prioritized moral values</th>
<th>• fairness, justice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• a framework where some moral values are implied within others</td>
<td>• equity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• a single master value that entails the full range or moral values</td>
<td>• equality, impartiality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The Golden Rule</td>
<td>• responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• expressed as virtue ethics, citizenship ethics</td>
<td>• accountability, dependability</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>• kindness</td>
<td>• faithfulness, loyalty</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• love</td>
<td>• diligence, hard work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• care</td>
<td>• perseverance, determination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• sensitivity, empathy, compassion</td>
<td>• initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• respect</td>
<td>• courage, fortitude, bravery</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• forgiveness, mercy</td>
<td>• friendliness</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• courtesy</td>
<td>• wisdom</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• thoughtfulness</td>
<td>• prudence, discretion</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• understanding</td>
<td>• moderation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• sympathy</td>
<td>• temperance</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• sincerity, genuineness</td>
<td>• hope, optimism</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• tolerance</td>
<td>• conscience</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>• cooperation, helpfulness</td>
<td>• self-discipline, self-control, willpower, self-regulation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• inclusiveness</td>
<td>• avoiding maleficence, beneficence</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• humility, modesty</td>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>• integrity</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• honesty</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• truthfulness</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• trustworthiness</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• gratitude, appreciation, thankfulness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• patience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• generosity, charity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Abilities for processing morally salient issues, problems and dilemmas
- reflecting
- reasoning
- judging
- justifying
- evaluating
- problem-solving
- decision-making
- resolving conflicts
- sensitivity to morally salient issues
- identifying and judging moral salience
- identifying options, choices
- choosing solutions and actions
- motivation and fortitude to act
- expressed as stage progression
- expressed with domain specificity
- expressed in terms of consequentialism
- supported by constructivist or service-learning activities
- expressed in peer-mediation

Strategies

The term “strategies” refers broadly to any methods, means, approaches, instruction, practices and processes that teachers may engage in to convey ethical and moral messages and lessons, purposefully or coincidentally, directly or indirectly, and formally or informally. A range of such strategies is provided by empirical, theoretical and philosophical literatures, most of which were discussed in the Literature Review.

Two empirical studies, in particular, have identified several strategies: The Moral Life of Schools Project (Jackson, Boostrom & Hansen, 1993) and The Manner in Teaching Project (Fenstermacher, 2001; Richardson & Fenstermacher, 2000, 2001). The Moral Life of Schools Project identified eight categories of moral influence. The Manner in Teaching Project identified six methods for fostering moral conduct, improving intellectual dispositions, and cultivating virtue, in addition to acknowledging teachers as moral role models. These categories and methods were itemized in Chapter Two.
Together, they indicate six general strategies: (a) attending to the physical and cultural aspects of the learning environment, such as rituals and ceremonies; (b) teaching didactic lessons on morality, as part of an independent curriculum or within academic curricula; (c) managing the structures of classroom life, including rules, regulations, procedures, duties, and routines; (d) using activities, practices and pedagogies to convey morality; (e) participating in informal and spontaneous conversations and discussions with students; and (f) identifying moral role models for students and conducting oneself as a moral role model.

Theoretical work in the context of character education has also contributed strategies. Ryan and Bohlin (1999) recommend that teachers follow “Six Es”, in order to promote moral development and character formation:

1. *Example* refers to teachers as moral role models and behavioural exemplars;
2. *Explanation* refers to providing information and detail to enhance students’ understandings;
3. *Ethos or ethical environment* refers to creating a classroom community based on respect and fairness, among other ethical values;
4. *Experience* refers to providing service-learning opportunities for students;
5. *Exhortation* refers to inspiring and motivating students to be involved and to do their best;
6. *Expectations of excellence* refers to challenging students with high standards of achievement.

Lickona (2004) recommends seven teaching practices for helping children develop good judgment and integrity, among other character virtues.
1. Build bonds and relationships with students, and model character virtues;
2. Teach academics and character simultaneously and in support of each other;
3. Practice character-based discipline, which reinforces accountability, responsibility, respect, and democratic processes of shared decision-making;
4. Teach manners, such as appropriate greetings and responses;
5. Prevent cruelty and promote kindness among the students;
6. Help students take responsibility for understanding, assessing and building their own characters;
7. Involve students in creating a school of character through leadership opportunities.

Through the Center for the 4th and 5th Rs (http://www2.cortland.edu/centers/character/), Lickona, Davidson and Khmelkov promote nine classroom-based guidelines, as part of a 12-Point Comprehensive Approach to character education.

1. The teacher as caregiver, model and mentor;
2. An ethical learning community;
3. Character-based discipline;
4. Democratic classroom environment;
5. Teaching character through curriculum;
6. Cooperative learning;
7. Conscience of craft;
8. Ethical reflection;
Similar themes emerge from these theoretical works, including role modelling, having conversations and discussions with students, attending to cultural aspects of the learning environment, providing opportunities for students to practice moral behaviours, teaching moral lessons, and heightening one’s awareness of practices and pedagogy.

Lastly, Aristotle and Noddings suggest strategies for moral education, from a philosophical perspective, Aristotle’s being ancient and Nodding’s contemporary. Aristotle proposed that virtue is taught by both habituation and instruction, with attention to cognitive and emotional dimensions. Strategies include guided practice, impersonation, intelligent reflection, and personal appropriation (Bergman, 2007).

Noddings (1998) references Dewey in suggesting that schools have three resources for transmitting morality: (a) the life of the school as a social institution; (b) methods of learning and of doing work; and (c) the academic curriculum.

I have consolidated this range of empirically derived, theoretical and philosophical strategies into five categories: (a) environmentally-mediated strategies; (b) personally-mediated strategies; (c) pedagogically-mediated strategies; (d) formal lessons; and (e) spontaneous messages. Although presented as such, these categories are not mutually exclusive. Group work and class discussions are pedagogically-mediated strategies, but may also be personally-mediated if the teacher participates with the students. Values-based posters are generally thought of as environmentally-mediated morality, but may also represent spontaneous messages when the teacher references them. Pedagogically-mediated strategies may be enacted in the context of formal lessons on morality, or utilized spontaneously to convey moral messages. This categorization of strategies is, nonetheless, useful for understanding the literature and providing clues to
what I might observe in practice, but is not meant to imply a reductive or deductive framework of moral agency.

Environmentally-Mediated Strategies

“People teach, but the institutions which people build also teach”. This contemporary statement by Sizer and Sizer (1999, p. xiii) harkens back a century to Dewey. Dewey was arguably the most influential North American proponent of the learning environment as an intermediary for learning morality. He suggested that moral knowledge, judgment, and responsibility are cultivated through social interactions. As social institutions, schools should expose children to the communal life of society by providing a democratic environment in which children might learn to exercise sound judgment, and find it both possible and desirable to be good. Dewey put his theories to the test in 1896, by founding the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools (ucls.uchicago.edu/index.aspx), where students collaborate with teachers and administrators in shaping their learning and schooling experiences (Dill, 2007; Hansen, 2002; Noddings, 1998). Although Dewey was hesitant to draw-up a blueprint for this, he did suggest conditions characterized as simplified, purified, balanced and steadying. Hansen (2002) adopted this framework in his independent report of a Catholic boys’ school, generated from The Moral Life of Schools Project.

More contemporarily, the desired social environment of schools and classrooms has been described using metaphors of family, tribe, team, and community, with community as the most common. In an article entitled Creating Classrooms that Students Experience as Communities, Solomon, Watson, Battistich, Schaps and Delucchi (1996) capture the intention of this metaphor, with their definition of community as a
social grouping where members feel a sense of connection, commitment, belonging, caring and support; and where they can participate and contribute in collaborative decision-making, planning, and deliberation toward shared purposes and common goals. A classroom community of this basic description is widely recommended throughout North American education literature, such that Furman (2004) considers it to be a moral obligation of teachers to foster. She proposes an ethic of community to complement ethics of justice, critique and care in Starratt’s (1994) three-dimensional framework.

Moral education literature, more particularly, indicates that classroom community is not only a worthy end unto itself, as Furman (2004) suggests, but also a means for supporting the moral growth and development of students. In a context of care ethics, Noddings (2002) states that it is our “everyday moral obligation to develop and maintain an environment in which moral life can flourish” (p. 9). Coloroso (2005) similarly argues for the creation of peaceful and just learning environments. In a context of cognitive development, classroom community is envisioned as a means of helping students develop structures of moral reasoning and judgement. Kohlberg promoted the Just Communities model. Similarly to Dewey’s Laboratory Schools, students engage with teachers in democratic processes of problem-solving and decision-making (LePage, Darling-Hammond, Akar, Gutierrez, Jenkins-Gunn & Rosebrock, 2005; Power & Higgins-D’Alessandro, 2008). Focusing more on climate than structures, Nucci (2009) adds that classrooms be emotionally supportive, predictable, trusting, caring and fair. In the context of character education, a classroom community is envisioned as a means of promoting and cultivating virtuous habits. Ryan and Bohlin (1999) use the terms ethos and ethical environment in suggesting a virtues-infused community that helps students to
know, respect, affirm, value, and care for each other. Wynne and Ryan (1997) suggest that a moral classroom ethos encourages students to love what is good. Lickona (2004) recommends developing a caring community to prevent peer cruelty and promote kindness. Finally, from a virtue ethics perspective, Richardson and Fenstermacher (2000, 2001) suggest a community characterized by justice, respect and tolerance. Fenstermacher, Osguthorpe and Sanger (2009) argue that unless embedded in morally attentive school and classroom communities, moral education programs are not fully effective.

Environmentally-mediated strategies may also include aspects of the classroom’s physical space, and structures that define classroom life. Jackson, Boostrom and Hansen (1993) address the physical space in their categories of visual displays and expressive morality. Posters, banners and signs, for example, may have moral content and exhibit moral messages related to how one should behave or associate with others. The arrangement of the room, placement of objects, and design of displays may convey care and sensitivity. Richardson and Fenstermacher (2000, 2001) assert that the physical set-up of classrooms contributes to a feeling of community. Structures of classroom life may involve rituals and ceremonies that engender pride, loyalty, reverence, piety, and thankfulness; and rules and regulations that manifest moral values of fairness, equity and care (Jackson, Boostrom & Hansen, 1993). In addition, Ryan (1993) claims that a school which positively impacts the character of its students has in place the following policies, programs and practices: a widely known mission statement; comprehensive service programs; school spirit and healthy intergroup competition; external charity that the school supports; an award system to recognize effort, achievement and contribution;
expectations that all students will be role models; displays of heroes; and rituals for celebration. As Hansen’s (2002) and Chow-Hoy’s (2001) studies show, we can apply these school-level structures to classroom life, as well.

*Personally-Mediated Strategies*

The term personally-mediated denotes the personal influence that the teacher has on students. “Ultimately, it is the *person* [italics in original], not the teacher, who makes a lasting impression on his or her students” (Ryan & Bohlin, 1999, p. 142). Strategies included in this category are modelling morality, and developing personal relationships with students. Modelling is generally defined as making visible a way of being, in behaviours and actions, as one interacts with others and carries out responsibilities (Fenstermacher, Osguthorpe & Sanger, 2009). As a moral education strategy, it assumes the children will *catch* what is modelled by influential others. “If these adults are respectful and caring, the children will try to be respectful and caring. If the adults are self-serving and lazy, the children will be self-serving and lazy” (Wynne & Ryan, 1997, p. 121). Thus, a person with a good and righteous disposition is believed to affect the same in others (Fenstermacher, 2001). Jackson, Boostrom and Hansen (1993) identify modelling as *expressive morality* related to teachers’ facial expressions, gestures, body language, posture, mannerisms, and style. Ryan and Bohlin (1999) refer to modelling as *example*.

Although the process of modelling is not well understood (Schwartz, 2007), it is thought to lend credibility to other methods of moral teaching. Fenstermacher, Osguthorpe and Sanger (2009) state, “Morality taught through content in the absence of moral manner on the part of the teacher will ring false to students and likely not be
seriously entertained by them” (p. 11). Goodman and Lesnick (2001) similarly note, “To be credible to children, teachers must attend first to their own morality” (p. 271). With the expectation that teachers be moral educators, therefore, teachers are held to a high moral standard by society, and expected to be moral exemplars in their personal and professional lives. This involves maintaining virtuous attitudes and beliefs; demonstrating ethical decision-making, problem-solving and conflict resolution practices; and committing to their own moral development (Arthur, 2008; Campbell, 2003a; Lickona, 1991, 2004; Noddings, 2008; Schwartz 2007).

More specific to conveying morality, when teachers extend their energies to help a student with a personal problem, they model compassion, kindness, sensitivity, and empathy. When they admit an error or apologize, they model respect and humility. When they stand-up to colleagues against gossip, they model courage and confidence; and when teachers present well-planned lessons that are enthusiastically taught, and assess and return students’ work promptly, they model diligence, dependability, responsibility, respect, and care (Campbell, 2003a; Ryan & Bohlin, 1999; Sockett, 1993; Wynne & Ryan, 1997). The latter example may also be considered a pedagogically-mediated strategy. Hansen (1993) suggests that teachers coincidentally and unknowingly model morality in these ways, as they carry out their professional responsibilities:

This is not to suggest that [the teacher] is trying to “demonstrate” [quotations in original] sensitivity. Rather, her actions can be seen as those of a person who *is* [italics in original] sensitive, which means that the everyday enactment of that disposition in her work need not be tied to self-conscious intent. (p. 659)

Campbell (2003a) accepts this claim, but also argues that some teachers are aware of modelling morality for students, and do so purposefully and intentionally. She refers to such awareness as ethical knowledge.
Personal relationships between teachers and students, and how teachers define their role within these relationships, as mentor, coach, guide, parent, friend, or big brother or sister, also contribute to the development of students’ characters (Lickona, 2004; Noddings, 2002, 2008; Ryan & Bohlin, 1999; Wynne & Ryan, 1997). “When a teacher does not know a student well, it is easy for that student to cheat, cut corners, and ‘fake it’ [quotations in original]” (Lickona & Davidson, 2005, p. 34). Lickona and Davidson also claim that “[students] don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care” (p. 90). Ryan and Bohlin (1999) suggest that teachers should get to know their students so well that they know even their implicit lives. This is a challenge for teachers in typical North American high schools, where the teacher-to-student ratio is generally quite high (Lickona & Davidson, 2005). Sockett (1993) advises that teacher-student relationships be defined by care, fairness, honesty, and trust. Watson (2003, 2008) recommends warm, nurturing and trusting teacher-child relationships as a condition for developmental discipline. The most fully articulated notion of teacher-student relationships, however, is promoted by Noddings (2002, 2008) as care ethics. Care ethics is outlined in Chapters One and Two, and revisited in Chapter Six. Here, I simply remind readers that such relationships are thought to afford teachers a range of opportunities to impart morality to students.

Pedagogically-Mediated Strategies

This category refers broadly to teachers’ practices and methods for delivering academic curricula and managing classroom life. Regarding curricula, it includes Jackson, Boostrom and Hansen’s (1993) curricular substructures category, and
Fenstermacher (2001) and Richardson and Fenstermacher’s (2000, 2001) design and execution of academic task-structures activity. Together, these strategies represent how curricula are shaped, ordered, organized, and delivered to project a range of ethical values, to provide opportunities for students to practice associated behaviours, and to cultivate intellectual virtues, such as wisdom. For example, when teachers separate students during a test to minimize the potential for cheating, they reinforce honesty (Jackson, Boostrom & Hansen, 1993). When teachers give quizzes to ensure homework is completed, they reinforce responsibility. When teachers involve all students in a class discussion, they reinforce inclusiveness and respect; and when teachers provide for different learning needs and styles, they reinforce fairness (Lickona, 2004). Opportunities for students to practice ethical behaviours may emerge from carefully constructed and monitored group work, thoughtful partnering of students, exercises in perspective-taking from another’s viewpoint, and cooperative learning activities (Buzzelli & Johnston, 2002; Campbell, 2005; Halstead & Taylor, 2000; Kohn, 1997; Lickona, 2004; Noddings, 2002, 2008; Ryan & Bohlin, 1999; Simon, 2001; Sockett, 1993; Wynne & Ryan, 1997). These opportunities allow students to express dependability, kindness, empathy, and respect, accordingly. Expressing ethical values through their own behaviours, in these situations, students also act as moral models for each other.

Moral messages are also transmitted by the resource materials teachers use, either in support of their practices or directly in the instruction process. These may include books, manuals, articles, and program outlines. Regarding the direct use of materials, Sanger and Osguthorpe (2005) provide the example of a teacher pairing Mary Shelley’s novel Frankenstein with popular scientific articles on genetically modified organisms,
and the myths of Prometheus and Pandora. Students extracted and explored the moral conflicts inherent in these resources. This is the type of learning exercise that Simon (2001) recommends teachers provide for students.

Lastly, the teacher’s classroom management and disciplinary practices might also encourage moral reasoning and virtuous conduct. This is the theoretical foundation of developmental discipline (Nucci, 2009; Watson, 2003, 2008). “In addition to the goals of control and efficiency common to all approaches to behavioral management, developmental discipline includes the additional goal of fostering students’ social and moral competence” (Nucci, 2009, p. 86). Character educators also promote discipline as a means of conveying morality. Lickona (2004) proposes that “[discipline] has to help [students] develop the virtues—often respect, empathy, good judgment, and self-control—whose absence led to the discipline problem in the first place” (p. 144). The assumptions that underlie these two orientations are different. Developmentalists understand discipline as growth and learning, and building on what a child is already capable of to achieve self-discipline (Coloroso, 1995, 2005). Character educators understand discipline as filling-in the gaps, or providing children with what is lacking (Ryan & Bohlin, 1999; Wynne & Ryan, 1997). “We are born both self-centered and ignorant, with our primitive impulses reigning over reason” (Ryan & Bohlin, 1999, p. 5-6). Both perspectives, nevertheless, agree that discipline and class management have the potential to convey morality.

**Formal Lessons**

The Moral Life of Schools Project and The Manner in Teaching Project reveal that schoolteachers may sometimes deliver formal lessons on morality to their students,
either as an independent program or unit of study, or as part of the academic curricula. Jackson, Boostrom and Hansen (1993) identify this as two categories: *moral instruction as independent curricula*, and *deliberate moral instruction within the academic curricula*. Fenstermacher (2001) and Richardson and Fenstermacher (2000, 2001) identify this as a single method, *didactic instruction that directly signifies desired moral conduct*, but recognize both sources of curriculum. Independent programs and units of study have traditionally been rooted in religion (Hansen, 2002; Jackson, Boostrom & Hansen, 1993; Richardson & Fenstermacher, 2000, 2001). Non-religious examples are found in contemporary character education programs, of which several were identified in Chapter Two. In addition, some of the empirical work in moral education has resulted in the creation and delivery of values-based units of study. For example, during his fieldwork McCadden (1998) developed a unit on friendship, which involved telling stories, brainstorming, and discussing a variety of moral values that he hoped to infuse into the classroom culture. Boone’s (2005) doctoral dissertation describes how she used narratives of moral role models and heroes to reinforce ethical values with her research class.

The academic curriculum also offers opportunities for delivering formal lessons on ethics and morality. The literature presents many examples. In the context of a History course, one may examine human motives, behaviours and intentions. Language Arts is replete with characters embroiled in conflicts and dilemmas, through which one may examine moral standards, and models of goodness and evil. Social Studies enlarges the concepts of person and society, highlighting human diversity and reinforcing the necessity for tolerance and respect. Scientific discoveries and technological
developments raise ethical issues relating to responsible applications, and the social and political contexts in which pioneering scientists live and work. Physical Education provides an opportunity to grapple with and practice competitive and cooperative values in sports. Mathematics can be used to assess the fairness of differential insurance rates based on age and gender, as well as issues related to justice and equality. Finally, the moral obligation of museums to return artwork stole from the Jewish community during World War II can be debated in a Visual Arts course. These suggestions are broadly derived from contexts of care ethics, cognitive development, character education, virtue ethics, philosophy, and teachers’ professional ethics (Bryan, 2005; Campbell, 2005; Edgington, 2002; Falkenberg & Noyes, 2010; Fenstermacher & Osguthorpe, 2000; Goodman & Balamore, 2003; Goodman & Lesnick, 2001; Howard, 2005; Iozzi & Paradise-Maul, 1980; Lickona, 2004; Noddings, 2002; Nucci, 2008; Null & Mison, 2003; O’Sullivan, 2005; Ryan & Bohlin, 1999; Simon, 2001; Straughan, 1988; Wynne & Ryan, 1997).

Yet Ryan (1993) warns, “simply selecting the curriculum is not enough; like a vein of precious metal, the teacher and students must mine it together” (p. 17). Accordingly, Simon (2001), and Wynne and Ryan (1997) propose asking students probing questions to guide their exploration of moral issues. Examples of Simon’s moral and existential questions are recounted in Chapter Two. Wynne and Ryan suggest asking, *Why did the people believe they were acting morally* and *What does this indicate about how we treat strangers*. Alternatively, students may be urged to make an argument for the immorality of a situation.
Spontaneous Messages

In their category of *spontaneous moral commentary*, Jackson, Bostrom and Hansen (1993) recommend that teachers seize a wide variety of naturally occurring opportunities to communicate moral messages, and to engage students in moral dialogue and reflection. These opportunities arise in the context of academic work, discipline, and classroom interactions. Regarding academic work, opportunities for spontaneous messages are generally initiated by students, through discussions, written work, and presentations where unanticipated issues of a moral nature may be raised. When the teacher encourages and probes these issues further, morality is conveyed and reinforced. In the context of classroom management and discipline, Fenstermacher (2001) and Richardson and Fenstermacher (2000, 2001) indicate that teachers publicly *call-out* to correct students’ conduct and behaviour, have *private conversations* with students about conduct and behaviour, and *showcase* exemplary student behaviour. These strategies are generally enacted in-the-moment and spontaneously. They may also be considered pedagogical, and thus, pedagogically-mediated strategies for conveying morality.

Finally spontaneous moral messages are routinely conveyed in classroom interactions. Campbell (2003a) provides an example of a teacher who comforted a student when she was not assigned to the same group as her friend. “Theresa takes her aside, explains her reasons gently and kindly…” (p. 27). Campbell notes that messages of genuine care and respect are conveyed in this interaction. In another example, a teacher apologizes to a student for missing him when handing out the test paper (Campbell, 2003a). This conveys both respect for the student and integrity on the part of the teacher. Finally, Sockett (1993) recounts an incident where the teacher requested that
students stay away from the freshly painted classroom door until it has dried, in order to
demonstrate respect and consideration for the painter who worked hard to paint it, and for
their mothers who would have to clean their clothes should they become soiled with
paint. Many additional examples are noted in reports generated by The Moral Life of
Schools Project (Jackson, Boostrom & Hansen, 1993) and The Moral and Ethical Bases
of Teachers’ Interactions with Students Project (Campbell, 2003a, 2004; Campbell &

Limitations

These five categories of strategies are presented positively, as a means of
enhancing the moral growth and development of students. Oser (1994) warns, however,
that every action designated to enhance moral development may entail a morally negative
side effect. He provides the example of group work. This pedagogically-mediated
strategy is often suggested as a means of facilitating relationships among students and
teaching pro-social values. Yet Oser (1994) states:

Students feel confused or even ashamed if the distribution of the different tasks
within one group is unequal; they may feel humiliated or frustrated when
classmates with higher capacities work on their own and, thus, do not share their
experiences and thinking with those who are weaker in the given subject.
Similarly, students may feel hurt when a number of friends work together in one
group and leave others out (and thus label them “outsiders”) (p. 58).

Wynne and Ryan (1997) similarly warn of negative behaviours that may be encouraged
by cooperative learning programs. Further, a spontaneous conversation that arises from
studying the internment of Japanese Canadians during the Second World War may
initiate feelings of vulnerability and isolation in a student of Japanese descent, for
example. A formal lesson on “Christian” virtues may alienate those who are not
Christian, even if the virtues are universally espoused. Finally, in fostering relationships with students, the teacher might not connect as well with some students as with others. This can lead to feelings of exclusion and neglect. Such scenarios are considered limitations of these strategies, and must be anticipated and carefully monitored to ensure an overall positive moral outcome.

Limitations may also include barriers and challenges at the school-level, which impede the implementation of strategies or their potential to convey morality. Simon (2001) recognized several. The current study is not positioned to evaluate these, although, barriers and challenges may be brought to light in interviews with the participant.

Table 3, entitled Indicators for Strategies, summarizes this range of strategies for imparting morality, as they inform both observations and interviews. While strategies may be readily visible in observations, interviews are necessary to determine how purposeful or coincidental, and how knowing or unknowing the teacher’s intention for each strategy is, and to signify where more focused observations might be required.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators for Strategies</th>
<th>Environmentally-mediated strategies</th>
<th>Personally-mediated strategies</th>
<th>Pedagogically-mediated strategies</th>
<th>Formal lessons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• ethos</td>
<td>• modelling moral values and virtues</td>
<td>• curricular substructures</td>
<td>• direct didactic instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• metaphor of community, family, tribe or team</td>
<td>• expressive morality (e.g. facial expressions, body language, posture, mannerisms, style)</td>
<td>• design and execution of academic task structures</td>
<td>• moral instruction as independent curricula (e.g. religion, character education, unit of study)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• ethic of community</td>
<td>• relationship with students, care ethics (e.g. mentor, coach, guide, parent, friend, big brother/sister)</td>
<td>• opportunities for students to practice moral behaviours and express moral values (e.g. constructivist activities, perspective-taking)</td>
<td>• moral instruction within the academic curricula (e.g. history, language arts, geography, social studies, science, physical education, math, art)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• democratic values (e.g. fairness, justice, common goals, collaboration)</td>
<td>• incidental and intentional</td>
<td>• use of resource materials (e.g. books, manuals, outlines)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• community values (e.g. belonging, predictable, trusting, caring)</td>
<td></td>
<td>• discipline and class management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• student relationships (e.g. tolerance, respect)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• physical set-up (e.g. displays, posters, banners, signs, placement of items and objects)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• structures of classroom life, visual displays, expressive morality (e.g. posters, décor, rules, rituals, ceremonies, regulations, policies, procedures)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Spontaneous messages | • moral commentary  
|                      | • context of academic work, classroom interactions  
|                      | • context of discipline (e.g. call-outs, showcasing, private conversations) |
| Limitations          | • negative moral side effects  
|                      | • school-level barriers and challenges |

**Assessment**

Assessment refers to how teachers evaluate both their students’ moral development and their own efficacy as moral educators. The moral education literature primarily focuses on assessment of students as an end, using standardized assessment tools. Causal connections between students’ moral development and teachers’ moral agency are unclear, but generally assumed. Therefore, student assessment may be a means toward teachers’ self-assessment. Further, teachers’ self-assessment might also entail consideration for the social and moral aspects of classroom life. Assessment tools are available for school-level climate and culture, but are scarce for classroom culture on which teachers have more direct influence. The discussion below notes only a few such assessment tools, as representatives of the larger body of resources available to educators. Formative and summative assessment methods used by teachers to evaluate students in relation to academic curricula are also considered for their application in moral education. The brief review below is not, however, an examination of the very broad topic of student and teacher assessment, only of that which may inform data collection.

A significant outcome of Hartshorne and May’s *Character Education Inquiry*, in the early 1900s, was the development of a large body of standardized testing materials. This includes instruments for assessing students’ knowledge, skills, attitudes, opinions, motives, conduct, and self-control, as they relate to honesty and deceit, altruism, pro-
social behaviours and service to others (Leming, 2008). Several additional tools for assessing students’ moral learning have since been developed, primarily aligned with particular character education programs (Berkowitz, Battistich & Bier, 2008; Gibbs, Widaman & Colby, 1980; Iozzi & Paradise-Maul, 1980; Kuhmerker, 1980; Lieberman, 1980; Lockwood, 1980; Mentkowski, 1980; Whiteley, 1980). A Google search of “character education program assessment” (February 2011) identified 286,000 hits. One of these hits is the Character Education Partnership (http://www.character.org/), which offers assessments in three categories—individual, teacher, and school. Individual assessments are used to assess students’ attitudes, behaviours, and skills. They sometimes entail pre- and post-tests to determine the impact of a character program. Teacher assessments are used by teachers, to gauge their attitudes about their classes, their emotional intelligence, and their ability to teach character education. School assessments measure aspects of school culture and climate that impact character development. Also in this category, the Classroom Environment Scale for middle and high school levels evaluates the effect of teacher personality, teaching methods, course content, class composition, and characteristics of the classroom environment.

The Center for the 4th and 5th R’s (http://www2.cortland.edu/centers/character/), founded by Thomas Lickona, also emerged in this search. Several assessment instruments are provided that measure individual, teacher, and school-wide parameters, including School as a Caring Community Profile-II, Character Education Evaluation Toolkit for schools and school districts, Character Education Quality Standards, Coach’s Character Development Self-Evaluation Checklist, Individual and Team Character in Sport Questionnaire, and a Twelve Component Assessment and Planning tool to be used
with the 12-Point Comprehensive Approach to Character Education. A link to this last assessment tool is also provided on the Character Education Partnership website.

In the context of cognitive development, James Rest established the Defining Issues Test (DIT), as an assessment of one’s developing framework and sophistication for making moral judgements. Six ethical dilemmas are presented. Participants are asked to rank 12 statements, according to how significant each is in processing the particular dilemma (Rest, 1980b). Rest continued to refine this assessment, as Research Director of The Center for the Study of Ethical Development, at the University of Minnesota. DIT-1 and DIT-2 are still available on their website (http://www.ethicaldevelopment.ua.edu/), although now, with additional options of three (short-form) or five (DIT-2) ethical dilemmas. Answers are recorded by participants and returned to the Center for scoring.

As another example, The Developmental Testing Service (DTS) (https://devtestservic...
premise that little is known about teacher self-efficacy for moral education. This tool measures teachers’ beliefs regarding their capacity to bring about positive change in students’ moral character and behaviour, and their perceptions of school climate. Specific indicators include instructional efficacy for promoting positive relationships; instructional efficacy for helping students to learn; self-efficacy for promoting character education; and two measures of climate—the school culture scale and a collective efficacy measure. In addition, Schwartz (2007) proposes a framework for assessing teachers modelling of morality, which consists of seven attributes organized in three perspectives—cognitive, affective and action. The cognitive perspective is related to active thinking, and involves demonstrating self-reflection and reasoning skills when making moral judgments. Attributes of the affective perspective include demonstrating empathy, perspective-taking, concern and care for others, self-regulation, emotional competence, and flexibility. The action perspective involves congruence between moral statements, understandings and actions, and engagement in actions that support the moral development of others.

These examples represent a much larger pool of assessment tools, which are commercially available and easily accessible. They are generally instrument-driven, quantitatively measured, and scientifically validated. This approach to assessing moral education is not consistently endorsed, however. Romanowski (2005) comments:

It is nearly impossible to measure the results of a [character education program] in a quantitative form because character education is a long term plan that materializes in students' adult lives. (p. 18)

Echoing an early paradigm shift in education research, toward qualitative methodologies, Romanowski recommends a qualitative approach to assessment that involves teachers
observing their students. Further, Nucci (2001) is critical of assessments confined to particular programs. He believes that moral and social reasoning are best evaluated in the context of the academic curriculum, where students’ responses to schoolwork might demonstrate moral development, such as increased moral reciprocity and decreased egocentricity. In the broader education literature, the notion of assessing students against an externally-created benchmark or standard is also challenged. Hammerness (2006) believes that teachers assess the success of their work with students against their personal visions. “Like a mirror, teachers compare daily practice to their vision and recognize successes as well as identifying areas for improvement” (p. 3). This is relevant for moral agency too. Campbell (2003a) notes that moral agent teachers reflect on and evaluate the success of the moral education they impart in relation to how they envision their classrooms and students.

The lack of clarity and consensus around assessment indicates the need for further investigation. Wynne and Ryan (1997) don’t necessarily agree. In regard to character education, they state, “It is often easier to tell whether a school’s students are learning obedience or politeness than whether they are learning arithmetic. Levels of politeness and obedience in a school can be simply assessed” (p. 144). I find this comment to be uninformed and unhelpful. Obedience and politeness are not moral in nature, unless reinforced by moral values of respect, kindness, tolerance, and care; and good behaviour does not equate with good character (Kohn, 1997) or necessarily entail moral intentions and motivations. How the presence of underlying moral values is best assessed is still an elusive prospect.
Although narrowly envisioned for moral education, student assessment is well represented in the larger education literature, as a significant aspect of teaching practice. There are two broad approaches that might be relevant to moral agency, summative and formative. Summative assessment involves a cumulative and culminating activity that is conducted at the completion of a topic, unit, semester, or year. This may include quizzes, tests, exams, assignments, questionnaires, interviews, teacher-student conferences, case study reports, research projects, responsive writing, oral presentations, skits, or improvisational role-playing. The assessment tools noted above may be used in this way. Formative assessment is ongoing throughout the topic, unit, semester, or year, and allows teachers to gather information about students’ progress, as learning continues to take place. This may include a review of students’ propositions and insights, attention to the students’ use of language, feedback from students, and students’ conflict resolution and problem-solving abilities (Buzzelli & Johnston, 2002; Huebner, 2009; McCadden, 1998). Regarding the classroom environment, teachers may assess student relationships by observing groupings and alliances, or preparing a social dynamic mapping to illustrate how relationships are forming and changing. In the absence of agreed-upon benchmarks, standards and competencies for moral learning, and given the personal nature and variability of teachers’ visions, formative assessments, in particular, are assumed to involve high degrees of intuition, instinct, experience, perception, reflection, and subjective judgment on the part of the teacher.

Table 4, entitled Indicators for Assessment, summarizes this discussion in terms of indicators for how the participant of this study might assess students’ moral development, and his or her moral agency. While these indicators inform observations,
many are, in fact, not visible, particularly those that are formative, subjective and qualitative in nature. As is the case with teachers’ visions, they are more suitably and meaningfully investigated with interviews.

Table 4

Indicators for Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summative student assessment</th>
<th>commercial tools (e.g. Character Education Partnership, Center for the 4th and 5th R’s, DIT, DTS)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>quizzes, tests, exams, assignments, questionnaires, interviews, teacher-student conferences, case study reports, research projects, responsive writing, oral presentations, skits, improvisational role-playing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formative student assessment</th>
<th>students’ hypotheses, propositions, insights, use of language, conflict resolution and problem-solving abilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>feedback from students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>teacher observations, social dynamic mapping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>role of intuition, instinct, experience, perception, reflection, subjective judgment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>correlation with teacher’s vision</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher self-assessment</th>
<th>commercial tools (e.g. Character Education Partnership, Center for the 4th and 5th R’s, TEME)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>administrative evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>solicited or volunteered feedback from students, parents and colleagues</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion

Developed in anticipation of fieldwork, this framework positions the range of existing understandings, insights and knowledge, related to moral education and moral
agency, in accordance with the current study. The indicators gleaned from the literature and summarized in the charts point to data that might be acquired by the methods described in the following chapter. As such, this chapter literally and symbolically provides a bridge between the preceding review of literature and the forthcoming description of methodology. Yet, this framework should not be understood as a research instrument or analytic tool. The indicators did inform interview questions and observations, but did not restrict the data or the results in a deductive manner. I was at all times open to unexpected and unanticipated morally salient qualities of practice and classroom life. Further, this framework did not determine how the results were ultimately understood or represented, and thus, does not provide the conceptual framework for this study.
Teachers as moral agents to their students, a concept as old as schooling itself, represents a relatively new area of empirical research that relies largely on qualitative, rather than quantitative methodologies. In the past, social science inquiry related to education was influenced by a scientific paradigm derived from the physical sciences and rooted in objectivism, positivism and determinism (Leming, 2008; Sockett, 1993; Stengel & Tom, 2006). This paradigm advances assumptions that limited the scope and nature of educational research. Such assumptions include: (a) the social world, like the natural world, is governed by universal laws that regulate human behaviour and interaction; (b) reality, truth and knowledge are independent of humans and can be captured, understood, and verified; and (c) researchers are objective and autonomous observers of social reality. Empirical research within this paradigm is deductive and quantitative in nature, typically involving methods of laboratory experiments; mathematical models; and surveys that measure cause and effect relationships, test hypotheses, control or remove confounding variables, and negate biases and assumptions. Results are objectively represented, often in third-person prose, statistical tables, and graphs (Cohen & Manion, 1994; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Howe & Eisenhart, 1990; Krauss, 2005).

Under the influence of behavioural psychologist, Edward Thorndike, research in education was conducted within this paradigm into the 20th century. This included Hartshorne and May’s Character Education Inquiry. Campbell and Stanley’s 1963 book, Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research (Chicago: Rand McNally), introduced the idea of quasi-experimental methodology, but continued to perpetuate
scientific methods late into the century (Leming, 2008). Fenstermacher (2001) notes this legacy:

Thirty years ago, many studies of classroom teaching were prompted by a desire to understand the relationship between how a teacher behaved in the classroom and what students learned from that teacher. The studies employed a distinctly behaviourist conception of teaching and learning, using highly quantitative designs and methodologies to search out compelling correlations between teacher behaviour and student learning (p. 639).

According to Leming (2008), the nature of empirical research had not changed nearly a decade following the publication of this book. “The experimental science paradigm has been, and remains, the most influential perspective with regard to how to improve educational practice” (p. 145).

Education research eventually did catch up to the work of philosopher and psychologist John Dewey. A contemporary of Thorndike, Dewey advanced that education was as much art as science, and that science-based inquiry was an obstacle for truly understanding the practices that characterize teaching and facilitate learning (Leming, 2008). In opposition to Thorndike’s consistent promotion of measurement, Cohen and Manion (1994) side with Dewey in stating, “No matter how exact measurement may be, it can never give us an experience of life, for life cannot be weighed and measured on a physical scale” (p. 23). The nuanced, implicit and contextualized interactions between teachers and students, and the complex social processes of moral agency represent life experiences. As such, they are more meaningfully investigated within the context of an alternative research paradigm that is qualitative, inductive, naturalistic, and constructivist. As Denzin and Lincoln (2000) avow, “The province of qualitative research, accordingly, is the world of lived
experience, for this is where individual belief and action intersect with culture” (p. 8).

This paradigm considers the social world to be a manifestation of human consciousness, behaviour and interaction; and reality, truth and knowledge to be created, experienced, and contextualized (Cohen & Manion, 1994; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003; Howe & Eisenhart, 1990; Krauss, 2005; Van Maanen, 1988). The current study, like those outlined in the literature review, is situated within this epistemological, ontological and methodological framework.

More specifically, this study satisfies the three conditions suggested by Yin (1994) for case study methodology: (a) a how-type research question that implies investigation of process; (b) minimal ability of the researcher to control the research setting and events; and (c) a contemporary phenomenon of interest. Multiple-case studies generate a wide range of themes that enable comparisons among different teaching contexts and teachers. A single-case study has the potential for generating data that are deeper, and more detailed and nuanced (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). Three comprehensive, multiple-case studies have previously been conducted, each contributing greatly to the moral education literature, as discussed in Chapter Two—*The Moral Life of Schools Project* (Jackson, Boostrom & Hansen, 1993), *The Manner in Teaching Project* (Fenstermacher, 2001; Richardson & Fenstermacher, 2000, 2001), and *The Moral and Ethical Bases of Teachers’ Interactions with Students Project* (Campbell, 2003a, 2004; Campbell & Thiessen, 2000, 2001). Hoping to provide new insights, I selected single-case study methodology, with a yearlong engagement that allowed me to track the teacher’s moral agency activities through a complete school cycle. The moral agency practices of a single teacher represent the unit of study or
bounded system, for which a comprehensive and contextualized description was
generated (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 1994). What follows is a detailed outline of the research
methods for this project.

**Sampling and Access**

This study focuses on a single teacher. Crucial to its success, therefore, is finding
a participant with the combined characteristics and qualities relevant to the research
problem, and with the ability and desire to commit to this long-term project. “What
teacher is going to let you in the classroom for a whole year?” This was an honest
question asked by a fellow doctoral candidate and elementary-middle school teacher. It
had occurred to me, as well, and I knew it would be one of my biggest challenges with
this project design. Yet, that is precisely why this study is important, and why I felt it
was worth the effort, and possibly the risk. Access to classroom life in real-time, and
over a prolonged period of time, has the potential for generating meaningful insights into
the work of teachers, which is otherwise difficult to fully appreciate.

The main research question assumes moral agency of the participant teacher. As
moral agency is variably defined in the literature, noted in Chapter One, and as this study
hopes to contribute to its definition and description, one might interpret this as *putting the
cart before the horse*. Relying heavily on Campbell’s research (2003a), purposive
sampling (Merriam, 1998) was used to identify such a teacher. The following criteria
were considered:

1. Full-time, classroom-based kindergarten to grade-12 school teacher;
2. Minimum of 3 years full-time teaching experience in a school;
3. Attributes of moral agency, such as awareness of the moral dimensions of the classroom, awareness of one’s ethical conduct and behaviours, effort to apply one’s personal sense of morality to teaching practice, and an interest in supporting the moral education of students (Campbell, 2003a);

4. Availability and willingness to collaborate throughout the school year;

5. Articulate communication skills to facilitate such collaboration.

While more subjective and intuitive, this last criterion was significant in the context of spending a year together, and was intended to help ensure that the single participant remained engaged and at ease throughout, and that the data would be sufficient. As the research question relates specifically to the teacher, the teaching context was less important in my selection process, and may have been either an elementary, middle or secondary school, which is public, private, independent or residential. I relied on my associations with school administrators, teachers, colleagues and education professors to suggest candidates. Sean Patrick (pseudonym), a school administrator who is deeply committed to moral education, recommended an experienced grade-four teacher at his school. I contacted Terry Kennedy (pseudonym) by telephone, in June 2009. She was interested in the project, and we met for just over an hour in her classroom to review the specifics, and for me to gauge her suitability in relation to the specified criteria. Along with project logistics, we discussed the conceptual foundation of the study, and her teaching background, philosophy, vision and priorities. Our conversation was open, honest, friendly and warm. We seemed to be compatible and to communicate well with each other.
With the first two criteria met prior to this meeting, and criterion five satisfied early in the meeting, I concentrated on criterion three, related to moral agency. I drew heavily on my knowledge of the literature, and experiences that I had gained from participating in five previous and related empirical studies, the most comprehensive of which is *The Moral and Ethical Bases of Teachers’ Interactions with Students Project* (Campbell, 2003a, 2004; Campbell & Thiessen, 2000, 2001). This teacher did indeed articulate a comprehensive understanding of the moral dimensions of teaching, learning and classroom life; and a strong commitment to moral education, in both her philosophy and vision. She had been the lead staff member in developing and implementing the school’s character program, and was heavily involved in its community service program. Because school had ended only the week before and the classroom still reflected classroom life, I was also able to note several values-based posters around the room. Terry expressed an interest in the project, so I forwarded a copy of the Information and Consent Letter to her. The potential for insecurity and vulnerability implied by my colleague’s earlier comment was, in fact, revealed in Terry’s emailed response to the consent letter:

*I think the part that worries me most is the possible negative side effects. Therefore, let's discuss possible scenarios further. Also, I admit that it will be a little intimidating at first to have you as part of our classroom on a regular basis. However, I am open to the experience. I also know that I am not the perfect moral agent. There will be things I miss doing and missed opportunities, for sure.*

(July 13, 2009)

We met for coffee at the beginning of August, just over a month after our first meeting, and enjoyed a leisurely chat on a variety of topics. When our conversation turned to the research project, I reiterated some general comments from the Information
and Consent Letter, and from our earlier conversation. “You were recommended for this study because you are successful at helping the students learn about right and wrong. My job will be to learn from you. You will also be helping me to interpret what I think I’m seeing. My intention is not to jump to conclusions, without checking with you.”

“What if I yell at the kids one day?” she asked.

“I’m a mom. I have kids. Most days I can hold it together, but I yell and behave in ways that I’m not very proud of sometimes. It happens no matter how hard we try not to let it, and no matter how much we know we shouldn’t. I get that.”

“How will you record it?”

“You and I will decide together. Likely I’ll note it and then in an interview I’ll ask you what happened and why. We’ll talk about it. Maybe we’ll even see a pattern that will be helpful.” I paused to let her reflect, and give myself the same opportunity. I realized that I was pursuing her as a participant and wondered why. I was confident that the specified criteria were satisfied. I was also impressed by her modesty and humility in light of Sean’s glowing recommendation, noting that the moral person is an aspect of moral agency, and by my definition, necessary for being a moral educator. I persisted, “I’m not looking for perfection. There is no such thing. That wouldn’t help anyone anyway.”

Convinced, Terry replied, “I hope I can give you what you need.”

“I hope I can recognize and properly represent what you give me. If it makes you feel any better, I’m nervous too.”

Terry’s curiosity and a natural inclination toward learning overshadowed her insecurity, and she agreed to participate. Before parting, we took a short walk up and
down the street, chatting more comfortably and enjoying our time together. I took her insecurity to heart, nevertheless, and understood that this would require constant effort to manage, not only to prevent her from withdrawing from the study, which was her right to do at any time, but also to ensure that she was authentic when I was in the classroom. I considered this an ongoing process of consent, and prioritized deepening our relationship with mutual respect and trust.

Part of the process for securing a suitable participant also involved gaining access to the school. The school administrator had already endorsed the idea of conducting the study at the school by recommending this teacher. Gaining access, therefore, was merely a formality. The week prior to the start of school, I provided Sean with an administrator’s Information and Consent Letter, as well as a copy of the participant’s Information and Consent Letter. We had discussed this study in some detail the preceding spring, so no further discussion or information sharing was required, although, I certainly offered my time to do so. Sean circulated an email introducing me to the other teachers in the junior division. It simply stated that I was a PhD candidate at the University of Toronto and would be spending the school year in Terry’s classroom. On the first day of school, he sent an information letter home to the parents of the students in the class. This letter is reproduced below, altered with pseudonyms, and abbreviated to remove identifiers.

Dear Parents,

I am excited to let you know about a partnership between Middlevale School and the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto. Gillian Rosenberg, a candidate for a Doctoral Degree in Education, will be working with Terry Kennedy in the completion of her doctoral thesis.
Gillian’s research project, entitled *Portrait of Moral Agency*, is focused on the role of the teacher as a moral agent in the classroom, delivering, as part of the routines, practices, relationships, and instruction, underlying lessons in morals, ethics and character development. The aim of the study is to present a comprehensive and authentic portrait of moral agency as a model to which other teachers may aspire.

The focus of Gillian’s research project is Ms. Kennedy, who I identified as an educator whose work with children is underpinned by a sense of values and character. Over the course of the school year, Gillian will spend time in this classroom observing Ms. Kennedy’s instruction and interactions with her students. Gillian is in the classroom to observe Ms. Kennedy. Her work is not with the children in the class. Gillian’s work in the classroom will not disrupt the class or affect, in any way, your children’s academic program. Indeed she may, at times, be available to act as a volunteer and enhance the learning environment for the students.

All of the research is being conducted under the auspices of the University of Toronto’s Office of Research Ethics. Confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained for the school, students and teachers.

An essential component of a Middlevale education is our focus on developing the moral and ethical growth of the children. Several school initiatives provide children with an understanding of our values. We endeavour, every day, to ensure the shared values of good character are infused into the curricular and co-curricular programs of the school, and are visible in the actions and daily interactions of all members of the Middlevale community. …

Gillian will be introduced to the children as a researcher from U of T who is learning about good teaching practices by observing Ms. Kennedy. It will be explained clearly to the children that Gillian is not in class to observe them, but rather to watch and take notes about Ms. Kennedy. We often have student-teachers and volunteers in the school, and the children adjust very quickly to their presence.
Many thanks for your support of this important work. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

To my knowledge, none of the staff, teachers or parents indicated concern or followed up with questions. I was welcomed throughout the school.

_Pre-fieldwork Visit_

Terry and I met in her classroom one week prior to the start of school. We finalized the particulars of the study, to our mutual benefit and convenience. This included creating a tentative and flexible schedule for observations and interviews that would allow me to capture relevant and special events, witness the cycle of activities, experience routines and rituals, and interview the teacher regularly, all with minimal disruption to classroom life and with sensitivity to Terry’s range of responsibilities at the school. The schedule approximated the equivalent of two full days of fieldwork per week and one interview per month, with one exception regarding fieldwork. McCadden’s (1998) study suggested that classroom culture is established in the first month of school. Due to the relevance of classroom culture to moral education (Lickona, 1991; Noddings, 2002; Nucci, 2009; Richardson & Fensteramcher, 2000, 2001), I spent proportionally more days in the field during the month of September. Week-by-week, usually via email the preceding weekend, this schedule was adjusted and confirmed according to my personal schedule, and to events and activities that were to take place at the school or in the classroom, including special guests and fieldtrips. The enacted schedules are included in this report, as Appendix A, entitled Observation Schedule, and Appendix B, entitled Formal Interview Schedule.
The first formal interview was also conducted during this visit. It was an opportunity for me to demonstrate my interview style; to signal the nature of the questions and prompts that I might use; and to build rapport with the participant and put her at ease. I worked to keep the discussion low-key, friendly, conversational, and without pressure. As such, I did not have a strong agenda regarding content, but asked Terry to talk about subjects I thought she would find relatively comfortable, such as her personal and professional background, including how long she had been teaching, what grades she had taught, what schools she had taught at, and what mentors or role models she had while growing up. Although my expectations were low, this interview generated significant data, particularly regarding Terry’s teaching philosophy.

Finally, the pre-fieldwork visit provided me with an opportunity to become oriented to the school. This involved acclimatizing to the environment, particularly regarding appropriate dress and culturally appropriate ways of behaving, and gathering information on the school and community, primarily through document analysis and observation (Bogdan & Biklin, 1982; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Descriptions of the school are presented in Chapter Five. They are considered findings, given the contextualized nature of moral agency (Chow-Hoy, 2001; Hansen, 2002).

Fieldwork Methods and Data Collection

Data collection began in earnest on the first day of school, September 10, 2009. Although this is not an ethnographic study, as it does not aim to create a holistic description of “the way of life” (Wolcott, 1997, p. 329), ethnographic methods were used to uncover “what is going on here?” (Wolcott, 1997, p. 347), in accordance with the unit of study. These methods include observations, document analysis, interviews, and
participant feedback, with the researcher as the collection instrument. They were enacted simultaneously, informing each other in a multidirectional and interdependent approach. Each method is detailed below.

Observation

Extensive observations of the teacher took place primarily within the classroom, but also in other locations where the teacher interacts with students, such as the playground, hallways, auditorium, computer lab, and library. Ryan and Bohlin (1999) call these the “lesser places” of moral education, but recognize that they are, in fact, saturated with morality. This is confirmed by McCadden’s (1998) empirical work. I was also able to observe the teacher at school-wide assemblies, activity days, concert rehearsals, club meetings, on fieldtrips, and co-teaching with visiting scientists, the librarian and other teachers. Opportunities for observing Terry in settings without students were, nevertheless, limited by the school administrator, as Terry’s email to me explains:

As for when you can shadow me, field trips, grade meetings with grade-four teachers, and on-calls are all okay. Anything that concerns my interaction with the students is okay, but things like junior division meetings and visit mornings [with parents], where it's not necessarily just about the students and me, are not okay. Junior division meetings cover school-wide issues and curriculum issues in the junior division, while visit mornings can get to look like mini parent-teacher interviews. (September 2009)

Observation data were collected from two perspectives. Initially, I assumed the least invasive role of non-participant observer, with minimal disruption to the environment, activities and social dynamics (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003; Merriam, 1998). I perched with my computer and notebook in an unobtrusive location at the back of the classroom, wedged between a file cabinet and the
computer desk, but with a clear view of all activities. Personal belongings were tucked out of sight in the storage cupboard. From this vantage point, I was poised for listening and quiet watchfulness, and remained open and receptive. I limited direct contact with the teacher and students. This allowed them to become accustomed to my presence, and allowed me to acclimatize to the classroom and school environments. I kept to myself, mostly, and hand-recorded many pages of notes.

By the second week, I felt an instinctive need to reach out to Terry, so she would not become suspicious of my incessant writing, or resentful of my presence. “I have a million pages of notes from last week. It was an amazing week. But almost everything I wrote has a question after it, things I need to talk over with you to make sure I’m getting it right.”

“I’m glad you’re finding this helpful”, Terry replied. “I was thinking that you were bored just sitting there. I was feeling badly.”

“Are you kidding?! This is so great. I love being in your class. The kids are so happy and relaxed, and there’s always something interesting going on.” She seemed pleased by this comment. I continued, “But I’m not seeing what I thought I would be seeing. Not yet anyway. Something interesting is happening and I know it has everything to do with you, but I need you to help me understand it. I don’t want to make anything up.” This exchange also signalled the collaborative approach I would be taking in our second interview, to be conducted only a few days later.

By October, earlier than anticipated, we were both feeling comfortable with my presence in the classroom, and I began to slowly assume the active role of participant-observer (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992), assisting in classroom
activities with Terry’s guidance. This role grew over the course of the year, until I was actively helping the students with their seatwork and science experiments, sometimes at the request of the students and sometimes at Terry’s request. Terry formalized my role with the students by announcing on several occasions, “Gillian is someone you can also ask to help you.” This participation allowed me to experience classroom life from the teacher’s perspective, and gain an emic or insider’s view (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). It was particularly helpful as I am not a teacher of children, and likely had an outsider’s tendency toward inaccurate and unfair assumptions. My sensitivity was enhanced for how difficult it is for teachers to realize and maximize the potential morality of each situation, while also attending to the academic program and the many other facets of school and classroom life. At times, I felt overwhelmed by the bombardment of demands students had for me, by the constant shifting of activities, and by the consistent feeling of unfinished business. I continued to set up a perch at the back, but I now had a reason to move around the room without drawing attention to myself. In fact, rarely did eyes follow me. I varied my vantage point by standing and sitting in different spots, sometimes sitting at a spare desk with students, or in Terry’s chair at her desk while she was delivering a lesson.

Reciprocating Terry’s generosity became increasingly important to me, also earlier than I had anticipated. Aside from helping the students with seatwork, I helped in other ways, such as cleaning materials after a science experiment, sweeping the floor, emptying the recycling bin down the hall, photocopying, creating bulletin board displays, tidying shelves and cupboards, purging the file cabinets, and organizing books. As a result, or coincidentally, Terry became increasingly generous with her time, more
spontaneous in providing in-the-moment insights, and more frank and open in her responses. She expressed her appreciation by thanking me regularly, sometimes publicly and at other times privately, as below.

The amount of help that you were giving to the kids was always the right amount of help. It wasn’t too much and it wasn’t too little. And I didn’t have to explain that to you. It’s like having a student teacher, but not having to say how to do things. I could say, “Go to Gillian if you need help”. And I didn’t have to worry or think about it again. That is because of who you are, the way that you blended in, and the ways that you worked with the children, eventually. It was all very helpful, in all ways. It could also be you noticing something different, social things that are happening that I didn’t notice. And that extra insight was valuable. And then working with the kids as needed with respect to their editing, or their researching, or math was all helpful. But it just gave me that second person, another person, to just look after the kids and tell me things that I may have missed. I think the kids, too, benefitted because then they got two adults instead of one taking care of them. (interview 11)

By the way, Gillian, in the hustle and bustle of the end of the day today, I neglected to acknowledge your part in the wonderful year we have had, and to thank you for all the work that you have done in our class. I am so sorry. I do appreciate all that you have been to me and to this class. I think that they were fortunate to have had you as a constant presence. How wonderful to have had two adults almost every day! You were sensitive to their needs, and you provided them with comfort when they needed it. I will miss having you around each day next year. So, thank you, thank you! (email June 18, 2010)

Notwithstanding, I worked to ensure that my increased participation did not diminish my priority to this study. Terry respected this as much as I respected her priority to the students. If I was taking notes, she would not disturb me and did not let the students do so either, saying, “Give Gillian a couple of minutes”. I did not ever feel that my ability to record data was compromised, and I was not involved in any activity that I could not step away from, and take a reflective moment or jot a note. Despite all of this classroom interaction, I also worked to avoid going native and completely losing
objectivity (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Merriam, 1998). Both McCadden (1998) and Vazir (2004) identified this as a challenge during their own methodologically similar studies. Unlike McCadden and Vazir, however, not being a teacher of children was an advantage for me, as I was unlikely to confuse my identity. On Glesne and Peshkin’s (1992) continuum of participant-observation, my behaviour is best described as observer as participant, rather than participant as observer. I was not responsible for any activities; was not asked to make decisions, problem-solve, plan or give advice; did not take initiative regarding the academic program, the students or classroom life; and was never in charge of the class. I was simply an extra pair of eyes, ears, and hands, supporting Terry and following her lead. Occasionally, one of the girls asked how my research was progressing, suggesting that I was successful in maintaining this separation, and remaining marginal with guarded intimacy (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Also of help, Terry introduced me to the students by my first name. They called me Gillian throughout my stay, which distinguished me from other staff and teachers at the school, and thus, from any formal role within the classroom or with the students. As she later explained:

When I was thinking about it, it was just at the moment, and I actually just decided that moment that it should be the first name, because if the kids are going to be seeing you every single day, and they’ve known other adults who have worked in the classrooms, not necessarily student teachers, but just other adults helping out, on the first name basis, and I know that they call each other’s parents on the first name basis, I thought it’s okay for you to be Gillian. I wanted you to be approachable. And I wanted you to be just Gillian. (interview 3)

It was a fine line to walk, nevertheless, between detachment and involvement, as both provide useful perspectives for addressing the research question (Wolcott, 1997). Glesne and Peshkin (1992) articulate this balance. “The more you function as a member of the
everyday world of the researched, the more you risk losing the eye of the uninvolved outsider; yet, the more you participate, the greater your opportunity to learn” (p. 40).

Three types of observation data were simultaneously recorded as field notes: objective-descriptive, subjective-descriptive and reflective. Objective-descriptive data recount the details of classroom life and the teacher’s practices, which may include incidents, situations, activities, behaviours, conflicts, dilemmas, people, dialogue, announcements, lessons, classroom layout, décor, visual displays, seating arrangements, schedules, and cultural artefacts (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). They were recorded without concern for an apparent moral mark, and in an effort to capture as much detail as possible. Yet, such data did increasingly reflect morality, once non-moral details had been recorded, and as I became more focused and selective. In addition, as I discuss in Chapter Five, Terry’s moral agency was intentionally more explicit as the first month of school progressed.

Subjective-descriptive data are judgmental, evaluative and interpretive, such that two researchers are less likely to identify and describe the same morally salient elements in quite the same ways. Yet, these data give deeper meaning to the objective data (Howe & Eisenhart, 1990; Wallace & Louden, 1997). In the context of this study, examples may include the teacher’s physical appearance, style, mannerisms, gestures, posture, body language, mood, and expressions; the classroom culture, symbols of status, relationships and social dynamics; and missed opportunities, challenges or barriers for imparting moral messages (Campbell, 2003a; Fallona, 2000; Jackson, Boostrom & Hansen, 1993; Richardson & Fenstermacher, 2000, 2001).
Finally, reflective data are of a personal nature, derived from the researcher’s thoughts and intuitions (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). They generally involve four themes: (a) the apparent effect on the environment of the researcher’s presence, activities and positions within the classroom; (b) the researcher’s frame of mind, moods and thoughts, which may indicate an implicit change in the research environment, or help to jog one’s memory following the period of fieldwork; (c) the meaning of what is being observed, and hunches and interpretations that entail early analysis and identify themes; and (d) the success of the research methods to generate relevant data, deal with problems, adjust to changing conditions, ensure synchronicity between the project and the research setting, and enable an audit trail (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

A specific example of reflective data that did inform this study’s methods relates to the participant’s review of interview transcripts. I noted that in reviewing the first two interview transcripts, Terry made only minor changes to the language, but did not alter the content of the data. For interview three, I reminded her that she may add, delete or alter her statements in any way, and that the final version of the transcripts would provide the data. Still, she did not make changes to the content, and shortly after asked if we could discontinue this activity, explaining that she was overwhelmed by the time commitment to read each transcript. As I had already determined that no additional data were being generated by the transcript reviews, I was confident that this request would not compromise the study. Given Terry’s feelings toward this activity, continuing it may actually have caused a negative effect. Such reflective data helped me to weigh the benefits against the costs.
Copious field notes were continuously hand-recorded or digitally recorded, in words, dialogue, diagrams, flow charts, and other organizers. With the exception of fieldtrips and concerts, where it was neither appropriate nor feasible for me to record field notes, I carried a large spiral notebook wherever we went. The pages were numbered at the top left corner, starting at one on the first day of school, and proceeding consecutively to 197 on the last day. Occasionally, page numbers were qualified with a letter, A or B (e.g. 83A and 83B) to correct numbering errors. Page numbers allowed me to quickly find observation data during interviews, and cross-reference observation data on transcripts. Beneath the page number, I recorded the calendar date, and the school day based on the eight-day schedule (e.g. Jan. 8; day 5). Initially, objective-descriptive data were recorded in pencil or black and blue ink. Green ink was used to record subjective-descriptive and reflective data. Red or pink was used to indicate questions for subsequent interviews. Data from fieldtrips and concerts were similarly recorded, but from memory after the event. This system of coding, while helpful early in the fieldwork, became cumbersome and no longer necessary once I had gained research experience and knowledge of the classroom, conducted several interviews, and was increasingly able to ask in-the-moment questions. All three types of data were recorded to the end of fieldwork, nevertheless.

For the first month of fieldwork, observations were exclusively hand-written in this manner. After this period, I began to record dialogue, in particular, directly into the computer. As my typing is faster than my writing, this allowed me to capture the dialogue more completely and more accurately. By the middle of the first term, I had created a computer file for field notes, and was also recording larger incidents and stories
electronically, sometimes supporting and elaborating on hand-written notes, but other times as the only record. As with dialogue, this allowed for more detailed descriptions. Digital recording was not colour-coded as were the hand-written notes, but dates were included to maintain the chronology.

The number of hand-written pages decreased as time passed, partly due to digital recording, but also as a result of having previously captured the basics of classroom life and teaching practices, and focusing more specifically on the research questions and new incidents. Fourteen pages were recorded on the first day of fieldwork; an average of 8 pages per day through the month of September; an average of 3 pages per day in the month of October; and an average of 2 pages per day by June. None of the field notes were made available to the participant, as outlined in the Information and Consent Letter, primarily due to the personal nature of the subjective and reflective data. Consequently, I was able to record honestly, without the potential for causing psychological harm to the participant or compromising the recording of potentially unfavourable data related to the research questions. I did not audio record, video record, or photograph the school, classroom, teacher, or students.

The Observation Protocol is included in Appendix C. It was developed in anticipation of the study and acted as a generic guide for collecting data from all observation sessions. Observation data helped to generate interview questions, ideas and themes; provide context for interview discussions; corroborate or contradict interview data; and provide representative anecdotes and examples. While informing all subquestions, observation data were most useful in answering subquestions two and three:
2. What is the content of the teacher’s moral messages and lessons?

3. What strategies does the teacher purposefully or coincidentally, directly or indirectly, and formally or informally use to deliver moral messages and lessons?

**Document Analysis**

Documents are a type of artefact that can add historical and contextual dimensions to data (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992), and provide details or examples for illustration. As they are prepared for purposes other than research, they may reveal ethical values embedded within the cultures, structures and practices of the school and classroom, both reflecting and reflected in the teacher’s assumptions, goals and practices (Chow-Hoy, 2001; Hansen, 2001, 2002). At the classroom level, documents may include worksheets, assignments, tests, record books, student work, planning materials, to-do lists, emails, the teacher’s website, and reference books. At the school level, they may include handbooks, memos, minutes from meetings, newsletters, performance reviews, strategic plans, curriculum guides, syllabi, marketing brochures, and the school’s website.

Searching for expressions of moral values, I reviewed a variety of print materials that Terry shared with me, as well as the school’s website and published documents. Several of these sources are included throughout this dissertation. Verbal permission to include them or summarize their content was granted, and citations are noted where known. Considered to be part of the observation process, document analysis was guided by the Observation Protocol in Appendix C. As such, objective-descriptive, subjective-descriptive and reflective data were included with other field notes, and not shared with the participant.
The quantity of data generated from this method was comparatively small. Yet, it informed other methods, by alerting attention to relevant events and activities, indicating areas for further investigation and topics for discussion, and providing illustrations and examples. This was helpful in addressing all subquestions, but particularly one and two:

1. What is the teacher’s vision for the moral education of students? How is this vision conceived?

2. What is the content of the teacher’s moral messages and lessons?

*Interviews*

Interviews serve many purposes in interpretive studies. Several apply generally to qualitative methodologies (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Merriam, 1998; Seidman, 1991), including:

- Giving the participant a *voice*;
- Acquiring detail and insight on data collected by other methods;
- Identifying relevant classroom events, activities and documents;
- Generating stories and examples;
- Gaining background and contextual information;
- Uncovering what cannot be seen and heard through observations, including thoughts, feelings, instincts and opinions;
- Validating subjective data.

The following additional purposes were gleaned from previously conducted empirical work on the moral dimensions of teaching and classroom life (Campbell, 2003a, 2004; Campbell & Thiessen, 2000, 2001; Jackson, Boostrom & Hansen, 1993; McCadden, 1998):
• Determining consistencies or inconsistencies between the talk and the walk;
• Understanding the participant’s moral orientation, ethical knowledge, and professional framework;
• Distinguishing what is intended by the participant from what is perceived by the researcher;
• Distinguishing moral from instrumental explanations.

Regarding this last point, in the absence of interviews there is a potential for over-ascribing moral salience. This is illustrated by a hypothetical example of a student who is reprimanded for running in the hallway. The teacher may interpret this through a moral lens, as discourteous and disrespectful behaviour. Alternatively, the teacher may interpret this through a social or conventional lens, as an issue of safety, control, orderliness and power, or as a breach of school conduct and rules. In a context of moral agency, this latter interpretation likely indicates a missed opportunity for sending a moral message, or a gap in the teacher’s ethical knowledge (Campbell, 2003a). The former interpretation might not be readily visible in observations, particularly if moral language is not used. The two may not be distinguishable without gaining the teacher’s perspective through interviews. This was identified in Chapter Two as a limitation of The Moral Life of Schools Project (Jackson, Boostrom & Hansen, 1993).

Formal interviews were semi-structured, with a series of guiding questions, but without a fixed sequence by which they were addressed (Wolcott, 1997). The Formal Interview Protocol is included in Appendix D. The questions were open-ended, organized around the themes of the four subquestions, and informed by observations and document analysis, as well as education literature. This approach helped to maintain a
focus on the research question and to limit the types of conversations that are suitable, while providing opportunities to explore unusual, unexpected, unfamiliar and unanticipated themes that might emerge. Some questions were of a personal nature, in order to gain insight into Terry’s moral orientation, beliefs, background and experiences, as they influence her vision and moral agency practices (Campbell, 2003a; Richardson & Fallona, 2001). Probing and prompting questions encouraged a fuller expression of perspectives, attitudes, feelings, thoughts, desires, opinions, experiences, understandings, sensory information and knowledge, and stimulated a slowly offered or reluctant response. Repeating and overlapping questions helped to confirm significant issues, and minimized the potential for inaccurate interpretations, thus, increasing the reliability of results (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Several of the questions and prompts were piloted in a previous, interview-based study (Rosenberg, 2008). Examples of those used in this study are provided in Appendix E, entitled Selected Questions. Mindful of building trust, I maintained the low-pressure interview style of the first interview, for several subsequent interviews. I became more aggressive in probing once I determined that mutual respect and trust had been established, and as the need increased to dig deeper into data already collected.

Early interviews focused heavily on observations, and primarily informed subquestions two and three:

2. What is the content of the teacher’s moral messages and lessons?

3. What strategies does the teacher purposefully or coincidentally, directly or indirectly, and formally or informally use to deliver moral messages and lessons?
This helped me to acclimatize to classroom life. Although I continued to ask questions related to observations, this became less necessary during formal interviews, as I was increasingly able to do so informally, and in-the-moment. Beginning with interview four, I drew from education literature and added questions more directly related to vision and assessment, by way of informing subquestions one and four:

1. What is the teacher’s vision for the moral education of students? How is this vision conceived?

4. How does the teacher assess the effectiveness of the moral education he or she imparts? How does this relate to the teacher’s vision for the moral education of students?

The last interview, like the first, was more reflective, and provided an opportunity to discuss our collective experience in this research project, and its influence on Terry’s practice and knowledge as a moral agent. This helped to address some of the limitations of this project that are identified below.

Eleven formal interviews were conducted, approximately one per month. They were scheduled month-by-month at a mutually convenient time in the school day, usually during preparation periods when the students were on rotation, or during lunchtime. All interviews took place in the classroom at Terry’s desk, with the doors closed to prevent distractions and interruptions, to ensure a quality audio-recording, and to provide privacy regarding the content of our discussions. Each lasted between 45 minutes and one and a half hours. Interviews six and nine were split between two sessions. Both parts of interview six were completed on the same day. Interview nine took place on two separate days. The first interview was conducted just prior to the start of school, and the
final interview was conducted after the last day of school. The complete Formal Interview Schedule is included in Appendix B. Interviews were considered a gift of Terry’s time, which I viewed with gratitude and responded to with helpfulness.

Audio-recording relieved me of continuous note-taking, allowing me to fully engage in conversation. Brief supplementary notes were sometimes hand-written during the interview, to include observation data, changes in protocol, questions or prompts that I was considering, and topics requiring follow-up. These written notes were not shared with the participant. I transcribed the audio files within a few days following each interview, while my memory was fresh. Supplemental data that I recalled at this time or recorded during interviews were added to the transcripts, in a blue font to distinguish them from Terry’s statements. This might include, for example, nodding the head in affirmation, or facial expressions such as rolling eyes and winking. Verbal ticks were eliminated, such as the phrase “you know”, and repeated words, such as “right”. At Terry’s request, grammar was corrected for passages that would be included in reports. On my initiative, words were sometimes added or removed for clarification of content, but without altering the intent or message. The following passage, recounted in Chapter Seven, illustrates such modifications.

Well actually, personally for me I always thought that at some point I would go away. I always wanted to take... I thought it might be a great idea for our senior students to go away on a trip if they were interested in leadership things. Cause there are some organizations that take older students and they go away to a less fortunate country or area and they help build schools. And I always thought that I’d like to do that with older kids. But they’re too young. It starts at 14. So I thought that I’d actually take on that myself. (original passage from transcript of interview 1)

I thought it might be a great idea for our senior students to go on a trip if they were interested in leadership. There are some organizations that take older
students to a less fortunate country or area, and they help to build schools. I always thought that I’d like to do that with older kids. But they’re too young here. It starts at age 14. So I thought that I’d actually take that on myself. (interview 1)

Electronic copies of transcripts were provided to the participant for review and revision, prior to adding supplemental data. Terry was encouraged to add, delete or modify as necessary, ensuring an accurate representation of her thoughts. Following interview three, however, transcript review was discontinued, at Terry’s request. This was previously noted. I continued to send subsequent transcripts as a courtesy. This practice too was discontinued after interview seven, again at Terry’s request.

In addition to interviewing the participant, I conducted a single, formal interview with the administrator of the school. The need for this interview had not been pre-established. Reflective data identified that his perspectives on the school’s character development program and general approach to moral education would enrich the data and give context to Terry’s moral agency practices. The interview took place in the administrator’s office, and was structured similarly to interviews with the participant. Questions did not include reference to Terry’s students or to the efficacy of her pedagogy. The administrator did discuss her skill in facilitating the moral development of her students, and her partnership in researching and establishing the school’s character program.

While formal interviews are pre-planned and provide opportunity for individual and collective reflection, there is a potential for collecting data based on flawed memory. Informal interviews minimize this problem by capturing the participant’s in-the-moment insights and authentic reactions (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). They are spontaneous and unstructured, with questions emerging directly from the context (Wolcott, 1997). After
an initial period of watching and listening, I began to seize moments for casually asking questions, such as “What do you think the students understood about that?”; “How do you feel about Heather’s response to your discussion with her?”; and “What was that about?” Having become familiar with the rhythms of the class and Terry’s practice, I was generally able to avoid disrupting activities, and often waited until the students went on rotation. By the beginning of November, Terry began to spontaneously offer thoughts and initiate brief conversations. This occurred quite frequently when we were alone in the class, sometimes starting with a comment such as, “Well, that certainly wasn’t my best lesson.”

I might reply laughing, “You’re lucky that I’m not a teacher then. I would never have noticed.” When relevant to the study, data from these informal conversations were included as field notes, and not shared with the participant. Yet, they often provided questions and topics for further exploration during interviews. Other teachers, staff members and students were not questioned. Occasionally comments were volunteered. If relevant to the study, they were also recorded as field notes.

The informal interview process addressed and supported all research subquestions. Due to its spontaneous and dynamic nature, no protocol was developed to guide this method. Rather, I relied on my intuition and instinct. This was possible because of the trusting and respectful relationship between the participant and myself.

**Participant Feedback**

Participant feedback is also known as member checking. Inspired by The Manner in Teaching Project (Fenstermacher, 2001; Richardson & Fenstermacher, 2000, 2001), this method involved obtaining the participant’s feedback on early analysis results. This
is different from a review of interview transcripts, as transcripts represent unprocessed data. I anticipated that I would regularly provide Terry with preliminary results, in the form of charts, diagrams, lists, reports, or stories. The level of analysis this entails, however, was too ambitious. Instead, results were periodically verbalized in interviews and conversations, as “Here is what I’m starting to think”; “Does this make sense to you?”; “Do you think it fits?” For example, the following discussion occurred early in the second term, during an informal interview. “I think I’m seeing four distinct approaches to moral education here, all operating simultaneously. I see aspects of character education, cognitive development, care ethics, which is focused on the relationship between teacher and students, and also service-learning, which relates to the community service stuff you do. Do you think that’s accurate?” I asked.

“I do”, Terry replied.

“So would it be fair if I wrote it up that way, as representing the moral education you provide?”

“I think that would be fair,” she confirmed.

In another example from third term, I asked, “I’m thinking of calling my thesis Nurturing Goodness. Do you think that would represent what you do?”

“It depends on what you mean by goodness”, Terry said.

“Bringing out the best in the students, helping them become better people, encouraging them to be kinder, more respectful, more helpful, etcetera”, I reflected.

“Then I think that would work.”

Terry’s participation in this oscillating and layered process of data collection and early analysis deepened the data, ensured their accurate representation, and helped to
increase the trust in our relationship, despite that neither of these two examples were retained in the final analysis. Data from this method were recorded in interview transcripts and as field notes. Participant feedback supported all other methods of data collection, and addressed all subquestions. It was particularly helpful in addressing subquestion four:

4. How does the teacher assess the effectiveness of the moral education he or she imparts? How does this relate to the teacher’s vision for the moral education of students?

These methods were established in anticipation, prior to the start of the study. Sensitive to unforeseeable and changing conditions of classroom life and qualitative research, I remained flexible, and made priority and protocol adjustments as necessary. This was accomplished according to the research questions and ethical standards, to ensure that the data were adequate, relevant and fresh. The longitudinal nature of the methodology not only made this possible, but also allowed me to realize where opportunities were or were not being seized.

Analysis and Representation

In qualitative research, analysis is ongoing. It begins at the first encounter with the participant, and continues through the writing process until the final report is completed (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Merriam, 1998; Richardson, 2000). Two distinct stages can be defined for this study, one taking place during fieldwork and the other at the completion of fieldwork. The former involved reading field notes every few days, regularly reviewing the literature, and promptly transcribing interviews. These steps familiarized me with the data as they were accumulating; allowed me to make
connections among data collected by different methods; provided an opportunity to add
details not originally captured, but still fresh in my mind; and informed the research
methods. In this regard, early analysis may also be considered a method, as it generated
new data.

Four examples of how such early analysis deepened the data follow. On more
than one occasion Terry referred to a coaching workshop in which all of the teachers
participate. Identifying a relationship between my observations of Terry’s personal
interactions with the students and the strategies she attributes to the workshop, I
conducted a document analysis of the workshop materials. Early field notes indicated
that Terry rarely used a moral vocabulary with the students, but readily used words like
respect, fairness, kindness and helpfulness in conversations and interviews with me. I
began to track this discrepancy, and initiate a discussion on it during a subsequent
interview. While reviewing field notes, I experienced what ethnographers refer to as
crystallization, a moment when data begin to take shape (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). As
a result, I was able to test the authenticity of an emerging thematic framework, while still
in the field. I was aware of the challenge, however, to ensure that further data collection
did not become deductive in nature, and continued to broadly reflect the research
questions. Finally, by the second term of school, my notes began to reflect data
saturation, with little that was new or different. I recorded the question Am I starting to
write the same things? (field notes, January 19, 2009). A return to the literature, mid-
February, refreshed my lens, and broadened and deepened my perspectives, particularly
regarding the moral underpinnings of non-moral values in the classroom and in Terry’s
practices.
The advantages of conducting early analysis were not realized within the first few weeks in the field, however. Reflective data indicated that I was too aggressively searching for meaning. I recorded more than once that I was not seeing what the literature said I should see. I was overwhelmed and lost in the complexities of classroom life. Looking for indicators and insights everywhere, I was seeing nothing. One might say that while searching so hard for the forest, I missed not only the forest but also the trees. Worried that this might compromise my ability to record objective-descriptive data, I decided to just let the experience of being in this classroom engulf me. I wrote field notes, and later added details that I recalled, but I temporarily discontinued any form of review and analysis. I returned to this non-analysis state periodically, finding it both refreshing and inspiring.

The second stage of analysis is retrospective, and began when fieldwork ended, at the completion of the school year. More ruminative than early analysis, data were systematically scrutinized, without the aid of computer software or an objective system of coding, but guided by the following three areas of thought and reflection:

*Identifying and defining what is moral or amoral, ethical or non-ethical:*

Campbell (2003b) suggests, “A concept needs to be seen to involve an evident moral principle relating to good/bad, right/wrong…. unless the underlying principle is explicit in the specific context or made obvious by the respondent’s explanation, the analysis does not identify it as a moral or ethical belief” (p. 33).

My ethical orientations, research questions, and previous research experiences represent filters by which I make such judgements. These filters helped prevent me from either over-stating or disregarding moral salience. Several questions
were considered when reviewing data. How does this relate to right and wrong or good and bad? Can I label this with a virtue, principle or moral value? Is this ethically complex or controversial? Does it represent an ethical dilemma? How do I know this?

*Determining the teacher’s ethical knowledge:* This term was defined in Chapter One, as referring to both teachers’ conscious appreciation of their moral agency and the application of teachers’ personal moral wisdom to teaching practices and classroom life (Campbell, 2003a). Questions that were helpful when reviewing data include, what rationale is given for why this is right or wrong, good or bad? What language is used that relates to ethics, including right or wrong, good or bad, should or shouldn’t, do or don’t? Are moral principles or virtues articulated by name, and by whom? What questions are asked and what answers are given? What is the teacher’s intention in a particular situation? What does the teacher think the students understand? How do I know this?

*Ascertaining potential and real implications of morally salient elements:* The effects of morally salient elements on classroom life, teacher-student and student–student relationships, and behaviours, for example, may indicate learning, and thus, help to identify what might be considered moral education. The students and their learning are not the focus of this study, except as they illuminate the teacher’s moral agency. Several questions were considered, including what differences are evident in individual, small group or class-wide behaviour? Are the social dynamics or relationships changed? Is the teacher’s
manner or conduct different? Is there a change in the teacher’s goals for the class? Is the classroom climate or culture different? How do I know this?

In this way, themes were identified and abstracted into a thematic framework that provides readers with direct access to them. As Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) explain, “The development of emergent themes reflects the portraitist’s first efforts to bring interpretive insight, analytic scrutiny, and aesthetic order to the collection of data. This is an iterative and generative process; the themes emerge from the data and they give the data shape and form” (p. 185).

Limitations

All scholarly research is concerned with ensuring the rigour, integrity, trustworthiness and legitimacy of its methods; yet, all have inherent limitations in doing so. Mediating these limitations involves attending to issues of truth, applicability, consistency and neutrality. Given different epistemological and ontological assumptions, qualitative and quantitative researchers have different ways of understanding these issues (Lincoln & Guba, 1988). For qualitative researchers, truth-value is discussed as credibility, and relates to how faithfully meaning is constructed from data, and how faithfully results portray the phenomenon of interest without embellishment or exaggeration. Applicability of qualitative results is not determined by researchers, but rather by readers, who transfer meaning to their own contexts. This is due to the nature of the results. Unlike quantitative conclusions and abstract universals, qualitative results are perspectives, concrete universals, empirical assessments or extrapolations. Kilbourn (1998) offers the following analogy: “My aesthetic appreciation of a painting of that tree comes from that particular tree and that particular work of art. It doesn’t come from what
the painting says about trees in general” (p. 99). Consistency is discussed as
dependability, and relates to the potential for identifying similar themes and making
similar inferences should the study be repeated under comparable conditions related to
time, location and circumstances. Finally, neutrality is discussed as confirmability. It
relates to the absence of researcher values in the data, and in how the methods are
enacted. This does not assume values-neutrality in other aspects of the study, however,
such as methodological design and analysis (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003; Lincoln & Guba,

Several specific strategies were used in this study to attend to issues of truth or
credibility, applicability or transferability, consistency or dependability, and neutrality or
confirmability, and to help mediate the limitations of the study’s design. The following
strategies have been informed by several sources, including Edmonson and Irby (2008),
Fraenkel and Wallen (2003), Glesne and Peshkin (1992), Mulholland and Wallace

*Reflection and disclosure:* This study’s methodology is highly
interpretive, relying on the researcher’s personal observations and ascribed
meanings, which cannot be verified by others. Reflection and disclosure
represent the researcher’s attempt to identify and declare personal biases,
assumptions, perspectives, worldviews, and theoretical orientations, as they define
the lenses, filters, and decisions informing every aspect of the research.
Accordingly, I shared aspects of my personal and professional life, in Chapter
One, as they potentially influenced this study, and I collected and reported
reflective data. This transparency increases credibility, dependability and confirmability.

Prolonged engagement: The naturalistic observation method of this study has the potential for researcher effect. The presence of the researcher, as an outsider, and the use of research methods may alter that which is under investigation. Prolonged engagement in the field is thought to diminish researcher effect. Bernard observes, “People just get plain tired of trying to manage your impression and they act naturally” (in Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003, p. 453). This became evident in October when Terry declared, “I’m used to you now.” Credibility, dependability and transferability were increased with prolonged engagement. Confirmability, however, may have decreased as my involvement with Terry and the research environment intensified, over time.

Demographics: The results of this single-case study cannot be used to make generalizable claims regarding the moral agency of all teachers. This portrait serves, instead, as an exemplar of what might be possible. One’s ability to apply these results in other contexts is increased by efforts in Chapter Five to provide demographic information regarding the teacher, the students, and the school. This gives readers an opportunity to determine relatable results, and to transfer knowledge at their own discretion.

Triangulation: Triangulation refers to collecting data from multiple sources, using multiple techniques, and cross-checking among them for consistencies and discrepancies. Themes that are corroborated by more than one source are thought to be credible, dependable and confirmable. Themes that are
contradicted require further investigation. Triangulation was achieved in this study by using several methods for collecting data. Prolonged engagement contributed copious amounts of data from each method.

*Dense descriptions:* Chapters Five, Six and Seven present detailed and deep descriptions of the results, both analytically and anecdotally. This was made possible by the collection of numerous data through a variety of sources, and over an entire school year. In particular, the interview structure encouraged Terry to talk freely, openly, honestly and reflectively. Such dense descriptions enhance transferability and dependability.

*Member checking:* Member checking, such as participant feedback, increases the credibility of results. As discussed above, the participant was periodically asked to give an opinion on early analysis results, to ensure they were adequately reflective of her moral agency.

*Audit trail:* I recorded in field notes and in this report a reflective and detailed description of my procedures and processes, as they evolved, and their effectiveness in generating meaningful data regarding the research questions. This transparent tracking increases the study’s dependability.

Despite these strategies, limitations with this study persisted that are acknowledged and accepted. Firstly, due to the necessity for informed consent, Terry’s knowledge of both the topic and the study heightened her understanding and awareness of her own conduct and practices prior to the collection of data. This may have biased the data by not providing an authentic baseline of practices (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Relatedly, by her own admission, interviews and participant feedback methods enhanced
Terry’s awareness of moral issues and moral agency practices. Yet, I liken this to anthropological studies, where an ethnographer’s prolonged presence and activities have little effect on customs and practices that have developed over generations, but can, nevertheless, act as catalysts for changes already beginning to occur (Frankenberg in Merriam, 1998). It is conceivable, then, that moral agent teachers are primed for their continued development as moral agents, a notion that speaks to the implications of this study, as discussed in Chapter Eight.

Secondly, a single researcher as the data collection instrument (Wolcott, 1997) minimizes potential problems related to inconsistency. Yet, this introduces several challenges. One researcher is not likely to gain more than one perspective based on this researcher’s investigative skills, judgment, assumptions, values, biases, and theoretical orientation. Therefore, insights that other researchers might note could be missed. Further, while I have previously mentioned that single-case study methodology does not allow for thematic comparisons and contrasts, it also entails risks related to selecting a suitable participant, and ensuring the participant remains engaged and motivated. Despite defined criteria, the former involved a leap-of-faith. Regarding the latter, I invested considerable effort in my relationship with Terry, as is typically required with ethnographic methods (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003; Wolcott, 1997). This involved airing problems as they arose and anticipating problems before they arose, to ensure a quick and satisfactory resolution. The decision to discontinue the transcript review, for example, was made for this reason.

Finally, my relationship with Terry entailed balancing involvement and detachment. While both can benefit this study, they are inversely proportional such that
one decreases as the other increases. Near the start of the school year, my relationship
with Terry was more detached, and it was possible to collect data that were mostly
objective. As the year progressed, so did our involvement with each other. My ability to
collect objective data was compromised by how well I was getting to know Terry and she
was getting to know me. Yet, I gained increasing access to her thoughts, feelings,
reflections, intuitions, and ideas. This deepened my understanding of the nuances and
subtleties of her practices, decisions and strategies, and of her connection and
commitment to the students. Our growing relationship also helped to alleviate Terry’s
insecurity and vulnerability concerning my presence in the classroom, as the following
two statements indicate:

If I had to discipline then there was an understanding of why it had to be done, or
even if you had your own point of view on it you asked me about it just to get
further insight. (interview 11)

Dear Gillian,
Thank you for talking things through with me. I really appreciate having
someone to bounce ideas off of. (holiday greeting card, December 18, 2009)

Thus, in working to maintain a relationship of professional friendliness I prioritized
involvement over detachment, and sacrificed objectivity more than another researcher
may have. The results that follow are considered in light of these limitations.

Ethical Considerations

The potential quantity and quality of data collected for research purposes are
weighed against principles of confidentiality and truth-telling; physical, psychological
and emotional safety; and human dignity and wellbeing. Several ethical considerations
are particularly relevant to this study. Some have been alluded to above, and others are
reiterated in the protocols of the appendixes. They are discussed more thoroughly here,

Once approval to proceed with this research was granted from the University of Toronto’s Office of Research Ethics, a suitable participant was selected. The school administrator and participant were fully informed of the study’s intent, limitations, conditions, safeguards and promises, and the participant’s responsibilities. These were documented in Information and Consent Letters, provided to each. Partial disclosure or deceit, while occasionally required for collecting authentic data, was not justified for this study. Both letters were signed prior to data collection.

Confidentiality has been maintained for purposefully collected information, as well as information that I was coincidentally exposed to during my visits to the classroom and school. As such, names throughout this report have been systematically changed to pseudonyms. Other potentially identifying features have also been altered, except where the integrity of results might be compromised. Raw data with identifiable features, including field notes, digital files, audio files, transcripts, emails, analysis reports and photocopies are securely kept in my possession, and will be destroyed after a maximum of five years, with the exception of documents for which I have permission to reproduce in reports and publications. No data or results were verbally or otherwise shared with the school’s administrators, teachers, staff, students or parents. Nevertheless, several members of the school community were informed by the administrator of my presence.
and activities at the school. This was by mutual agreement with Terry and me, according to the following communication:

Hi Gillian.
Sean and I met late yesterday afternoon. He feels that there is no need to be "secretive" about this whole thing. In the letter to the parents, he will explain that you are researching life in the ethical classroom, and that you will not be studying the students. The staff will be told the same thing. If you have any questions, please let me know. Sean will work on the letter today. Many thanks, Terry (email September 3, 2009)

The possibility of others accessing published reports and linking the school and Terry to the content was discussed openly and honestly with Terry and the administrator. This provided an opportunity to assess and air potential side effects related to the collection of data that might be considered negative or interpreted as missed opportunities. Such data are anticipated in Chapter Three, as informative of challenges and barriers for moral agency, and gaps in the teacher’s ethical knowledge. They are important in creating a balanced portrait, and are represented with integrity, honourable intentions, and goodwill.

Every effort was made to ensure the participant’s comfort and dignity throughout the study. She was treated with professionalism, respect and sensitivity. I remained focused on the processes of understanding her moral agency and learning from her, and tried not to judge or evaluate the efficacy of teaching practices that were not applicable. Only information that is relevant to the research questions was considered data. Other information was inadmissible, and generally not recorded as field notes, or transcribed. Regardless, the participant maintained the right to dismiss me at any time from activities or situations that might arise, and to decline from answering questions. Although Terry never hesitated to answer questions, she did, on one occasion in the first month of school, ask me to leave the classroom in order to place a sensitive phone call to a parent. Formal
interviews were conducted in private. Informal conversations were discrete. Thus, no unexpected psychological harm, adverse professional consequences, or embarrassment was anticipated for the participant, students, teachers, staff, administrators or the school community. There was no known possibility of physical harm or discomfort from the methods used. Nevertheless, the participant was able to withdraw from the study at any time, without explanation, and request that data be destroyed.

In addition to ensuring the participant’s personal and professional wellbeing, I identified benefits to her, should she choose to participate, including: (a) opportunities for professional dialogue, reflection, and collaboration; (b) broader awareness of moral education literature; (c) heightened ethical knowledge; (d) expanded repertoire of moral agency strategies; (e) improved ability to anticipate, comprehend and deal with complex ethical challenges in the classroom; and (f) increased understanding of the ethical implications of decision-making. Correspondence with Terry, following the completion of fieldwork, does indicate that some of these benefits were realized.

Hi, dear Gillian!
Oh, you have no idea how long I have been meaning to email you and see how things are going. I have missed you so much! I remember all those times when we discussed my kids and their situations. How I wish I had you to talk with this year! Just talking with you helped me to formulate my opinions about what may be going on with them. (email February 2011)

Further, Terry acknowledged that the students also benefitted from my presence in the classroom, something I had not anticipated.

But if you hadn’t been there issues related to the girls wouldn’t have been as easily solved. And I say girls because I don’t think that the boys really had as many social issues as the girls did. I think the girls appreciated you being there because they had someone else to be supportive of them, their feelings, their growth. All that emotional stuff. I think it helped. It wasn’t just me, because if I’m busy they could see you. It would have been more tense, I think, if we had
different approaches though. Then they would have had to separate. “If I have this kind of an issue then I go to her. If I have this kind of an issue I go to her.” It wouldn’t have been as easy to go back and forth between us, as it was for them. (interview 11)

Finally, I helped in the classroom whenever I could, to reciprocate Terry’s generosity and compensate her for the time she spent with me on this project. Prior to the December break, I presented her with a gift card to a teaching supply store, as a means of demonstrating my appreciation for the opportunity to conduct the study with her. Terry purchased posters for the room, fun pencils, and other small items for the students. I also presented the school administrator with two books for the staff resource library, Campbell’s (2003a) *The Ethical Teacher*, and Nucci’s (2009) *Nice is Not Enough: Facilitating Moral Development*. In June, I made two charitable donations, one to the school’s general fund, in Terry’s honour, and a second to the administrator’s discretionary fund, in his honour. Finally, I offered to remain available to Terry and the school, to further our mutual interests in the moral education of children. Terry and I are still in touch, and I volunteer periodically with her current class.

The next three chapters outline and discuss the data collected with these methods and considerations. Chapter Five provides contextual detail of the school, the classroom, and Terry’s teaching philosophy and vision. Chapters Six and Seven are focused on the classroom and Terry’s moral agency practices, as they relate to teaching morally and teaching morality, respectively.
Chapter 5: Research Context and Overview

The purpose of this chapter is two-fold. Firstly, it aims to introduce readers to the research site, Middlevale School; the research classroom and its students; the research participant, Terry Kennedy; and the pseudonyms, which are used throughout this dissertation. This provides context for the discussion on Terry’s moral agency, and helps to texture the portrait that is created. Secondly, this chapter provides an overview of the results, including how they emerged from the data and how they are presented in the two chapters that follow.

The School

In the heart of an urban centre in Ontario, one will find an independent, non-residential, nonreligious school, with a quirky campus of several buildings, some over 100 years old and others only a few. Approximately 350 boys and girls from junior kindergarten to grade eight are organized among these buildings. Junior kindergarten to grade-one classes are located in the primary building; grades two to five in the elementary building; grade six in its own building; and grades seven and eight in the senior school building. Each division has a dedicated group of teachers for homeroom, and the core subjects of language arts, science, social studies, health and math. Specialty teachers in art, music, drama, French, computers and physical education teach several grades across the divisions, and remain connected with students for many years. These teachers and their programs are scattered among the various buildings. The students travel between these buildings in all weather, to attend classes in the drama and art studios, French cabane, music room, library, computer and science labs, and gymnasium. These rooms are fully equipped for their activity. The drama studio is in the basement of
the elementary building, and has no windows, so complete darkness can be achieved. It has a stage with a curtain that can be drawn, a sound and lights booth, and a props and costume cupboard. The gym has basketball nets, sports demarcation lines on the floor, and an electronic score board. The primary music room contains percussion instruments from different parts of the world, and the senior music room has traditional band instruments. Both have a piano. Classrooms are appointed with large, bright windows, bookcases and shelving units, and at least one computer; although, laptops are always available. The senior students have a one-to-one laptop program, whereby they are provided with a fully-loaded laptop for the year. Until grade four, the students have a hook and shelf in the hallway outside their homeroom class, for hanging coats and storing personal items, and a drawer in their desk for school supplies. Beginning in grade four, every student has a full-length locker, and a cubby within their homeroom class. Locks hang from senior students’ lockers, but are rarely secured. There is not a culture of stealing at this school, and I’m told that it is a rare occurrence.

The school year is divided into three terms. The first begins on the third day after Labour Day, in September, and continues to the December break. The second begins a day after New Year’s Day, and ends at the start of a two-week break in the middle of March. The final term begins after March Break, and continues to the end of the second week in June. The School-Wide Daily Schedule operates Monday to Friday, as shown in Table 5.
Each day begins in the classroom, with quiet reading followed by the national anthem.

The day ends in the classroom with announcements and the recording of homework.

Students remain at school for lunch, eating in their classrooms four of the five days. One
day per week, each division rotates eating in the gymnasium, while their teachers meet
and plan. There are two recess periods, one in the morning and one after lunch. Unless
the weather is inclement, all students go outside to the courtyard playground, or to the
municipal park nearby for which the school holds a permit to use. There are seven
instructional periods during the day, with subjects scheduled by class. These rotate on an
eight-day cycle. The day two schedule for Terry’s class is reproduced in Table 6, entitled
Terry’s Class Schedule for Day Two.
Table 6
Terry’s class schedule for day two

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:30-8:45 am</td>
<td>Homeroom/DEAR National anthem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:45-9:30</td>
<td>Period 1: math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30-10:15</td>
<td>Period 2: music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:15-10:30</td>
<td>Recess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30-11:15</td>
<td>Period 3: social studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:15-12:00</td>
<td>Period 4: French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00-1:00 pm</td>
<td>Lunch/recess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00-1:15</td>
<td>DEAR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:15-2:00</td>
<td>Period 5: writer’s workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00-2:45</td>
<td>Period 6: writer’s workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:45-3:30</td>
<td>Period 7: language arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:30-3:35</td>
<td>Homeroom/homework</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With five days of school per week and an eight-day cycle, each week is unique, as the days of the week can be any scheduled day from one to eight.

There is a low child-adult ratio across the campus. Regular classes are capped at 16 students. There are two such classes for every grade. Each grade also has a class capped at 10 students, for those requiring consistent academic support. These are not referred to as special education classes, although they are, but rather as the small classes. Students in a small class have a modified academic program, but are integrated with their peers for physical education, health, music, drama and art. The low child-adult ratio is also a result of many support and resource staff available for remedial or enrichment work, counselling, and disciplining. Parents and teachers primarily, but occasionally students themselves, directly contact these professionals with regard to a range of specific
needs. This facilitates Middlevale’s commitment to meet the learning needs of each child, as expressed in the school’s brochure: “We govern our actions and decisions by a commitment to do what is best for each child” (2009/2010 school year).

The annual tuition and incidental fees for this school total approximately twenty-four thousand dollars per year. As a result, and with very few exceptions, the students are from privileged families. They have access to books, computers and private tutors, and are supplied by parents with a wide range of learning materials. They travel with their families for pleasure, and in many cases have more than one home. They are appropriately clothed in all seasons and for all weather; although, most days uniforms are worn, either formal or gym. One can reasonably assume they come to school well nourished. Parents are involved and interested in the school, supporting its programs financially, and volunteering and participating in special activities throughout the year. Parents are generally well educated and speak English fluently, and are capable of helping their children with homework and communicating with teachers and staff.

Enabled by this range and level of support for teachers and students, Middlevale has assumed a holistic approach to schooling. This includes attending to rigorous academic curricula, sustaining a culture of community, and creating programs in character development, peacemaking and community outreach. The school culture and these programs are described below for their relevance to moral education.

Culture of Community

A metaphor of community defines the culture of Middlevale. Community is nurtured by activities, clubs and teams; weekly assemblies; special activity days; and a cross-grades house system. These structural elements intentionally bring together
students, teachers and staff, in different groupings that encourage a variety of relationships to form. There are multiple co-curricular activities and extra-curricular clubs and teams in areas of leadership, athletics, arts, and technology. Leadership opportunities include primary-level helpers, game referees, student ambassadors, learning buddies, peer tutors, tour guides, buddies to new and younger students, students’ council president, and captains for assemblies, athletics, community service, arts, sustainability, literacy, spirit, technology, communications, and yearbook. All students from grades four to seven are encouraged to participate in a leadership role as a means of practicing responsibility. In grade eight, every student must assume a leadership role in the school. Athletic teams for soccer, basketball, ice and field hockey, cross country running, volleyball, and track and field participate in tournaments with other independent schools. The coaches work to reinforce a sense of cooperation and team spirit. Non-competitive athletic clubs include tennis, ultimate Frisbee, t-ball, badminton, walking, intramural sports, and pleasure skating. Arts clubs include arts and crafts, concert band and stage band, theatre and props, choir, writer’s craft, and needlepoint and sewing. In addition, there is an information and technology club.

Some of these activities operate for the entire school year, while others, only for a single term. A school-wide clubs’ assembly is held at the start of each term to introduce new clubs. With controlled chaos, students excitedly move around the gymnasium to different sign-up booths. They submit their names for as many clubs as they like. The following week, homeroom teachers determine with each student what is logistically possible. Students are encouraged to participate in several activities throughout the year. Most teachers and staff also participate, as leaders and helpers. The technology staff, for
example, co-lead the information and technology club. One of the custodians supports
the theatre and props club by building props with students. This study’s participant co-
coaches the field hockey team. With such an array of activities, the school is bustling
from 7:30 in the morning to 5:30 in the evening, Monday to Thursday. Fridays begin at
8:25 in the morning and end at 3:35 in the afternoon.

School-wide assemblies are held every Monday morning. With the exception of
the kindergarten classes, the entire school gathers in the gymnasium from 8:45 to 9:15.
The national anthem is sung together, led by one of the music teachers, and alternating
between French and English. Student leaders assume responsibility for the agenda,
calling on students first, then teachers and staff, to make announcements and
presentations, or show videos and slide shows. This is also an opportunity for celebrating
collective achievements, such as those related to fund-raising and sports. Occasionally,
individual achievements are celebrated.

I loved these assemblies and attended as often as I could. There was such a
positive spirit of celebration and camaraderie, encouraged by the presenters and
presentations, but also by the relaxed informality of the gathering. Teachers often
brought along their morning coffees, and sat together on benches along the periphery of
the gymnasium. Students sat on the floor with their classmates and other peers. Rarely
was disciplinary action necessary, and if it was, it was merely a reminder, a small
adjustment in seating positions, or the removal of a distracting object. The students were
trusted, respected and empowered regarding their own behaviour. As my participant
remarked, “They always behave. They know what is appropriate”. It is important to note
that this comment was not intended to minimize the goals of her moral education, which,
as illustrated in the chapters that follow, extend beyond conforming to behavioural conventions.

Three special activity days occurred in the school year. They were referred to as day zero, and not included in the general schedule. Regular classes were suspended in place of an integrated, school-wide, co-curricular program, organized around a particular theme—Remembrance Day, cultural diversity, and environmental sustainability. Each was launched in a morning assembly. These assemblies were distinct from the Monday assemblies. For Remembrance Day the gym was arranged in rows of chairs, lengthwise in front of a stage. Teachers sat with their students. The assembly was longer and more sombre, and included external speakers. The other two assemblies, in contrast, were more like pep rallies. For example, cultural diversity day was held on February 11, 2010, and coincided with the winter Olympics. After the students had gathered in the gymnasium, two representatives from each grade marched in carrying homemade flags from around the world, as the song known as *Wavin’ Flag* (Universal Music Group, 2010) played loudly in the background. The students immediately rose to their feet, and began dancing, clapping and singing along. Teachers and staff joined them. The rest of each day involved rotating through a variety of educational and hands-on experiences, often led by guest speakers, presenters and performers. Cultural diversity day, for example, included dancing and singing with a steel drum band from South America, and storytelling in the French Canadian tradition. The overall tone is fun, explorative, cooperative and non-competitive. Older students provide leadership in some of these activities, and care for younger students by accompanying them on rotations. For two of these days, students wore their street clothes instead of uniforms, and contributed a loonie
to the community outreach fund for the privilege of doing so. For the Remembrance Day program, however, students were in formal dress uniform, out of respect for the solemnity of that day.

During these three days, and in other activities throughout the year, students and staff participate within the particular *house* to which they were assigned upon entering the school, and not according to their class or grade. The school’s house system, established in 2007, is based on inspiring individuals and moral role models who demonstrated personal determination and courage, and were responsible for significant, positive and lasting contributions to society. I have not named these individuals in order to protect the identity of the school. Each house is associated with two of the schools’ values, respect plus either responsibility, integrity, compassion or courage. Siblings are assigned to the same house, connecting the school community to home.

Small schools, like Middlevale, have an advantage in building community, as they are more readily able to develop a personalized context that allows teachers and staff to enter into caring relationships with students (Strike, 2008). One of Middlevale’s running jokes notes that Sean Patrick, the Head of School, not only knows every child, every sibling *and* their parents, he also knows the family pets. Yet, building community is not simply a consequence of Middlevale’s size. It is also not an inevitable outcome of the structures discussed above. Necessarily underpinning these structures is a range of values and moral values, which guide the attitudes, understandings and behaviours of students, teachers and staff toward sustaining community. Several were mentioned, including cooperation, responsibility, integrity, trust, respect, empowerment, leadership, compassion, and courage. To this list I add tolerance. As a moral value, tolerance is
understood in the context of human flourishing, dignity, wellbeing and welfare, and is associated with other moral values, such as inclusiveness, fairness, justice, respect, sensitivity, understanding, compassion, empathy, consideration and patience (Borba, 2001). With a mission to nurture a range of academic and social needs, Middlevale attracts children with personal and individual exceptionalities and challenges. One administrator commented to me, by example, “There are several schools for the alpha-male, but not for boys who are outside of that box. That’s what we provide.” In this, tolerance is most closely associated with inclusiveness. Tolerance is also associated with patience and understanding, as the school encourages a general appreciation and acceptance for the spirit of children, as they learn, grow, develop, and make mistakes. Strike (2008) contends that such moral norms of school culture have unintentional consequences in providing a moral education for students, and that the key to a good moral education lies in building healthy school communities. Salls (2007) agrees:

The basic context of character education in schools then, is the environment of the school as a whole.... Everything that occurs within and around the school can be the occasion of character education. (p. 100)

*The Character Development Program*

Salls (2007) asserts, “A school’s commitment to education in virtue should be reflected first of all in the school philosophy statement, next in the school mission statement, and lastly in the character education strategy itself” (p. 96). The following passages from Middlevale’s website, demonstrate this to be the case:

While attending to each pupil's academic development, Middlevale is also concerned with the "whole child", striving to maintain a balance of a child's physical, emotional, and moral development. (June 2010)
Our mission is to challenge children to realize their potential. We recognize and embrace that our work as educators moves beyond the academic to include developing skills for personal growth and citizenship. Good character can be both taught and learned and is at the core of a safe, effective, responsive school, and a just, caring, and democratic society. Character development enhances self-actualization, confidence, social and emotional wellbeing, and ultimately, academic achievement. (June 2010)

Although consistent with both statements, the character program did not directly or linearly derive from either the school’s philosophy or mission, as Salls’ comment may imply. Instead, it grew from a philosophical and practical shift in the school’s approach to discipline, which Sean Patrick initiated in his role as assistant head of school, prior to becoming head of school. In his words:

I wanted to change our approach to what was essentially student discipline. I wanted to show kids how to make the right choices. This began with me understanding that I wasn’t really doing a very good job of changing behaviours of kids by doing punitive things. “If you do that again you’re going to have a detention. I’m going to call home. I’m going to suspend you”. (administrator interview)

Sean was reacting against classroom management and discipline practices that were promoted throughout the 1970s and 1980s, when many currently practicing teachers and administrators were educated. Derived from behavioural psychology, the goals of these practices are to control student behaviours with rewards, punishments and incentives. In this, little regard is paid to social and moral learning (Watson, 2008). Sean’s beliefs, however, are more closely aligned with developmental psychology, which promotes assumptions that children are naturally predisposed to being cooperative and pro-social, and if provided with opportunities to acquire social, emotional and moral skills, in an environment of goodness, they will increasingly do what is right and good.

Developmental discipline, therefore, involves policies, procedures, rules and guidelines
that enable and encourage desirable behaviour; help students to learn from mistakes; preserve students’ sense of worth, competence and dignity; provide opportunities for students to practice being kind, fair and responsible; and allow teachers to model goodness (Watson, 2003, 2008). As Goodman (2006) asserts, “If schools take seriously the moral development of students, their discipline policies should be a conduit for moral instruction” (p. 213). In this context, punishments and punitive measures are counterproductive to moral development, because they are devised to be harmful to wrongdoers (Watson, 2003, 2008).

With this philosophical shift at the school, Sean focused on fostering self-discipline “through teaching thoughtful regard for the welfare of others” (website, June 2010). This is currently articulated in the parent’s handbook, as follows:

Our focus is on the positive side of reinforcement, rewarding appropriate behaviour. Expectations are set out as guidelines that students "can" follow, rather than lists of "can't". These guidelines are meant to encourage students to think and act responsibly, rather than encouraging avoidance techniques. (2009/2010)

Correspondingly, Sean identified a need to provide more direct support for students’ moral development. This coincided temporally with the Ontario Ministry of Education’s character education program, as outlined in Chapter Two. Sean collaborated with my research participant, Terry Kennedy, to investigate an approach to character development that would suit Middlevale’s nature and needs. The history of this program is recounted in their words, which I have woven together from interview statements each had made independently of the other. Sean’s statements are from one interview, referred to as the administrator interview. Terry’s are primarily from interview one.
Sean: It was initially conceived of as a curriculum piece. Writing curriculum over the summer is a classic school project. We’re going to have a team of three come in and they’re going to look at our curriculum, our science curriculum or social studies, or even smaller, our research skills curriculum. Somebody’s going to map that out. And they look at best practice and they come up with a bunch of skills. And then they come up with lesson plans about how you’re going to teach these skills across the grades. And really, I saw character education like this, as being curriculum writing.

As he had in the past for other projects, Sean circulated an email asking for a volunteer. Terry responded. Her initial task was to research character education, specifically what it was and where it was taking place, and then to write a made-in-Middlevale version, which would be distributed to teachers and taught in conjunction with the health curriculum.

Terry: Sean approached me in the spring of 2004 and asked, “What do you think about doing a little bit of research on character education?” So, for about a year I was looking at different journal articles to do with character education, and went to workshops. (interview 1)

It soon became apparent to both Sean and Terry, however, that a curricular approach was not appropriate for Middlevale.

Terry: If you go to other schools they actually have a program. And we thought about that. We thought long and hard. Is it worth doing an action program where you have a scope and sequence like any curriculum strand? But we didn’t think that was right for our community. (interview 1)

Sean: Terry came and said, “I don’t think I do want to do what you think you want me to do. I don’t want to write a grade-four curriculum or a grade-one to eight curriculum around character because it’s not going to work. It won’t do anything. There’s no point”. I know now that that is entirely the wrong direction to go because it can’t be a stand-alone. It can’t be an overlay. We don’t want a shrink-wrapped version delivered—here’s your grade-four respect Worksheets, role-play, whatever. It has to be woven somehow right into the school. We wanted to weave this into the culture of the school with words, actions, behaviours and characteristics, for all of the humans that come here every day.
Sean: And so we stopped that project. But Terry and I continued to read together. We visited lots of schools. And this became a filter I looked through when I’d visit other schools. And out of all this came the notion of an ethos of values and development, rather than traditional character education.

This shift in orientation was signalled by the change in language, from character education to character development.

Sean: And then, Terry and I worked together, co-chairing the committee. We had a couple of parents on that committee; we had a few kids; we had other teachers. I think there were about 10 of us. And we met over the course of the year.

Sean: I had come to understand that we needed to define the values that we wanted to have the children experience. I don’t want them to just learn, but to experience day-to-day so they could develop those values in themselves. And I was very conscious that I wanted that to be a shared process, all of us together, or that there should be community input. A process of asking together, what is really important here? What do we want the children to emerge from here with? And we had focus groups in the school. And we did a lot of brainstorming. We had faculty meetings set aside for it and parent focus groups and questionnaires that were sent home.

Terry: And then we had the character education committee come up with a list of values. But we couldn’t choose too many. So what was the right number and which ones? I looked at a study of different cultures and different values. There were similarities. Respect and responsibility are common throughout the world, and not only based on religion, culture or where you come from. They’re just human. Humans are a community-based species, and in order to get along we have similar values. (interview 1)

Sean: We were able to distil out the five values—respect, responsibility, integrity, compassion, courage—from which our program emerged.

Terry: By defining the values there was a little more focus to what everyone was doing, because the teachers were already randomly giving some form of character education. This way, everybody had the same language and same values from junior kindergarten and up. (interview 1)
Terry: Then I asked people to share their materials with me, anything that related to character. This included the peacemakers’ stuff, and articles and programs that other teachers were using. I even interviewed teachers. We wanted to see what others were already doing, not to ask them to change, but to share and build upon that. Grade one, for example, still has their I Care Cat stuff, but they also do Project Love where they collect school items for those in need. Everybody seems to have adopted something. The grade-eights clean-up the environment somewhere. Some classes go to another school and buddy up with a grade-two class for drama. There are new activities that are added each year. We’ve had speakers from Free the Children, and food bank people. It’s growing. Everybody has the capability to make it their own now. That was what we wanted.

(interview 1)

Sean: One of the things we also said was it wasn’t like this was a barren wasteland of unethical behaviour before we stepped up. It was to try to name and intentionalize a lot of the stuff we already did as a culture, as a school community, so we could do it better. “Here’s what you’re already doing that falls into these things. And here are some other things that we’ve heard.” Or, “Here are some things that your colleagues are doing. Here are some DVDs and books that we liked. Here are ways to do it that are really appropriate for a six year-old, a four year-old, a 14 year-old and a 45 year-old.” I include the adults, because we can’t talk about values with the children in full authenticity, unless we’re actually behaving accordingly ourselves.

Sean: That all begins with the adults. I now know better what those [values] are, because I’ve taught them. I’ve been working with the children, and I’ve been working with my colleagues. What does this look like in our school? What does this look like in our lives? We have been living it. And you stop and you rest on those words. If we have to have difficult conversations with parents, like the conversation that your child will have to go into our special education program, or this may not be the right school for your child, we say, we have to have the courage to do this. Our responsibility is to this child. A colleague died last year and we talked about compassion. I had a conversation just this morning with a colleague about very difficult things she’s been through with her family. We talked about our school values of courage and integrity. We talked about how we don’t just talk about courage and integrity as the adults here, but we also have to be them. You rest on those words. But they’re not just words, because you build up against them.
Sean: I think that this more clear articulation of values in our school community has allowed the adults, who really determine the culture of the school, to hold themselves differently and conduct themselves differently, and be somehow more ethical, moral people in their practice with children. And it’s going to rub off on the children. Any shift in school culture begins with the adults. We do far more for our children by what we do than by what we say. This is the children are watching us stuff.

Sean: And we always come back to our values. We come back to the words. To the children we say, “You need to have the courage to not stand by while this is happening in your classroom or on the playground. You need to have the respect....” Or, “I challenge you to have the respect. What would compassion look like in this situation? We are a place to talk about compassion. Now’s your chance to exercise some. What am I going to see?” And the nice thing is all of the children know what those things look like. They know. Integrity is a hard one. But every kid I know in the school has heard the words and knows what they mean in an age appropriate way. And when the values do come around again and we are faced with opportunities, when it’s decision time, then hopefully some of what we talked about resonates.

Sean: So in the end, we did not roll this out as an add-on, a curriculum piece. It’s not a curriculum piece. It’s a cultural piece that permeates all aspects of our school life for the children as well as the adults in our community. It’s human to human to human.

Several years after its 2005 implementation, I am able to observe examples of how the character development program has become relevant beyond the classroom, as a way of life at this school. Often at assemblies, Sean and other school administrators reference the school values, with versions of the following two statements: “If you are sitting quietly and still, listening, clapping, and laughing when it is appropriate, you are showing respect for the person who is up here talking” (field notes, September 14, 2009); and “It takes a lot of courage for people to stand up in front of all of you and make a presentation. Even some teachers need courage to do this” (field notes, September 14, 2009). Achievements in community outreach are discussed in terms of responsibility and
compassion, and achievements in sports are discussed in terms of courage. At the launch of the cultural diversity special activity day, Sean reflected how the school’s values relate to those of the Olympics, particularly courage, respect and responsibility. In awarding silver and gold pins for individual achievement, Sean explained how points toward this begin to accumulate in grade four, based partly on participation in leadership, athletics and arts, but also on the personal integrity by which one honours his or her commitments to these activities (field notes, May 31, 2010). When announcing an indoor recess due to rain, the assistant head of school said, “Please look after each other and your teachers”. This simultaneously signalled values of respect and responsibility, among others. Finally, the school values are referenced in many external communications throughout the year. The passages below, modified from two parent newsletters, are fairly typical of the overt nature of these messages, and suggest an attempt to educate parents, as well as students.

At Middlevale we believe that the development of both MORAL and PERFORMANCE character are essential for children to succeed in life.... Character strengths such as empathy, fairness, trustworthiness, generosity, and compassion are aspects of our capacity to love. These qualities make up our MORAL character.…. character strengths such as effort, initiative, diligence, self-discipline, and perseverance constitute our capacity to work. These qualities make up what we call PERFORMANCE character. (2008)

We challenge students to become better human beings, to learn from their mistakes, but also to accept individual differences. It’s about learning to help and support one another and to look after each other.... We believe that children develop character by what they see, what they hear, and what they are repeatedly led to do…. The many adults we have working here every day with your children live and breathe these character values through their pedagogy as well as their daily interactions with your children. (2010)
In addition, the students’ unsolicited behaviours toward each other and their teachers coincide with the school’s values. I observed students to readily hold open doors for others to pass through, without having to be asked. They said, “You’re welcome” when thanked, and “Thank you” when a door was held for them. Students spontaneously picked up items that had fallen, regardless of whether they were responsible or to whom they belong. If a conflict arose in the playground other students rushed over to help and offer support, or to get a peacemaker or adult. Students were engaged during assemblies, clapping, laughing and listening. Students were helpful to visitors and guests, in official roles as tour guides and buddies, and unofficially if someone simply looked confused or lost. When such behaviours are not exhibited, or behaviours are disrespectful, unkind and irresponsible, for example, any adult at the school is expected to intervene with a reminder or a more significant consequence. The language of values is commonly invoked. While these generalizations do not apply to every child, every adult or every incident, I did overhear an older student contextualize the school’s ethos as follows: “When you are playing soccer at my other school and you make a bad shot, the kids say ‘You suck!’ When you make a bad shot here, they say, ‘Nice try. Good shot’”.

While Sean acknowledges that much progress has been made, he realized that the teachers are at varying levels of moral agency: “Some teachers get it more than others”. Terry agrees:

Not everyone’s going to have moral education, character education first and foremost on their mind. They will teach the five values that we stand for as a school. But whether that becomes a daily conversation or goes through their whole curriculum, I’m not sure. My expectations are always there for that in every subject they do. But people may not do the same thing. Or people may not necessarily do it until it’s time for health class. I carry on and do what I can in
here and out there, even in the hallway. It’s hard to know what somebody else really does, though, in their own class. (interview 5)

There are still incidents of teachers yelling at students, sometimes reducing them to tears. There are also stories of teachers not taking the time to fully understand a situation, and implementing what some students feel are unfair consequences, including group punishment. On occasion, a teacher will bring a laptop to an assembly and work, rather than engage in the proceedings. These are not in accordance with the school’s values of integrity, respect, responsibility and compassion, in particular. “It’s a process and we’re working on it”, Sean reflects.

Sean: I think we have 100% buy-in from the teachers that this is the way to be in this community, and that we’re not just about the delivery of curriculum here. This is why these people choose to become teachers. But some of them are, like everything else, a little further along the learning curve, and a little more open and available to colleagues who are putting in place some of the coaching skills to support character development. We all need some coaching to be coaches.

Sean often expressed a metaphor of teachers as coaches to students, in the context of character development. In support, all of the teachers are offered an opportunity to participate in an external coaching worship. Terry explains:

Pretty much all of the teachers have gone through the coaching workshop. We go through several days of it in the summer, and we learn the steps to take. We practice with each other first. It’s one of those self-awareness things. It’s great for educators and parents alike. And certainly, with adult-to-adult relationships it’s good as well. (interview 6)

This workshop is called Coach Training for Educators: Introduction to Fundamental Coaching Skills. It provides what are considered to be add-on skills, to better enable teachers to meet Middlevale’s expectations for supporting students’ holistic growth and
development. The content was adapted by the facilitator to meet Middlevale’s needs, and is summarized in Table 7, entitled Coach Training for Educators.

Table 7

Coach training for educators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core competencies</th>
<th>Foundational skills reinforced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• meeting ethical guidelines and professional standards</td>
<td>• listening deeply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• establishing coaching agreement</td>
<td>• asking powerful/impactful questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• co-creating the relationship with trust and intimacy</td>
<td>• providing meaningful feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• communicating effectively</td>
<td>• holding the students’ agenda, not one’s own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• facilitating learning and results</td>
<td>• navigating the coaching conversation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• deepening the learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although not mandatory, teachers are strongly encouraged to participate in this workshop, and Terry could not think of a single teacher who had not done so. The workshop also helps to maintain school-wide continuity regarding how teachers support students’ social-moral development, year after year, as Terry acknowledges:

The strategies for solving their social problems, they’ve already seen because they had problems last year. What happened exactly, I don’t know. But I’m pretty sure they were trained to talk about it. They probably had time to talk about it one at a time too, and told not to interrupt and just to listen to everybody’s versions. Then come up with something together. (interview 6)

I see them for this year, but all the time that they have been at the school, somebody’s done one thing or another to support what I also do. Then they just go through me and move on to somebody else. (interview 6)

From the idea to add a piece of curriculum in support of students’ self-discipline, a comprehensive character development program has evolved, and become a central
concept in the school’s philosophy and mission; a defining feature of the school’s culture; a focus for teacher development as well as student development; and a context for developmental discipline. The latter represents having come full circle. As Fenstermacher, Osguthorpe and Sanger (2009) conclude from their study:

Our inference from our extensive observations of, and discussions with the teachers in both schools, is that having an explicit moral program or curriculum within the school signals the teachers that moral matters are an important part of the work of teaching, and attention to such matters will be valued by colleagues and superiors. The adoption of a program of moral content, either in the form of a “pre-packaged” curriculum, or as an organic product of the mission and philosophy of the school, served as a form of permission-giving to the teachers, as if to say, “Moral development is valued here; we want you to attend to it”. (p. 12)

Middlevale’s character development program serves this purpose, but its expectations extend beyond the teachers and students, to all members of the community. It is currently articulated, as follows:

The character program was created to help ensure that shared values of good character are infused into the curricular and co-curricular programs of the school, and are visible in the actions and daily interactions of all members of the school community. It intentionally cultivates the development of Respect, Responsibility, Integrity, Compassion, and Courage in the members of our community, so they foster a conscious, lifelong commitment to themselves, other people, and the Earth. These five qualities are shared values of our community. They transcend individual differences and act as a touchstone to many other important ethical and moral attributes of good character. The development of character is a shared responsibility, in which the school takes a supporting position to the parents and families of our students. (modified from the parent handbook 2009/2010)

Although continuing to evolve, this statement is evidence of the program’s firmly established place in the structures and culture of the school. As such, the program has eclipsed the influence of its creators. Terry and Sean no longer assume direct responsibility, but continue to be a resource for Jonathan. As assistant head of school,
Jonathan is also responsible for campus discipline. This maintains the conceptual and practical connections between character development and developmental discipline, which initiated the evolution of both.

*Peacemaker and Community Outreach Programs*

The Peacemaker and Community Outreach Programs are expressions of the school’s character development program, promoting its values and providing opportunities for students to practice associated behaviours. Terry, the study’s participant, coordinates both. The Peacemaker Program is a leadership activity for students in grades four and five. Peacemakers patrol the playground in pairs during recess, offering peer-mediation and conflict resolution support for younger students. Approximately 40 students, mostly girls, participated during my year of fieldwork. In the fall term, the grade-five students patrolled the playground while the grade-four students trained. Terry and her co-coordinator, Wendy Bell, conducted training sessions every Monday at lunch. Activities included roleplaying, watching videos, questioning former peacemakers, and practicing the protocol. Grade-four students began their patrols in January.

The peacemaker protocol is guided by a script that peacemakers carry on a clipboard when on-duty. Reproduced in Figure 1, the Peacemaker Script is consistent with both developmental discipline and the teachers’ coaching workshop. Related to developmental discipline, peacemakers are encouraged to be supportive and caring; to maintain a democratic process; and to preserve the autonomy and competence of the students they are helping (Watson, 2003, 2008). Related to the coaching workshop, peacemakers are encouraged to listen carefully, ask clarifying questions, and give
everyone involved a chance to express themselves and be heard. While of obvious benefit to others, these behaviours have a morally educative effect on the peacemakers. Howard (2005) notes that in helping others work through problems and find solutions, one’s moral judgement and reasoning abilities improve. Further, Johnson and Johnson (2008) acknowledge that a wide range of moral values, including fairness, compassion, empathy and honesty, is necessarily invoked in the process of peer-mediation. As such, the Peacemaker Program at Middlevale serves to support the moral development of its participants and the recipients of their efforts.
Figure 1. Peacemaker script

(Introduce yourselves.) **Hello, my name is ______________.**
**I’m in grade ______.** (Second peacemaker repeats.)

**We’re peacemakers. Would you like us to help you solve your problems or would you like to work it out with a teacher instead?** (If they want a teacher, accompany them to a teacher and then leave. If they want your help, move away from the conflict area, and continue below.)

**What are your names?**
There are some rules we need to agree to before we start.
1. Only one person can talk at once.
2. Don’t put each other down or name call.
3. Tell the truth.
4. Try hard to solve the problem.

**Do you agree to these rules?** (Ask each person separately.)

**Who wants to go first to say what happened?**
(Let each person have a full turn without interruptions.)
(After each person, repeat his/her story to make sure it is clear.)
**Is that what you were saying? How did that make you feel?**

(When each person has had a chance, move to problem-solving.)
**Let’s see if we are ready to problem solve now. What suggestions do we have?**
(Let each person have a turn. Offer some suggestions as well, when they are done with theirs.)

**Is this something you can all agree on? Do you all feel better?**
**Congratulations on solving your problem.**

(adapted from Sadalla, Halmberg & Halligan, 1990)

Community outreach is Middlevale’s version of service-learning, as it is defined by Billig (2000, 2009), Butin (2003), Furco, Root and Furco (2010), Hart, Matsuba and Atkins (2008), and Morgan and Streb (2001). Accordingly, the school maintains a connection between character development and community outreach, which is expressed
by a dual function of outreach such that *social* action focuses on benefits to recipients of the service performed, while *soulful* action focuses on the moral and character development of participants. This is explained in the following passage, modified from the parent handbook (2009/2010):

We believe that all community outreach initiatives should reflect the school’s values of Respect, Responsibility, Integrity, Compassion, and Courage. These include both social action and soulful action initiatives. Social action involves tackling important issues in our community, our country, and around the world. Soulful action involves activities that focus on personal reflection and self-transformation. Emphasis is placed on raising students’ awareness of the world around them and challenging them to take the initiative to make a difference. While fundraising is an important part of assisting worthwhile organizations, cultivating a sense of volunteerism and social engagement is the most important outcome of the community outreach program. We believe that students’ reaching their potential includes becoming more engaged and responsible citizens. Community outreach allows students to develop skills, and provides the tools for meaningful and active community service.

This dual nature distinguishes outreach and service-learning from community service and volunteerism. According to Hart, Matsuba and Atkins (2008), service-learning entails an academic component that community service lacks. Others more specifically identify, as the academic component, a theoretical basis, learning objectives, integration with course work, and opportunities for student reflection (Hinck & Brandell, 1999; Lakin & Mahoney, 2006; Morgan & Streb, 2001; Schutz & Gere, 1998). Because students generally do not have the choice to participate or not to participate, and often do not select the particular activity in which they are involved, such activities are not considered volunteerism (Hart, Matsuba & Atkins, 2008).

All students at Middlevale are involved in age-appropriate activities, some of which they identify a need for, and some of which are identified by the adults. In the
younger years, the activities are more characteristic of community service and reinforce moral values of helpfulness, responsibility and compassion. As the students get older, and by grades seven and eight, the activities become linked to curricula, particularly science and social studies, and assume a more service-learning orientation. In addition to reinforcing values of learning and participation, moral values of justice and courage may also be identified for older students.

As students progress through the school, they are expected to take on more responsibilities for organizing their community outreach activities, and determining where their volunteerism will be directed. From junior kindergarten to grade 2, community outreach activities are facilitated by the homeroom teacher and take place in the school. They emphasize class discussion, cooperative decision-making, and raising awareness. From grades 3-6, students will decide on a class activity that will allow students to engage personally with the local or global community. Grades 7 & 8 students will aim to participate in structured community outreach opportunities. (modified from the parent handbook 2009/2010)

Examples of initiatives have included creating and selling buttons for the World Wildlife Fund, writing letters or drawing pictures for residents of a seniors’ facility, sending postcards to war veterans on Remembrance Day, donating books to the Bookshare Program, planting trees, partnering with students from an inner-city school, testing the quality of water, and participating in nature clean-ups. The entire school is involved in the annual Terry Fox Run, and the house system is based on local heroes who are recognized as community service role models. Service activities relevant to Terry’s class are discussed in Chapter Seven.

The school’s commitment to community outreach is reinforced throughout the school year. This occurs internally, often during weekly assemblies where students announce, report on, and celebrate the projects with which they are involved. It is also
articulated externally to both inform and involve parents. This excerpt, modified from a parent newsletter, represents a typical example of how outreach opportunities involve the entire Middlevale community:

This Holiday Season, we invite you to continue the tradition of giving. The school will be making donations to three local organizations, which serve those in need at this particular time. In addition, the school will be once again sponsoring 24 local families. Within their class, or as a class pair, students will be given biographical information about a family in our neighbourhood who they will “adopt.” Each family will be provided with food, grocery vouchers, warm clothes, and small gifts to brighten the children’s holiday. Cards and letters to the family are also included in the hamper.

One of the goals of holiday giving is to involve students as active participants as much as possible. Please involve your children in any donation you may be making. Students can help with shopping, contribute some of their own money, help wrap items, or make cards.

While gifts to teachers are always appreciated, a donation to one of these causes in honour of a member of the faculty is also valued. Our faculty are supportive of these causes and appreciate this thoughtful gesture. (November 2009)

These structural and cultural elements of Middlevale School demonstrate a commitment to the moral education of its students. The literature also suggests that they may liberate, encourage and support the moral agency of teachers toward this goal, by enhancing teachers’ emotional and moral wellbeing, increasing teachers’ moral understandings, and deepening teachers’ commitments to teaching as a moral endeavour (Biesta & Tedder, 2006; Chow-Hoy, 2001; Cooper, 2010; Hansen, 2001). Biesta and Tedder (2006) summarize this as follows: “The achievement of agency will always result in the interplay of individual efforts, available resources and contextual and structural factors as they come together in particular and, in a sense, always unique situations” (p. 137). It can be assumed, therefore, that Middlevale’s environment enables Terry’s moral
agency. Yet, Terry was actively involved in creating this environment, with the
Character Development Program and its values, the Peacemaker Program, and the
Community Outreach Program. Thus, it may also be assumed that the environment was enabled by Terry, an interesting suggestion that speaks to a broader role for moral agent teachers, beyond their own students and classrooms.

The Classroom

Terry’s classroom is located on the second floor of a new, two-story building. Large windows afford a spacious feeling, although, the room is of a modest size. A clothesline diagonally crosses the ceiling, from the front corner where Terry’s desk is located to above my perch at the back corner. Student work is regularly displayed from it. Two bulletin boards at the back are also filled with students’ work, in themes corresponding to the current units of study, usually from the language arts, science and social studies programs. Another bulletin board by Terry’s desk is mostly used to post professional items, such as schedules and memos, and personal photos of Terry’s friends and family. Progressively during the year, however, it filled with notes and pictures from students. A bulletin board by the door to the hallway holds a world map. A second door leads directly to the other grade-four classroom. The teachers and students readily flow back and forth to share resources, and collaborate on activities. From 11:00 o’clock in the morning, when the sun begins to stream through the south-facing windows, a rotating prism fills the room with multiple floating rainbows. To this colourful and lively decor, Terry added a vase of flowers on the windowsill. Her intention was to keep fresh flowers throughout the year, but she often forgot at busy times. I also contributed to this, but not as often as I would have liked, either.
Full lockers are provided for each student directly outside the classroom, across a wide hallway. Coats, boots and knapsacks are stored there during the day, and not brought into the classroom. Students are also assigned a desk, with a built-in cubby for their school supplies. The desks are not affixed to the floor, and different seating arrangements can be achieved. Two layouts were used, one with four groups of four desks, and the other a U-shape, opening toward the whiteboard. These are diagrammed in Figure 2, entitled Seating Arrangements, and are discussed in Chapter Six for their relevance to Terry’s moral agency.
Figure 2. Seating Arrangements

- Windows (south exposure)
  - Low shelves
  - Wendy’s room

- Bulletin board
  - Terry’s desk
  - 4 desks
  - 4 desks
  - 4 desks
  - 4 desks

- Whiteboard
  - Library
  - Counters and cupboards
  - File cabinet

- Bulletin board
  - Hallway

- Bulletin board
  - Computer desk
  - Me

- Bulletin board

- Bulletin board
  - Terry’s desk
  - Computer desk
  - Me

- Bulletin board

- Bulletin board
  - Library
  - Counters and cupboards
  - File cabinet
The magnetic whiteboard, at the front of the class, is the hub of classroom activity, containing key information, reminders, notes, and the daily agenda, in blue, black, green and red marker. This is also where lessons are taught. Although the details are changed regularly, their position is consistent. Terry explains that this allows the students to become easily oriented. Accordingly, she often replies to inquiries with versions of “You know where to look for that”. Terry shares responsibility with the students for updating and cleaning the board, which is illustrated in Figure 3, entitled The Whiteboard.

Figure 3. The whiteboard

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Homework</th>
<th>Date / Day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Notes</td>
<td>Line leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chart paper</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With lessons on virtues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special notes for the day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space where lesson is taught</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-day class schedule</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students ready to give a book talk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Several posters adorn the walls around the room. Two are explicitly moral: “Kindness is showing that you care”, and “Respect others. Respect yourself.” Others are values-based, and implicitly moral. “How you play shows some of your character. How you win or lose shows all of it” is about good sportsmanship, and implies respect, humility and courage. “The expert in anything was once a beginner” implies perseverance and humility. “You’ll always miss 100% of the shots you don’t take” implies courage. “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart” implies diligence.
The following quote, by Marcel Proust, implies thankfulness, appreciation and gratitude:

“Let us be grateful to people who make us happy; they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom.” Finally, a magnet with the following sentiment by John Fischer was affixed to the white board, and implies equity, fairness and love:

The essence of our effort to see that every child has a chance must be to assure each an equal opportunity, not to become equal, but to become different—to realize whatever unique potential of body, mind and spirit he or she possesses.

Although not discussed with the class as a whole, Terry readily identified these postings to individual students, as they became relevant to their personal situation.

Some years I remember to do a little walkabout and point out to the students all the posters and messages. But most of the time they’re just there if I need to refer to them. So for example, if the students are giving up and they’re getting frustrated, or something is too hard, there are two posters—the expert in anything was once a beginner; and you’ll always miss 100% of the shots you don’t take. So sometimes I’ve had classes where maybe one or two don’t sign up for any clubs at all. And I really want them to sign up for a club. So then I say, “You’ll always miss 100% of the shots you don’t take. If you don’t take that risk you’ll never know whether or not it’s something that you’re good at, something that you’ll enjoy, something that will give you more friendships. You never know.” So there are moments when I refer to them. (interview 2)

In referring students to the posters, Terry does not always articulate the underlying or associated moral values, as she does with me, choosing instead to allow students to draw their own meanings. On the first day of school, one of the girls did just that. Copying each phrase into her doodle book, she explained how they were positive messages that made her feel good. Terry acknowledges that these messages have relevance for her as well, but finds more inspiration from a poem posted above her desk, written by Louise Cullen (1990) and entitled ABC’s for Our Children. This poem is partly reproduced in Figure 4.
This poem expresses a range of sentiments that Terry personally espouses and strives to enact in her practice, as she says:

Although I don’t look at my bulletin board regularly throughout the day, I always see something from it during the week that reminds me of the important things. That’s why I keep ABC’s up on my bulletin board. Sometimes also, parents need parenting help. And I thought that maybe that’s something I can offer, if I think that somebody needs it. I just think about one line at a time: *dream about what they want to become*; *question things so they’ll learn to wonder*. One thing per day. It’s lovely. I just think, have I done that today? It’s a reminder for me. Have I done any of that today? This week? (interview 8)

These values-based and morals-based postings connect the classroom’s physical space to its culture. Goodman and Balamore (2003) articulate this connection in terms of morality:

Arranging a classroom merits the same consideration. One wants each student to feel a rush of gladness when entering the room that first day, to sense, “Here I am
safe, here I can be myself, here everyone is treated fairly, here there are lots of possibilities.” That means designing a room to look attractive, colourful, and enticing, yes, but also one that is “fair”, where each child finds nourishment for his or her interests and aptitudes.... “In this room this year, we will develop a respectful, caring, lively, freedom-loving, hard-working, engaged community of learners”. (p. 12)

Terry is also aware of this connection, and how attending to the learning environment signals a way of life:

I think the environment helps them. I don’t think they would put it that way. I don’t think they know what it is when they come in here and why it works the way it does, not that it works perfectly all the time. And if you were to ask them they wouldn’t be able to verbalize what it was. But the atmosphere is conducive to being a certain way. This is the way that I run it. This is the way that I am. When you come in here this is what you need to learn about being in this classroom. (interview 6)

More specifically, the values and morals expressed in these posters provide a backbone for the classroom culture. In understanding this, I have applied Coloroso’s (1995, 2005) lens of the backbone parent to teachers in loco parentis. As such, backbone teachers create a values- and morals-based structure for classroom life that enforces an objective morality emphasizing fairness, trust, respect, helpfulness, caring, and compassion, among other moral values. Within this structure, children are not controlled, but rather “encouraged to explore, play, take healthy risks, and resolve conflicts assertively and peacefully. Mistakes are viewed as opportunities to grow, not as reasons for rebuke” (Coloroso, 2005, p.89). The following two chapters will illustrate that Terry’s practices foster a similarly characterized classroom life. There is evidence that Terry does not attempt to excessively control the children, and the classroom environment generally does not stifle their autonomy, energy and enthusiasm. Rather, the students are encouraged to interact with each other, be themselves, advocate for themselves and
others, challenge themselves, take initiative, and assume a range of responsibilities related to themselves, each other, the classroom, activities, and Terry. In support, Terry intentionally maintains a comfortable atmosphere, in which students can feel relaxed:

I don’t want everything to be so serious and they don’t smile. Funny things are going to happen. It’s just part of the day. And sometimes humour serves to sort of lighten up the atmosphere when things are getting too heavy. I gauge it by how I’m sort of feeling myself. If it feels tight to me I think that they subconsciously also are feeling kind of tight. They may not, but they may. So laughing about something makes it feel that little bit lighter. (interview 4)

Consequently, Terry’s classroom might be considered an active and noisy place by traditional standards. During seatwork, students often move from table to table, with constant chattering. Terry does not insist on absolute quiet or sitting at desks because her pedagogy encourages students to help each other, and to freely access resources throughout the classroom. Except during presentations and lessons, students may come and go at their own discretion, sharpen pencils, drink from their water bottles, go to the washroom, seek help from a peer, or use the computer. If these behaviours compromise the ability of others to accomplish the tasks at hand, however, Terry calls out versions of, “You are all too noisy right now. I need you to return to your seats, and quiet down for a while. Then we can try again.” Class-wide discussions can be particularly lively events, as Terry notes:

In the moment when things are moving and the thoughts are coming out, I don’t mind [the students] calling out so much. It feels like the free-flow of ideas, and I don’t want to disrupt that. I tend to listen and to take it in. It feels like I need to move with the energy of whatever it is that’s happening, I just let it go…. Now mind you, in a free-flow of ideas and a discussion they can also be really loud, at which point there’s no point in discussing because we can’t hear each other. I would have to put my foot down. I do say, “I need one at a time because I can’t hear your ideas”. Then there are times when there are too many people speaking. I say, “Did you interrupt? Was someone else talking?” So it just depends on
whether or not I can hear and whether or not I can tolerate it. (interview 3)

Occasionally, the noise and activity levels created a conflict with the librarian, Ms. Laurie, whose office is located directly across the hallway. Ms. Laurie is nearly a generation older than Terry, and from a traditional European culture where children are expected to listen more than talk, and adults are expected to control the behaviours of the children in their care. Terry appreciates this different viewpoint, and sensitively accommodates her when possible.

She has certain expectations of children’s behaviour. Sometimes she thinks noise is uncalled for. For example, the other day they were coming in from outdoor gym, and they were all so noisy. But it was happy noise. She came out of the library and stood there watching them. And then she said, “That can’t be Conner! All that noise? Can it all be from Conner?” That’s her thing. But if it’s happy noise I don’t come down on them quite as hard. It also happened for the happy birthday song. I thought Conner was okay with making the noise that he did. So when she came in to discipline I said, “Well it’s just because we are excited for the party”. I try to give a little bit of a reason if it’s called for so that she knows that maybe there was a reason for it. So that she doesn’t think that they are all bad. On the other hand, she has to live across from us during the school year. And if the noise disturbs her then she has a right to complain about it. (interview 3)

Such incidents were few and far between, and not a significant source of conflict between Ms. Laurie and Terry. I note the contrast in their expectations merely to illustrate the generally relaxed atmosphere of Terry’s classroom, and to lay a foundation for the discussions that follow.

*The Students*

Terry began the school year with 14 fourth-grade children. The other grade-four class, taught by Wendy Bell, was also below capacity, with 13 children. There were only four boys in each class. In January, a new boy joined Wendy’s class. In February, twin
boys joined the grade, one in each class. Both classes maintained a total of 15 students for the remainder of the year, with five boys and 10 girls in Terry’s class, and six boys and nine girls in Wendy’s. The small grade-four class, taught by a special education teacher, Ms. Robins, was all male, with seven students, and coincidentally, another set of twins. Although each class is small, and unbalanced regarding gender, the peer group for this grade includes 37 students, with 18 boys and 19 girls. This entire group is brought together for some classes, fieldtrips, and special activities or events. Terry identifies the benefits of doing so:

The first thing that we wanted to do is make sure that they had a chance to work with the other class for developing different relationships and a wider variety of people to work with. Because they always work in their own classrooms and with their own people, so it’s nice to mix it up once in a while. (interview 8)

For some activities, the boys and girls are segregated to enable a gender-specific approach. This occurs for physical education and health classes, and occasionally in the context of other subjects, such as science and technology, where more hands-on and outdoor activities are provided for the boys, and taught by a male teacher. Terry supports this, noting that “gender becomes a more pronounced issue at this age than in earlier ages, both academically and socially”. These collective experiences are facilitated by the close relationship between Terry and Wendy. “I love Wendy. I’m so lucky to be co-teaching with her”, Terry admits.

Among Terry’s 15 students, there is ethnic diversity, including students who are of East Indian, Australian, Maori, Asian, Italian, South African and German heritages. None of the students is a first generation immigrant to Canada, however. Regarding religion, most students are of Christian denominations, either practicing or non-practicing. Two students are Jewish; one student is half Jewish; and another student is
Hindu. One student’s parents are divorced and remarried. One student has two mothers in a same-sex marriage, and no father. Although this class and the school are homogeneous with respect to socio-economic status, there is heterogeneity regarding these other characteristics. Terry occasionally makes general reference to the variety of nationalities represented in her class. Yet, very rarely, and only around holiday time, did she make reference to Judaism, and never publicly referenced Hinduism or same-sex parenting while I was in the classroom. Not acknowledging and building on the different lifestyles, ethnicities and religions may represent a missed opportunity for moral lessons and messages related to inclusion, tolerance, sensitivity and respect, particularly in a context of community. Diversity regarding learning styles and abilities, however, is openly acknowledged and embraced for its direct relevance to the academic program. One child required remedial support in language arts; another was exhibiting difficulty with math skills and would be recommended for the remedial program the following year. One child has attention difficulties; another has difficulty beginning tasks. One is an excellent writer; another is exceptionally creative and dramatic; still another is gifted in math. It is these differences on which Terry builds a class community, instructing the students to “get to know each other, what you each can do. And help each other out”.

This study focuses on Terry, not the students. Yet, there is an individualized aspect to Terry’s moral agency that is particular for each student, and requires some knowledge of the students to appreciate. Consequently, the students are referenced throughout this dissertation, with consistently used pseudonyms so that readers may come to know them. They were never, however, questioned in relation to the study. The information provided was gleaned from observations and Terry’s comments. With Terry,
these students embraced me as part of their community. They chatted with me before and after class, and at lunch and recess. They sought my help with seatwork, science experiments, presentations, hurt feelings, and scraped knees. They wanted to know where I was when I was not at school, and if I was going on the fieldtrips with them. They showed me items they brought from home, and included me in their birthday and holiday celebrations. Finally, they made cards for me, one with the following sentiments:

- Hope you have a great hannukah
- I hope you have an awesome Hannukah! (sorry I misspelled Hannukah on the front). Thank you for everything you do for our class. Have a happy Hannukah and a happy new year!
- Have a happy Hannukah.
- I have recited a poem for you. I know it’s not the fanciest card. Not pink or blue. But I made it special just for you!

Although they remembered why I was there, occasionally asking me how my research was going, they never treated me as an outsider. At the end of the year, several of us said good-bye with hugs and tears.

*The Participant*

I have intentionally given Terry an Anglo-American pseudonym, although her ethnicity is Asian. This is consistent with her real name, which also does not reveal an Asian heritage. In addition, there does not appear to be any cultural distinctiveness in Terry’s moral agency practices. Her schooling and her influences related to teaching, generally, and moral education, specifically, have primarily been American. I have concluded that her Asian heritage is of little relevance to this portrait, and is only noted because Terry, herself, brought it up. Terry’s background and life history are best recounted in her own words, as recorded during the first interview.
I was born in Indonesia. My family and I left when I was eight years old and moved to Libya, in North Africa. I went to an American International school there for five years. Then my parents sent my sister and me to boarding school in Texas. I stayed for three years, and my sister stayed longer to graduate from high school. I decided to go to high school here in Canada, after they finally allowed landed immigrancy. Then I completed a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Toronto, in English literature and Japanese studies.

I went to Japan to teach English and was there for two and a half years. I didn’t have any sort of inkling as to whether or not I was going to be a teacher when I went to Japan. Nobody in my family is a teacher. I wanted to go there to do the cultural study thing, to see what it’s like. And I realized that I can do this. I can do this well, and I enjoyed doing it. I enjoyed the rapport you can have between student and teacher. And my students were adults. And teaching them English was just one-on-one at first. But I was enjoying the conversation and helping them to learn the language. Then later on in Japan, I taught Junior High-level students, just tutoring small classes in English. Again, I was attracted to the connection that you can have with the students to help them learn. I loved waiting for them to go, “Oh, I can use it this way? Oh, okay. I get that”.

So that’s when I decided to do teaching. I actually came into teaching late. I was thinking of going into business at first. I quickly switched out of that. I realized that I am more interested in a human career. And to help children is one way that I can have that. It just makes me more satisfied and fulfilled in my life, in being able to do something good for other people every day. I still like knowing that maybe I’m making a little difference for the next couple of generations that are coming up. And I find it really rewarding when I actually do get through to a child and there’s that “ah-ha!” moment. Or I see them developing later on, maybe two years after they’ve left me. And I know that they’re still interested in some of the things we talked about together.

I guess this desire to help partly came from my dad. He was a strict Methodist, and he made us go to Sunday school and Church every week. He’s a good, religious person. But he wasn’t overwhelming in that way. It was still quite democratic in our house. We went to church. We went to Sunday school. Boarding school in Texas was an Episcopal boarding school, and we had to go to chapel every day. But at some point he knew better than to actually be domineering about the whole thing. I did understand that I had a responsibility to be a good person, with a conscience to make sure that I contribute in some way.
So I came back to Canada and completed a Bachelor of Education degree at Queen’s University. Then I went immediately back to Japan for another two years. When I came back for good, I spent one year as a teaching assistant, at a private boys’ school, for grades one to four. Then I went to another private school to start a junior kindergarten program. I was there for one year as well, and then came back to the first school to teach grade two. But it was a hard school to really feel comfortable in. It taught me a lot, but I was staying there until 6, 7, 8, sometimes 9 pm every day. It wasn’t very good for having another life. I decided that’s enough, and came to Middlevale. This is a much more relaxed school, with a friendlier and warmer atmosphere. People leave by 5 pm, and they have a family life. Or they are able to do other things.

I started in grade three, covering a maternity leave. I was hired in November of 2002 and started with the class in January, right after their Christmas break. So from January to June was the grade-three mat leave. I continued in grade three the next September until November when that teacher came back. I then took over a grade-five mat leave from November until June. So that was 2004. And then finally in the fall of 2004 I was fully hired to teach grade four, and I’ve been teaching grade four ever since. So that means that I’ve been teaching here since 2002. Seven years this fall. That’s long. And while I was teaching here, I did a Master’s degree in education.

Terry credits a religious upbringing and her father’s personal example for her moral orientation and moral agency. This is consistent with Coloroso’s (2005) assertion that the family structure in which we are raised “influences the way we care for our children, the way we teach them about morality and ethics, and the way in which we present the world to them” (p. 71); and with Campbell’s (2003a) observation that teachers’ moral orientations, as expressed in practice, are heavily influenced by their upbringing. Terry does not, however, give direct credit for her moral agency to any of her teachers. In describing her favourite teacher, she notes values related to inspiring and motivating students to work hard, having high expectations of students, being creative with pedagogy, and encouraging a fun environment. These are not necessarily moral in nature, and were not discussed in terms of moral values or moral agency.
My most memorable teacher was my grade-six teacher at the American International School in Libya. He inspired the children to do really good work, and he always had motivating work for us. He had an expectation that if you’re giving in this work, you can do a better job. So if you hand in the work and it’s kind of shoddy, not your best, then he’ll say, “You need to go back and do a better job at it”. He always expected really good work. He was extremely strict in lots of ways. And I think that’s what drove me as a student to actually want to do good work, because he expected it and you liked him. You really wanted his approval. He also used to make his own math games. And he was an artist. So he would draw a Christmas or an Easter scene on the window. If you’d done your work, and it’s a really good job that you’ve done, you got a chance to paint the window. So I remember all those things, the wonder and the enjoyment of being a student in his class. He always made it motivating. And he always made it fun. It was so much fun to be in his class. Whenever I think of a teacher that I truly enjoyed, it’s him. (interview 1)

Further, Terry does not credit her formal education in teaching as imparting a disposition toward moral agency.

[Moral agency] is more out of my own interest I think. No one told me to do that. I’m being the teacher I want to be, not just the deliverer of academics. It’s not fulfilling any other way. It’s not rewarding any other way. (interview 8)

In fact, the only course available to her during the pre-service program, which related somewhat to the concept of teaching as a moral act, was an elective.

There was only one course in teacher education at Queen’s that comes close to anything we’re talking about, that had anything to do with values. But it was more self-awareness and self-discovery, knowing within yourself things about yourself. It had to do with spirituality; although, it doesn’t say anything about a particular religion. It more or less discussed that if your core being is soulful, and you know yourself well enough to be comfortable with that then you are better able to receive soulfulness in your students. You are better able to see soulfulness in others, and help them build up who they are and be comfortable with themselves. You can recognize the needs of students and help them. I just loved that class because it felt like I was being filled up with something important. It comes from who you are as a teacher first, before anything else can happen. But I was the one who chose to be in that course. So in a sense, as a learner you had to be ready to be there. I think I would have taken the route to provide moral
education to the students regardless. But maybe it would have taken me longer to figure it out. (interview 1)

There is a link between Terry’s attraction to this elective, her religious upbringing, and her desire to impart a moral education to students. She believes that religious life fosters moral sensitivity and moral reflection. She observes that students from families where religion is practiced, regardless of the particular religion, are primed to consider and discuss issues of a moral nature, whether related to peer relationships, the social dynamics of the class, current events, or the behaviours and motivations of fictional characters. In applying this to her own practice, Terry says:

I think I may sweat the small stuff more than other [teachers], and more regularly than others. I think maybe others would not have dealt with all the moral issues on a regular basis, as I have. I try to address as much as possible, all the little issues. Not every issue, but all the ones they’re ready to address and that I’m ready to address. I think some people probably would have ignored them and just moved on. (interview 8)

Terry’s efforts in this regard did not go unnoticed by Sean, who recommended her for this study on moral agency.

I think at the time Terry was teaching grade five, right next door to my office. So I knew she was a brilliant teacher, a great teacher. Her kids learned. No matter where we put her, the children she taught learned and were engaged. She has good teaching techniques. She plans well; she connects well with the children; she has great activities for them to do; she assesses well; she writes good report cards. She definitely had the knowledge base. But what I also know about Terry is that being an ethical practitioner is incredibly important to her. It isn’t just a belief. It’s something she does because it is the right thing to do. It is the marriage of her own personal ethics and what she will accept of herself and sees as her responsibility, with this deep love for the kids. There are children here, and children no longer here because they’ve graduated, that when I look at their journey through the school, their time with Ms. Kennedy stands out. She was the one who would not let it be okay until they were that best version of themselves. She spotted something in them and said, “You can do better and I’m here to help you”. (administrator interview)
Terry has really transformed lives. Not tons. But those individual lives that maybe could have gone one way or the other. She relentlessly held them honest to the values. Bullies bully usually because they don’t feel very good about some aspect of themselves. I’ve seen kids like this and I wasn’t always positive they were going to be able to stay at this school. She’d say to them, “We’re going to talk about this at the end of every recess. We’re going to talk about this, and then I’m going to talk with your parents openly and honestly about what my worries are here, where the opportunities are, what I intend to do about it. I’m not going to let this go. You have better in you than this and I’m going to be the one to hold you to that”. It’s easy to say, “That’s okay. He’s going to get it eventually.” But she’d make sure that he got it that year. I could list the four or five kids that I know she was the single most important influence in their ethical development. Grade five was so different than grade three for them, and it’s because of what happened in grade four when they had Terry. And sometimes she doesn’t make the big difference right away. But three years later all that drip, drip, drip pays off. A better version of that child emerges out of their time with Terry.

(administrator interview)

During my fieldwork, Terry taught grade four, assuming responsibility for a homeroom class, delivering to these same students curricula in language arts, math, health, science, and social studies, and supervising classroom-based lunch three days per week. At the school level, Terry supervised outdoor recess in the morning and after lunch every Tuesday, coached the school’s field hockey team, co-led the Peacemaker Program with Wendy, and was the school coordinator and liaison for community outreach. She also taught a three-day back-to-school workshop on study skills, the week prior to the start of school. Finally, she volunteered to program and supervise children living in a nearby shelter, who use the school’s gymnasium one night per week. Sharing a year of these classroom-based and school-based experiences has enabled me to know Terry in this environment. She is reflective, articulate, candid, instinctive, a devoted learner, collaborative, modest, and soulful. Although not inherently moral in nature, these qualities are briefly described here as they texture Terry’s moral agency.
Reflective: Terry provided well-considered and comprehensive answers to interview questions, often spontaneously illustrating them with stories, anecdotes or examples. In some cases, she was able to anticipate follow-up questions, and answer them before they could be asked. This indicates prior consideration and thoughtful regard for her teaching practices. Sean validates this reflective quality in Terry:

What I’ve always admired is that Terry is self-reflective. She stops after a lesson and reflects, “How did that go?” She’s always the last to have her report cards done, because she reflects and reflects and reflects. (administrator interview)

Terry also recognizes this aspect of her practice:

With every kid, with every year, there’s always something that makes you question and reflect, and go, “Okay. That’s not working. At this point, what do I need to do?” (interview 9)

At other times, Terry paused in contemplation before answering a question, not rushing to speak, and showing little concern for moments of silence. This often led to reflecting out-loud, as in this example:

I wonder, is it because I’m really pushing them as well at this time? And then they have other things on their plate including Christmas coming up, or birthdays coming up, or the concert. Maybe they just need to be with me in a warmer, cosier sort of way. Or are they just, in general, being needy? I haven’t quite figured that out yet, but I’m working on it. (interview 5)

Reflection is discussed further in the next chapter, as it relates to self-honesty.

Articulate: Terry expresses herself coherently, intelligibly and fully. Her passages in interview transcripts are consistently and remarkably long, but focused on our topic of discussion and most always informative. She makes few
verbal errors and has few verbal *ticks*. Cleaning-up the language for reporting, as Terry requested I do, thus, required minimal changes with little effort. This allowed me to represent her voice most authentically, by reproducing large passages from transcripts.

*Candid:* At the beginning of our association Terry was guarded, particularly with information related to students. She later explained her uncertainty regarding what was appropriate for us to discuss, and her decision to err on the side of saying less.

At the beginning of the year, I did not discuss any home with you. I wasn’t sure what to do about that. (interview 11)

Terry was also self-conscious regarding my presence in the classroom. Yet, as trust and respect developed between us, Terry dropped her guard. She expressed a desire for me to fully understand her practices, attitudes and motivations. This included worries and anxieties, personal insecurities and challenges, and a sense of failure when she could not meet her own high expectations. By way of example, she admitted the following:

I wasn’t the best version of myself that I could have given to those kids or to the class as a whole. (interview 9)

The honesty and humility that underlie such candidness are explored in the following chapter.

*Instinctive:* Terry’s instincts have been honed by many years of experience, and by reflecting on these experiences. She has come to rely on her instinct, as she notes in this particular example:
And it’s just a matter of my instincts telling me whether I need to deal with it, or someone else needs to deal with it. And that would depend on the child’s personality, and whether or not they’re open to talking. These children are mostly open to talking, but I know from last year that sometimes it’s just better not to pay any attention to shenanigans, and have somebody else handle it and take care of it. Sometimes I’m just too close. It’s almost like being a parent can be too close to helping with homework. So with me constantly hearing them out, they might think that this is a good way to actually get my attention. Then it becomes habit for them.
(interview 5)

Instinct plays a markedly important role in how Terry assesses her students’ moral development. This is discussed in Chapter Seven.

**Devoted learner:** Terry agreed to participate in this study primarily because of the potential for her to learn. She perceives life’s experiences in this way, and herself as a work in progress.

You go through your life and you pick up these things that just add a little bit more clarity and sharpen things up. It’s kind of like the focus on a camera. It just helps along the way. Then you kind of tweak things a little bit. Japan, the coaching course, the course at Queens that was good for the soul, the character education research, and you being here are all examples of moments like that for me. (interview 6)

How you decide right and wrong, and the whole grey area, the whole debate about what’s right or wrong.... I’m always trying to solidify what I believe is right or wrong. (interview 8)

Consequently, Terry readily models for students an attitude toward personal development that is related to honesty, humility and self-awareness.

**Collaborative:** Terry works cheerfully with other teachers, support staff and administrators, in a manner that reflects mutual trust. This regularly includes Carol Lindsay, the grade-two learning buddies teacher; Tony Roy, the technology teacher; Ms. Laurie, the librarian, who is more formally addressed by all; and the
information technology staff, all of whom welcomed me into these joint sessions. Her collaborative nature, however, was observed on a daily basis, in the context of her relationship with Wendy Bell. They print and photocopy for each other, store resources for each other, share supplies, problem-solve together, plan together, co-teach lessons, and co-lead the Peacemaker Program. Never once during my time with Terry, did I hear her complain or talk negatively about working with others at the school.

Modest: Terry does not draw attention to herself. Her appearance, attire and mannerisms are not gaudy, showy or flashy. Her hair is long and straight, sometimes tied at the nape of her neck. She rarely wears make-up to school. She is not overly expressive in her face, gestures or body language. Yet, at times when she laughs the joy fills her eyes, and although she may toss back her head, the laugh is surprisingly quiet. Terry is energetic and purposeful, but does not move quickly around the classroom. She is not generally theatrical, but there are moments when she may become animated moving back and forth in front the whiteboard. The overall effect is that Terry does not make herself the star of the classroom, or even a featured act. The students are the stars, and Terry allows and encourages them to shine both in her presence, and despite her presence.

Soulful: I was chatting with Mitchell, a teacher-administrator, in late September. He casually asked how the research was going, but seemed to anticipate the answer before I could say, “Very well”. Despite knowing little about the nature of my study, he told me how Terry was a good participant because she has soul and is not afraid to bring that into the classroom. I was
familiar with this term in the context of teaching, from the work of Rachel Kessler (2000; Kessler & Fink, 2008). It was not one that I had yet associated with Terry. But in that moment, I knew exactly what Mitchell meant. There is something transcendental, spiritual, deeply humanistic, gentle, and righteous about Terry. Terry also acknowledged her soulful nature when discussing the pre-service elective course she enjoyed. She attributes this to her religious upbringing and the gentle influence of her father.

In addition to enabling the collection of copious and meaningful data, in pursuit of the research questions, these character qualities are central to Terry’s moral agency. The ensuing discussion unpackages them further, to reveal their moral essence. Here they are noted simply for the purpose of introducing Terry.

*Terry’s Vision*

Consistent with Campbell’s (2003a, 2008a) research results, Terry articulates a vision for her students and her class in terms of moral and ethical objectives.

I know what I want them to do in the classroom. I want them to be a better community. I want them to be caring towards each other. I want them to be aware of other people rather than just themselves. And then I want them to be able to manage themselves and have self-control. And some of that may not be part of character education, but I’m trying to grow them up more generally too. (interview 9)

Three broad objectives emerged over several interview discussions, and were supported by observation data. The first is an objective for furthering each individual child’s holistic growth and development. The second is a collective objective, relating to the creation of a class community. The third bridges the individual objective and collective objective, by obligating the students to ensure each other’s happiness at school. These
three objectives that characterize Terry’s vision for her practices and classroom life are
detailed directly below for their implications to Terry’s moral agency.

The holistic nature of Terry’s goals for each student’s growth and development is
revealed in the following two interview passages:

So if I don’t deal with all aspects of the individual, I’m missing a whole part of
their development. And I always will question myself, “Well why am I not
dealing with that part as well?” It’s all connected so I can’t just ignore one part of
it. (interview 8)

I also want to make sure that if there’s something else going on that’s not part of
their academic life, it could be their social relationships with their peers or
something happening at home, I have to make sure that I take the time to listen to
them to make sure that I’m not bypassing all of that stuff in order to just work on
their academics. I still want to connect with them as a whole child. If things
aren’t going well outside of school it shows up in whether they get more easily
frustrated, whether they become more impatient, maybe with their friends at
recess. And when things go wrong they’ll quickly blow up or react more
physically. If I see it, it may just be an anomaly, a bad day. But if it happens
again in the near future, I’m thinking there’s something else going on here.
(interview 1)

These sentiments are often expressed in the catchphrase, “I’m trying to grow them up”.

On one occasion Terry explained, “They are my wards for a whole year, so I’m
responsible for how they grow up while they’re in my care” (interview 8). Terry thinks
of “growing up” as both academic development and social-moral development:

It’s all about the entire individual. I want them to not only develop academically,
but to become better, more aware. This is the age where they are more able to not
only think about themselves. I think I can push them to think about other things
outside of themselves. (interview 1)

Terry does not directly distinguish social development from moral development. For her,
social development is dependent on moral values of human interaction, and is thus,
essentially moral. Although Terry generally acknowledges a relationship between
children’s academic development and social-moral development, she is not consistent in how she articulates the nature of this relationship. The following statement is unusual for Terry, as it undermines the potential for a relationship: “Academic and moral are pretty much distinct. They’re two separate growths” (interview 10). In this next statement, Terry indicates that social-moral development enables academic development, in a linear relationship: “Wherever [students] are, socially and emotionally, is connected to how they’re going to perform academically” (interview 8). Additionally, she prioritizes social-moral development above academic development, as a long-term objective:

I like that they become better readers by the time June comes around. And I like that they can remember mathematical concepts so that they’re better prepared for grade five. That’s important too. But when they become better people, when you see them develop into something that you see they will continue to be as adults, those are the qualities that I’m hoping to develop, to grow in them. Because that’s the one that will become more important later on, regardless of what they take at school. (interview 5)

Finally, Terry suggests particular moral values that connect academic development and social-moral development:

There’s the whole social growth, which covers some of the respect and compassion, and also integrity and responsibility. And then there’s the academic growth, which is more or less responsibility. Where moral and academic growth meet is whether or not the students rely on me and expect me to do it for them. And then that whole confidence thing too, self-esteem that comes with, “I don’t know what to do”; or “Where’s this or this?” I’m trying to grow Pia up so she’s more confident in what she knows. In the end, her work is always really good, but she doesn’t know that at the beginning of a project. So it would be nice for her to see that ahead of time. Heather today was constantly asking for the correct spellings rather than taking responsibility; “What are the ways I can find out for myself?” (interview 10)

These various interpretations may be explored using Stengel and Tom’s (2006) five models for the relationship between academic and moral goals, namely separate,
sequential, dominant, transformative and integrated. A separate relationship infers that moral and academic goals are independent of each other and operate in discrete domains, as is the case with traditional forms of character education and some community service initiatives. In a sequential relationship, either moral or academic goals precede the other, providing a foundation on which the other may be pursued. A dominant relationship involves consistently prioritizing either moral or academic goals above the other, such that the two are not necessarily connected. In the context of a standards-based approach to education, academic goals generally dominate moral goals. In a religious context, moral goals generally dominate academic goals. Moral and academic goals that are linked in a transformative relationship involve one changing, reshaping, setting an agenda for, or providing a framework for the other. Care ethics, for example, may provide a context for academic teaching and learning. Finally, in an integrated relationship moral and academic goals are completely intertwined, and mutually supportive and transformative. Stengel and Tom (2006) further distinguish these five categories, by indicating that when moral and academic goals are separate, sequential and dominant, the teacher maintains power over students, and delivers knowledge as a static entity. When moral and academic goals are transformative and integrated, power is shared between the teacher and students, and knowledge is dynamic and socially constructed. Although Terry occasionally articulated separate, sequential and dominant relationships, observation data related to Terry’s practices conform to the latter description, and support an integrated relationship overall. Many examples are presented in the chapters that follow.
Given this discrepancy between interview and observation data, I pressed Terry to define how she envisions the relationship between academic and social-moral development, for its relevance to her goals as a moral educator. She proposed the metaphor of a ladder, with one vertical post representing social-moral development, the other representing academic development, and the horizontal rungs representing moral values that link and support them both. A brief account of our conversation follows:

Terry: A ladder image would work where the two run parallel together and then there’s these bridges between them. My first instinct was that the two operate parallel. They kind of meet up at certain points. One supports the other. The academic helps them practice responsibility, and responsibility enables the academic. Then maybe integrity meets up as another bridge. With integrity it can be integrity with the people and how you treat other people, and integrity in saying to me, “I didn’t do my reading last night. I didn’t hand it in because...” If you’re able to tell me that, that’s great. Courage might be another bridge; courage in standing up for your friend in a very uncomfortable situation, and then the courage, like Paige, to do public speaking. So there are certain instances where they meet.

Gillian: They both support each other also because they provide opportunities for each other. The two posts would fall if you didn’t have the connecting rungs.

Terry: They do support each other because if the social aspect isn’t working then they’re not as focused. For example, when Heather was having those issues socially it showed up in her math test, and she wasn’t focused and couldn’t do it. She didn’t do well on that test even though she knew the work.

Gillian: Yes, because she wasn’t happy and feeling respected. And the courage for Paige to get up in front of the class for the current events and book talks depends on her feeling safe in the classroom. That part is your moral curriculum, to make sure each student feels safe?

Terry: Absolutely. Safe is like feeling respected, feeling cared for. And whether or not she can trust someone in a social situation is the same as when she has to do something she doesn’t like doing academically, but she has to be pushed towards it. Then she feels good that she has had this difficulty and has overcome it. (interview 10)
This ladder metaphor indicates an integrated model, as well, because academic and social-moral development are mutually dependent, with neither framing the other. It also highlights the depth of Terry’s ethical knowledge regarding the moral underpinnings of schooling.

The second part of Terry’s vision is creating and sustaining a classroom community, which she characterizes as follows: “In the community it is important for them to be good in their relationships. I want them to care, and to know how to take care of each other first” (interview 11). As such, classroom community complements the social-moral growth and development of the children, by providing opportunities to practice pro-social and moral behaviours, and thus, a favourable context in which such growth and development may take place. Terry explains:

I don’t think that I want to stop with only forming a classroom community. Although, I would like to see them being a good community where they’re helping each other out and being observant about each other’s needs. Doing things that way to help fix things if things aren’t working properly here. The end ideal would be development within themselves, and how far they’ve grown individually, from September to June. It’s always related to how they relate to the group. It’s always you in relation to others. But is there some kind of bigger understanding about you by June? I’m hoping to see improvement in the development of who they are as people. Whether it’s becoming aware of what they need as learners, let’s say, or becoming aware of how to help other people more so than you were before. If you weren’t very respectful towards others in September, maybe by June I can see that you are being more respectful. (interview 6)

While community is considered a worthy end unto itself, as Furman (2004) advocates in an ethic of community, Terry also considers community to be a means toward other ends. These themes of community are comprehensively explored in Chapter Six, as a central aspect of Terry’s moral agency.
Ensuring each child’s happiness at school is the third broad objective of Terry’s vision for her students and her class. She describes what this entails, as follows:

I think happiness is knowing that you’ve had a great day with your friends and with your teacher. The day just went so well that you felt so positive about everything. And I know I want to feel really positive when I come to work. So I want them to look forward to coming to school. And if you were unhappy in some way leaving the school, I think that I would feel sorry for them and would want to help them through that. Even though part of life is learning how to deal with disappointments and unhappiness, I think they need to be aware that if somebody is unhappy then we should all try and make sure that they leave the school feeling better and positive. Everything has been satisfied emotionally and you’re going home and there’s nothing that’s bugging you. So at home before you go to bed you’re not crying about something from school. (interview 2)

Further, Terry considers happiness to be intertwined with the notion of community. “I think the happiness thing is just building a really close-knit and well-connected community” (interview 4). Accordingly, relationship-based values that underlie Terry’s characterization of community, such as taking responsibility for each other, being helpful and empathetic, and being considerate of the needs of others, are often expressed as they relate to an outcome of happiness:

You can feel anything else. Anxiety. You can feel fear. You can feel shy even, but everybody understands, or should learn to understand, to read people’s faces when they are not happy. Can you tell when Alexander is not happy? Can you tell when Paige is not happy? They may say, “Okay, they kind of look uncomfortable”. It’s that too. But really, when someone isn’t up and energized you can see it. You can see it in their body language. And I don’t have to explain it, hopefully. People know instinctively when someone is not happy. Like when Frances sulks, you know she’s not happy. I’m hoping it becomes easier for them to say to themselves, “That person doesn’t look very happy today”. (interview 4)

Happiness, as an education goal, is not a new concept, having emerged among British and French thinkers in the 18th century (Gilead, 2009). It is reiterated in contemporary education theory by Noddings (2003), who claims, “Happiness and
education are, properly, intimately related: happiness should be an aim of education, and a good education should contribute significantly to personal and collective happiness” (p. 1). The connection between happiness and moral education, in particular, dates back farther to Ancient Greek philosophers, who believed that happiness was the outcome of virtues acquisition, and thus, its ultimate goal (Parry, 2009). Character educators Ryan and Bohlin (1999) credit George Washington with making a similar observation: “There is no truth more thoroughly established than that there exists in the course of Nature, an indissoluble union between virtue and happiness” (p. 222).

Yet, it was not this literature that influenced Terry’s vision of happiness. Rather, she was inspired by an award-winning documentary called Passionate Eye, directed by Noboru Kaetsu, produced by the Japan Broadcasting Corporation, and distributed through the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation Educational Sales. Terry first watched this video shortly after its Canadian airing, on Monday September 27, 2004. The documentary follows Toshiro Kanamori, a fourth-grade schoolteacher in Kanazawa, Japan. By encouraging the students to share their lives, through laughter and tears, he builds a classroom community on compassion, care, and happiness. Terry explains:

One of the things this Japanese teacher tells them is that you have to make sure that you come into school happy and other people are coming into school happy, and if they are not happy then figure out why not? Is there something that you can do? (interview 4)

In the following passages from interview 10, Terry describes how he has touched her personally and influenced her own practice.

He’s one of my role models. I used to watch it every year in September, before I’d go into my new class. He’s inspiring, a reminder that this is what it’s about. He shows a lot of care for his students in order for them to grow up and be in touch with each other, and be in touch with their own feelings. The time he found
out that a girl’s father had died he was great about dealing with that right out in the open with them. All of that was within the classroom. It’s their emotional wellbeing he took care of. A whole bunch of them went and delivered some stuff to the girl. That didn’t even take place in school, but I’m sure it was influenced by what the teacher did and said in class.

I remember other parts that stood out for me. When he was in the classroom and he was talking about their journals. And someone had said something in their journal about how upset they were because they were being bullied. He waited there, and waited there, and waited there. And not a lot of teachers would be willing to wait that long because there is a comfort level to just waiting. What if he got nothing? Finally, the students started talking about it and started breaking down. But I like that he said, “You guys pretend that you’re all nice, but you’re hurting somebody else”.

And then another time he was really angry about someone wasting time working on that boat project for the pool. And he said, “That’s it. You’re not going to be doing it with us.” What stood out there was what he got from the other kids in the team. They said, “Well that’s not fair because the punishment didn’t fit the crime”. And the kid who said that was scared to death to say it to the teacher. He was shaking. But he had the courage to say it anyway. And in the end, the teacher said, “That’s good”. He acknowledged the courage, that the kid had made a good argument, and had shown growth. The growth that they get out of being able to think through something and to voice an opinion about it, in a respectful way, or to stick up for somebody because they’re showing compassion. It’s a lot of growth in being able to think it through, to voice it, to have the courage to voice it, and then see the results of whatever, democracy and how the world works. It’s a huge learning lesson. It’s a good life lesson. Loved that part.

And he was the one who said, “They need to come to school and be happy”. And that’s where I got that. It’s so simple and it’s easy for them to understand. And then one of his kids in an interview was asked, “Why did you do that? Why did you stick up for him?” He said, “Well the teacher says that everyone has to come to school happy and we have to be happy at school”.

While focused on happiness, this documentary and Terry’s reflections on it ground her overall vision in the realities of classroom life, and reinforce the interrelated nature of its
three objectives: holistic individual growth and development, a class community, and everyone’s happiness at school.

The congruence of teachers’ visions with the larger realities of their school contexts seems to determine the achievability of these visions in the classroom. Hammerness (1999) notes that teachers are energized, motivated, fulfilled and stimulated when the gap between school and classroom is small and reasonable. When the gap is large and cannot be easily navigated or managed, teachers lose motivation, and become frustrated, depressed and discouraged. Terry resigned from a previous teaching position, in part, due to the latter situation. The gap for Terry at Middlevale is relatively small, with much of Terry’s vision echoed at the school-level. She explains:

The type of school that I’m in fits very well with my expectations of what a whole individual should be. That this place is about educating more than just the academics. The school is a school that talks about educating the whole child, rather than just their mental aspects. And we do talk about confidence. We do talk about self-esteem and respect for others. But because we are a school that has the small classes as well, it’s sort of built in that the expectation is that you have to be aware of others and be kinder and more compassionate to others. (interview 8)

Emphasizing the small gap between school-level and classroom-level visions is Terry’s use of the word “we”, which occurred on several occasions. She readily, and perhaps even unconsciously associates her beliefs and practices with what takes place throughout the school, rather than maintaining a separate or distinct position.

Terry, nonetheless, faces challenges in realizing her vision. She recounts three, in particular. The first entails personal feelings of insecurity and uncertainty in her role as a moral educator. Despite strong support in the education literature, a school context that promotes and enables moral education, and Sean’s consistent endorsement and
encouragement, Terry struggles with the place of moral education in the classroom, and expresses concern regarding the boundary between school and home: “And I know it’s not my main role. It’s obviously their family’s role to instil those values in them. I’m just on the periphery” (interview 1). On another occasion she similarly reflects:

I don’t know how much a family would be comfortable with values-based education. It is the family’s responsibility, really, to instil values. I don’t want to go into new territory of doing that. However, if the values are universal enough and talked about enough in very explicit ways, I think it’s safer for me to talk about with them. (interview 9)

This uncertainty, also noted by Goodman and Lesnick (2004), may be reflective of the community Middlevale serves. For the most part, these children live in family units, and are acculturated from birth in customs and values that are consistent with those of Western schooling and classroom life. It is not unreasonable, therefore, for Terry to expect that parents will assume primary responsibility for the moral education of their children. Terry is also tentative because parents are self-confident and involved, and would not hesitate to contact her or school administrators should they perceive the nature of classroom discussions to be inappropriate. Had she been working with a different demographic, including first generation immigrants to Canada and low socioeconomic families, Terry believes she would have less concerns regarding moral agency, and feel a stronger obligation to help students acculturate socially with a foundation of moral values, as they are typically expressed in Western society. She was, nevertheless, unwilling to speculate further or more specifically, since she has never taught in such an environment. Regardless, Terry carries on with her moral lessons and messages, working toward the social-moral development of her students and a classroom community, but with self-imposed restrictions that her instincts have determined through experience:
Anything to do with religion. I would be uncomfortable with that because it’s not my place. All I would say is, “Everybody has a right to their beliefs and to follow which religion they wish to follow”. It’s not my place to say anything more than that because it’s not up to me to put forth any kind of religious ideas. But maybe to just make them aware that all religions have expectations of how a good person should behave. The other thing I would be uncomfortable with is the abortion issue. I also am afraid of hearing from parents afterwards if we were to discuss things like that, how they would react to some of the ideas that came up. (interview 10)

There are issues that I will shy away from. There are issues that I’m not comfortable with. For example, Number the Stars. There are issues in that book that relate to genocide and hatred that I did not touch with these kids because they didn’t bring them up. It’s hard for them to understand a lot of the grey area. I tend to shut them down with anything that’s too difficult for their age. (interview 10)

The restrictions that Terry identifies are topics of discussion, rather than particular moral values and principles that she perceives to be universal aspects of humanity. This is an important distinction regarding her moral agency, as it is explored in the following chapters.

A second challenge relates to limitations Terry occasionally faces in single-handedly trying to achieve such an ambitious vision for her students and her class. In these passages, she recounts negative experiences with a previous class:

Last year was not a great year. I didn’t remain as patient as I could have been and I got angry a lot. It was not an admirable year at all. There were moments that were really, really good, but in general if you look at the whole year I would say that it was a thumbs down year. I don’t feel good about it, but it taught me a lot. It taught me a lot about what I could handle and when I needed help. So last year was a year when I learned to actually not handle it myself, and just let it go and give it to somebody else because it’s just overwhelming. I admit it. I was not patient. I was pushed to the point where I was very stern with them and I lost my temper with them. And it wasn’t fun at all. And I just sort of had to let it go and say “I can’t”. Because I was losing my temper. It isn’t healthy for either party, the class or myself, to continue rehashing the same arguments again and again. It
was not going anywhere. So someone else needs to hear it because then at least both parties get a different perspective. (interview 9)

I decided to let Jonathan handle [those boys] from a discipline perspective, and to let Tom help them more from an individual, behavioural perspective. I just couldn’t deal with it. And I was getting really angry at them. I was talking back at them when they were arguing with me. And I didn’t like that. I was very upset, and frustrated, and angry. And I couldn’t get through to them. It felt like I was hitting my head against a brick wall. And then emotionally, I was not available for the ones who needed me and who were more positive. So then I just switched and handed it over. (interview 10)

Terry is more fortunate than most teachers, in that Middlevale has such resources to support her classroom work. Yet, she still experiences a sense of personal failure in having to forgo her vision of moral development for these boys, and her vision of community for the entire class.

I kept trying to teach them to be more reflective ahead of time, before anything bad happens. I used the values all the time. But it wasn’t happening. That was so frustrating for me. Am I going to see results? I’m not going to see results. (interview 5)

Her own happiness was necessarily prioritized, not as an end, but as a means to ensuring the happiness and wellbeing of her other students.

Prioritizing her own happiness was also the case with Terry’s third challenge. An administrative decision compromised Terry’s vision related to the academic and social-moral development of a particular child.

I had a kid in grade four who was incredibly anxious. His mother was here the whole day; otherwise he wouldn’t come to school. He didn’t do much academically. The expectations had to be lowered for him. I don’t like doing that. And then he wouldn’t show up for school and missed a whole bunch of days. At that point, I couldn’t work with him because it wasn’t just about him. It was also about the mother who wouldn’t leave. He knew that he could go to her anytime he wanted, if he had a hard time. It doesn’t really give him any kind of coping strategies. But if admin allows the mother to come, I can’t do anything
about it. When it came time for the fieldtrip, everyone knew that behaviour had to be good in order to earn the trip. He hadn’t earned the trip in my mind because he could do whatever he wanted. And he didn’t even have to show up for school. He was still allowed to go on the trip. So I washed my hands of it. I thought that we could have done more to guide the separation from home, and help his moral and social development. But I couldn’t help him grow up without more support from admin. So I put a limit on where I’ll go with morality. When I start to feel that it’s draining me and I have to save myself, then I don’t go there. (interview 10)

Although such challenges are rare occurrences for Terry at Middlevale, her frustration and disappointment regarding the latter two incidents resonate still, more than a year later.

When I pass on the students, I feel like I’m letting them down because I’m not putting in the effort as much as I should be or could be. I feel badly because it’s not what I want to do, and it’s not what I should be doing, but in order to stay calmer and to be more available to others I have to do it. I don’t feel good about it. I know that when I look at them in grade five, I could have done more for the ones who were in trouble. I could have done more to grow them up. (interview 10)

These feelings are likely a result of the incidents being ethical dilemmas for Terry. The latter echoes those described by Campbell (1997), related to administrative decisions that contradict what teachers believe to be right or good. According to Campbell, Terry suspends morality when she disagrees with the decision to allow this boy’s mother to be at school with him, but does not take a stand against it. This label, however, is misleading, as several ethical perspectives are, in fact, reflected in how Terry comes to terms with her decision to “pass on the students”. In noting her own wellbeing, Terry reflects an ethical egoist perspective (Shaver, 2010):

By February, I was going home and I was crying. I was so tired. And at some point I just had to sort of break off. And I just had to say to myself, in order to
conserve my sanity and my energy I can’t put in that much energy into fixing them myself. (interview 5)

A utilitarian perspective, to provide benefit for most, is noted in her desire “to be more available to others”. Care ethics, related to Terry’s relationships with her students, is hinted at in the statement “I feel like I’m letting them down”; deontology, as duty and responsibility, is expressed in the statement “What I should be doing”; and consequentialism, as outcomes and results, is reflected in the statement “When I look at some of them in grade five”. These four ethical perspectives indicate the complexity of Terry’s moral reasoning, and the multidimensional ethical framework with which she processes issues of a moral nature. These incidents have unsettled her, but do not dampen her vision, which she sustains with optimism.

Terry’s morally infused vision, to which she is now so committed, has evolved over time. Despite becoming a teacher because it resonated with her moral sensibilities, Terry’s initial vision was centred on the mechanical and technical aspects of teaching. She explains:

As a newer beginning teacher, I was more concerned about doing my job right. I was more concerned about making sure I did everything I was supposed to do. I was more worried about the lesson plan and what pages to get through and how to teach it, how I’m going to teach this lesson. (interview 8)

And until you feel comfortable with everything that’s going on around you, whether it’s forms that you have to fill out, school meetings, all of the day to day scheduling and also curriculum, until you’re comfortable with that it’s hard to talk to somebody about the other things that you now need to look at. (interview 9)

Terry reflects on how her current vision emerged, as she matured into the profession, gained confidence in her practices, and built a base of experience and knowledge.
Before the character research started, I was already interested in the people, who they are. And if something isn’t quite right, I reflect on it and wonder what’s going on. So if there’s something amiss I would be going to the student and saying, “What’s going on?” Or I’d ask someone, “What is going on in your life”. So I was beginning to build that interest into my practice, but it wasn’t specific moral values. It wasn’t as developed. (interview 8)

When Sean approached me to do the character education research, all of the readings that I did kind of brought everything that I am into focus. And it gave me a way to verbalize. And I just went, “This is so me”. I want to instil that in children as well. The readings I did about character education did give me the language, the philosophy, and a way to articulate who I am and what things are important to me as a person, and why they are important to me. (interview 1)

In the end, it just gave me a here’s what I want; here’s what I want out of them; this is how I want it to look within a classroom or how I want them to work. (interview 6)

These recollections support Kosnik and Beck’s (2009) assertion that teachers’ visions are dynamic works-in-progress. They also indicate that pre-service education may not, in fact, be the best opportunity for developing teacher’s moral agency, as many have suggested, including Beyer (1997), Joseph (2003), Narváez and Lapsley (2008), Ryan (1988), and Strike (1995). If Terry’s experience is typical of teacher candidates, they are inescapably focused on the mechanical and technical aspects of teaching practice and professional life, at the expense of the moral dimensions. This is taken up more fully in the concluding chapter, as related to further areas of investigation.

Emergency of Terry’s Moral Agency

The moral objectives of the school were readily and almost instantly apparent to me, likely a result of having been established for several years. The moral objectives of Terry’s vision, however, require annual renewing with each group of students, and were not as immediately observable. In fact, my first two weeks in the field, although exciting
and interesting, were also worrisome. The embedded moral messages of classroom life were not being made explicit by Terry through the use of moral language, and were not framed in terms of good and bad, or right and wrong. Terry told a group of girls working together in the hallway, for example, “Do not disturb anyone please” (field notes, September 11, 2009). Yet, she did not reference sensitivity or having consideration for others. She instructed Zeth, “Keep your tie done up please, while you are here. You can loosen it a little if you like, but you need to look respectable” (September 10, 2009). She did not extrapolate “looking respectable” to demonstrating respect and being responsible. Rather, these and other similar comments and directives were left as normative conventions without moral underpinnings, and there was no indication that the students understood them as anything more than rules. Although there was some direct teaching of the school’s values, as described in Chapter Seven, the values were generally not connected, at this time, to classroom or school life. Further, there was no mention of the values-based posters around the room. Nonetheless, Terry was sensitive and kind to the students, friendly to staff and teachers, and hospitable to me. The students were happy, helpful, and well-behaved. The classroom environment was lively, relaxed, and positive. I determined that I was likely searching for specific behaviours and indicators too early and too aggressively, before I had become accustomed to more general aspects of Terry’s practice and classroom life, and before the students and Terry had become oriented to the new school year. For the next three weeks, I continued to record descriptive field notes, objective as well as subjective, but did not attempt any interpretation or analysis.

By week six, overt expressions of morality in classroom life, and Terry’s practices, conduct and behaviours had fully emerged. This is, in part, a reflection of my
own acculturation and growing understandings. It is also a reflection of Terry’s acknowledged early focus on establishing schedules, routines, procedures, and behavioural and academic expectations related to non-moral values of efficiency, safety, timeliness, orderliness, tidiness, manners, listening, sharing, and group work. These non-moral values are, however, underpinned by moral values of fairness, respect, care, cooperation, responsibility, helpfulness, tolerance and trust, among others. Yet, Terry knowingly and intentionally let these moral values remain implicit in the early days, although, I know retrospectively they were always part of her goals and objectives.

Everything that you do, even how you line-up to leave the class, is a reflection of whether or not you are respectful of someone waiting for you, especially when you’re just talking. And then the same when coming in from recess and being ready to start. Are you being respectful of the time that somebody’s giving to you? (interview 10)

Consequently, I maintained a running joke with myself, as follows: “If I scratch a convention, norm or non-moral value in Terry’s practices or classroom life, I will uncover a moral intention”. Rarely was this wrong.

By December, I became aware that Terry’s moral agency practices extended across the academic literature, sampling applied aspects of care ethics, character education, and cognitive development, regardless of their different and often incongruent priorities and assumptions. A flippant and spontaneous thought crossed my mind in an “ah-ha” moment, as I browsed the extensive professional library behind Terry’s desk: “You may like Lickona, but you seem more like Coloroso to me”. Both authors were represented on her shelves, Lickona associated with character education and Coloroso with care ethics. Terry had expressed a particular interest in Lickona’s work:
I believe that we have to make sure we’re good people, and becoming better all around. I’m working on the students’ values. But how they act upon those values is their responsibility to the classroom community and to the outside community as well. That means everything from the classroom to home life, and then local and global communities. But it starts with making sure that you have the right values. So when I read Lickona, I thought this is it. This is what I do. (interview 1)

Yet, Terry admitted to never having read Coloroso’s work, and was not familiar with care ethics or the academic work of its major proponents, Carol Gilligan and Nel Noddings.

Terry’s motivation to nurture a personal relationship with each student is instinctive, and played a part in the decision to redirect her professional life toward teaching. She says, “I was attracted to the connection that you can have with the students” (interview 1). As Noddings suggests (2002, 2010), Terry believes that this connection facilitates her ability to impart morality and to achieve her vision.

I still want to make a good connection to my students and get to know them really, really well so that there’s a respectful relationship, and a trust that I’m going to help them develop. (interview 1)

In addition, Terry expresses goals for her students that are consistent with cognitive development theory:

I say to them, “It is the year where I’m going to ask you to make decisions more and more on your own. So this is one of those times where you have to make a good decision on what is the right thing to do. You have to make a choice on how you will react or behave. And you have to say to yourself, ‘What is a good choice, not only for myself but for others involved as well?’” So a lot of conversations will just keep happening, based on this theme. And I try to help them learn how to make these decisions. (interview 2)

Not familiar with the theoretical body of literature on cognitive development, Terry instead draws on practical resources associated with the Peacemaker Program to achieve these goals.
While helping me to detect aspects of Terry’s moral agency, character education, care ethics and cognitive development do not form the conceptual framework by which data are abstracted and discussed in this dissertation, partly because the study was not designed to deductively investigate particular moral orientations, and partly because Terry does not approach moral agency from a theoretical perspective. Rather, the two chapters that follow explore Terry’s practices as teaching morally and teaching morality, a distinction suggested by Fenstermacher, Osguthorpe and Sanger (2009). Chapter Six addresses how Terry teaches morally, as a way of being and a desirable end unto itself. Chapter Seven addresses how Terry teaches morality, by describing more deliberate practices for imparting a moral education. Both chapters acknowledge the synergy between teaching morally and teaching morality, such that the distinction between the two is recognized to be overly simplified.

To complement the predominantly analytic presentation of observation and interview data in these two chapters, several anecdotes are included. They are drawn from observational field notes, primarily, and reflect real events as they unfolded. Unlike the analytic discussions, however, anecdotes are more informally expressed, and include speculative comments generated from subjective-descriptive data. It is not my intention to mislead readers or to misrepresent data. Rather, I hope to present my experiences in this classroom, as they were lived and understood by me, so readers may vicariously share in these experiences. Although the anecdotes are situated to illustrate a particular theme, most, in fact, entail several themes and may be variously positioned. This signifies the complexity of Terry’s moral agency, and helps to build a portrait that is genuine.
Chapter 6: Teaching Morally

Teaching morally addresses the prong of moral agency related to the teacher as a moral person, and encompasses teachers’ conduct, behaviours and practices in their professional role as classroom teachers. Fenstermacher, Osguthorpe and Sanger (2009) define this in terms of virtue ethics: “To teach morally is to teach in a manner that accords with notions of what is good or right. That is, to conduct oneself in a way that has moral value… being a good or righteous person” (p. 8). Notions of what is good and right in professional practice are understood by Campbell (2003a) as teachers’ ethical knowledge. Yet, in being a good and righteous person, teachers also convey messages and lessons of a moral nature simply because their conduct and behaviors are on display. Fenstermacher, Osguthorpe and Sanger (2009) observe “that the teacher is engaged in both teaching morally and teaching morality, as she is acting in a morally upright manner and making her manner an object of instruction” (p. 9). Teaching morality is taken up more precisely in the next chapter, although, modelling moral behaviour is discussed here as an outcome of teaching morally.

Fostering a moral learning environment for students, often defined by the metaphor of community (Lickona, 2004; Noddings, 2008; Nucci, 2009; Watson, 2008), is also understood as teaching morally. Furman (2004) advocates for an ethic of community, to complement other ethical frameworks in education and to extend Starratt’s (1994) multidimensional framework of justice, critique and care. While this positions classroom community as a morally justifiable end, community is also promoted as a suitable context for imparting morality (Lickona, 1991, 2004; Noddings, 2002, 2008; Nucci, 2009; Oser, Althof & Higgins-D’Alessandro, 2008; Power & Higgins-
D’Alessandro, 2008; Richardson & Fenstermacher, 2000, 2001; Ryan & Bohlin, 1999; Wynne & Ryan, 1997). As with modelling, the morally educative outcomes of creating and sustaining community are discussed in this chapter, although, they too anticipate the next chapter and are revisited there.

Finally, Noddings (1984, 2002, 2008, 2010) advocates for teachers to engage with students in mutually caring relationships. This is known as care ethics or the ethic of care, and was outlined in Chapters One and Two. Although qualified by care, such relationships are properly characterized by several moral values, including compassion, kindness, respect, empathy, love and trust. These moral values are expressed situationally, to meet the needs of the cared-for and to further nurture the relationship. Accordingly, care ethics represents teaching morally as a moral end. Yet, the expectation for reciprocity in these relationships necessitates that students also learn to express this range of moral values, adding an educative outcome.

These themes are considered in the sections that follow, as they apply to Terry’s moral agency. In the first section, I identify and illustrate four moral values of fairness, respect, kindness and honesty, which emerged from the data as prominent in Terry’s conduct, behaviours and practices. The second section discusses Terry’s modelling of these and other moral values for students. In the third and fourth sections, I describe how Terry fosters community among her class, and makes use of this environment to impart lessons and messages of a moral nature, particularly related to moral values of helpfulness and responsibility. Terry’s expressions of care ethics are described in the fifth section. In the sixth and final section, I discuss how such caring relationships afford opportunities for her to impart a range of moral values.
The Moral Person

Terry demonstrates a wide range of moral values in her conduct, behaviours and practices. Yet, fairness, respect, kindness and honesty emerged from observation and interview data as predominant and prioritized. This finding is consistent with Campbell’s (2003a, 2004) research on moral agent teachers. As Campbell also notes, these moral values are rarely expressed in isolation, and are often associated with other moral values. Fairness is rooted in the principle of justice, and is related to both equity and equality. In education discourse, equity entails the same desired outcomes for every student. Consideration is given to individually accommodating student’s needs and exceptionalities, so they may each achieve such outcomes. This might necessitate different resources, advantages and opportunities, as well as different restrictions and boundaries. In this regard, fairness as equity is predominantly consequentialist, as it focuses on end results. Equality, however, may be seen as predominantly non-consequentialist, resting on a principle of consistency and constancy in how one is treated. Regardless of outcome, the same resources, advantages and opportunities are objectively and impartially offered to every student, and the same restrictions and boundaries are objectively applied (Campbell, 2003a).

Respect is often associated with fairness, courtesy, care, kindness, trust, consideration, sensitivity, and thoughtfulness (Campbell, 2003a; Lickona & Davidson, 2005). Detecting such additional moral values allowed me to distinguish authentic expressions of respect from behaviours that may only appear to be respectful, such as obedience, subservience, awe, conceit, self-aggrandizement (Campbell, 2003a), politeness, and good manners. These behaviours are not necessarily moral in nature; yet,
when obedience is underpinned by courtesy, consideration and responsibility, and
politeness or manners by care, kindness, sensitivity and thoughtfulness, they do indeed
become examples of moral respect.

Kindness is also a visible manifestation of other moral values, such as care,
sensitivity, empathy, compassion, consideration, thoughtfulness, patience and
helpfulness. As with respect, moral expressions of kindness were distinguished from
behaviours and actions, which may simply appear kind or nice, by such associations. For
example, a teacher bringing candy for students as a means of controlling behaviour is a
matter of class management. This action may seem kind and nice, but is not necessarily
performed with caring intentions or in the students’ best interests. Further, it might be
considered a form of bribery, and thus, unethical and immoral. If a teacher were to greet
the students at the classroom door every morning because instructed to do so, it is a
matter of policy. This action may also seem kind and nice, but is simply procedural if
performed without sincerity, care or compassion.

Finally, honesty is an aspect of integrity related to both being true to oneself and
being truthful to others. Being true to oneself is self-honesty, and depends on self-
reflection. Lickona (2004) notes this in saying that self-reflection allows one to be self-
aware and to avoid self-deception. In the context of moral agency, Campbell (2003a)
identifies self-awareness as a defining aspect of ethical knowledge. Being truthful to
others is generally related to representing all things with accuracy, and avoiding lies. As
such, honesty is associated with moral values of humility, genuineness and sincerity.
Honesty may, nevertheless, conflict with care, sensitivity and compassion when, for
example, telling the truth will cause harm.
This range of moral values that characterizes Terry’s conduct, behaviours and practices is described and illustrated below, organized as fairness, respect, kindness and honesty, according to how I have understood the data.

*Fairness*

Terry did not often or readily articulate fairness, as such, either in the classroom with students or during interviews. Rather, fairness was specifically addressed by me, in interview six, when I asked, “Is fairness a big issue for you?” This is not to imply that fairness is unimportant to Terry. On the contrary, Terry understands fairness as a self-evident foundation of the profession of teaching, in addition to being a desired character virtue and a necessarily ubiquitous aspect of classroom life. On the first day of school when Paige announced that she had heard Terry was strict, Terry laughed and replied, “I hope I’m also fair and nice about it”. Fairness is discussed in relation to Terry’s conduct, behaviours and practice as equality and equity, although, this distinction is often difficult to maintain. Generally, fairness as equality is grounded in Terry’s personal orientation toward humanity, her love of children, and her belief that every child is of equal worth. Fairness as equity is grounded in Terry’s appreciation that every child is different, and has a right to have those differences addressed by her. Thus, equity is embedded situationally within the broader context of equality, as both a nuance of equality and a means of ensuring equality. Examples of both in Terry’s conduct, behaviours and practice are presented below, with an effort to identify where the two intersect.

Terry prioritizes equality in the restrictions and boundaries that ensure the psychological and physical welfare and wellbeing of others. For example, Terry told a few students who were snacking at their desks, one morning, “This doesn’t feel good to
me because the rest of us don’t have anything to eat right now. Please eat during recess” (field notes, January 22, 2010). Similarly, a couple of girls complained of being excluded when three girls at their lunch table were sharing cookies with each other, but not with them. Terry intervened, instructing them to share with everyone or no one. Further, no physical harm can be inflicted on any student, at any time, or for any reason. This is a school-wide expectation that is enforced and reinforced by Terry in the classroom, without compromise, as illustrated in the following anecdote.

Kathy progressed slowly up the stairs from recess, cradling her left arm in her right, tears staining her cheeks. Bonnie accompanied her, with an arm protectively around Kathy’s shoulders and a face set in purpose. The two girls crossed the classroom threshold and walked the straight line to Terry’s desk. Terry instantly judged that this was not to be downplayed. Tears were unusual for Kathy, and such determination unusual for Bonnie. Terry rose from her chair and approached them around the front of her desk, crouching to eye level with Kathy. “Thank you Bonnie. If you were not directly involved in this you can go and sit at your desk now.” Bonnie did, but reluctantly, and closely watched the proceedings from there. “Tell me what happened, Kathy.”

“Noah hurt my arm”, she replied.

Noah had entered the room quietly, along with the rest of the class. Without drawing attention to himself, he was sitting at his desk appearing to read a novel. “Noah, please join us”, Terry requested. Noah took his time, moving in uncharacteristic slow motion. He retrieved the bookmark from his desk, and returned it to its spot in the book. He closed the book and placed it inside his desk drawer. He stood and pushed in his chair. Then he sauntered toward Terry’s desk from the back of the classroom, without ever looking up. All eyes in the room had followed these precise movements. Noting this, Terry reminded the class, “The rest of you can continue with your reading”. Eyes dropped into the pages of various books.
“So I’m going to hear what happened from each of you, one at a time. I want you to listen to each other as well. After we’ve heard both accounts, we’ll talk.” Terry listened without interruption, as first Kathy then Noah told their versions of the incident. Although the other students kept their eyes in their books, the unusual silence and stillness of the room was evidence that they were also intently listening. No pages turned. This didn’t concern Terry because the situation was already public. When both had finished, Terry said, “There are two sides to this story, two versions, so be careful what you say. Would either of you like to add anything, now that you have heard the other version?” Kathy and Noah remained silent. “It seems to me then that this is the result of a misunderstanding. Can we agree to this?” Kathy, still sniffling, was the first to nod. Noah agreed a little more reluctantly. Terry continued, “Kathy, you must learn to know the difference between helping somebody and taking their ball. Noah, do you understand why grabbing Kathy’s arm was not right? A physical reaction to this is inappropriate and cannot happen.” This last statement was said louder, likely for the benefit of the entire class, as Terry was quite aware of their interest in this.

Kathy and Noah returned to their seats, and took out their books. Terry let the quiet reading continue for a few moments longer, allowing each child the privacy of his or her thoughts. Although she busied herself around her desk, I was certain she also was lost in thought. (field notes, October 22, 2009)

There appears to have been some justification for Noah’s anger at Kathy. Terry sympathizes with this, but does not accept a physical response from him. She addresses this for everyone, as a categorical moral imperative.

Equality is also expressed in Terry’s desire to ensure that all students are given voice and receive personal attention from her. Regarding voice, Terry states:

Fairness with respect to having your opinions voiced, even though maybe you’re too timid to raise your hand. But at least to have a say in the class during the day so we can hear you. (interview 6)
Effort toward this goal is noted in several pedagogical practices. During discussions, Terry ensures full participation by interjecting versions of the following: “Hold on. You’ve talked twice.” “Who hasn’t spoken?” “Has everybody spoken who wants to?” “Let’s hear from someone who hasn’t spoken all day.” “Let me see if I can give somebody else a chance.” “I’d like someone to read. Who haven’t I heard from today?”

In the context of a lesson, Terry may call on particular students who have not raised a hand to speak, asking, for example, “Do you have a comment on this?” Terry explains why:

> There are some kids who never raise their hand or do not raise their hand often enough, and I don’t hear from them. So I kind of need to hear from them, and call them out. Sometimes it’s a matter of hearing from them and giving them a voice. And sometimes it’s just a matter of keeping them on track with respect to reading, especially. (interview 3)

Terry’s last remark reveals this practice to have both moral and pedagogical intentions, which reinforces the integration of Terry’s moral and academic goals, as discussed in Chapter Five.

Further, when Terry asks questions during a lesson she often pauses before calling for the answer or moving on. This practice provides all students with an opportunity to think. Terry signals this intention as follows: “Don’t say it out loud so other people get a chance to think about it first” (field notes, September 17, 2009); “Hands down for a second. I’m just going to watch all the pens till everyone is done” (field notes, September 14, 2009); “Please let him do his thinking, because you’ve already done yours” (field notes, September 30, 2009). Thus, slow cognitive processors are ensured an equal opportunity to participate. In a related example, Bonnie was still writing her answer to a question on the whiteboard when Conner called out, “You missed some.”
Terry replied, “It’s okay. Let her do it her way, and then we’ll see what we think after.” Bonnie finished, and Terry turned to Connor saying, “Connor, you have a different opinion about what is on the board. Please come up with a different coloured marker and show us” (field notes, October 7, 2009). In doing so, Terry ensured that neither voice was silenced.

Additional opportunities for students to have a voice during lessons include reading a question aloud, suggesting a strategy for generating an answer, asking a question, or offering a comment. Terry expects all students to participate; yet, with this variety, she often allows them to choose how, according to their desires, interests, comfort levels, or abilities. Embedded in this example of equality during lessons, therefore, is the notion of equity. This is further illustrated by rare occasions when students take turns reading aloud, in the order of their seating arrangement. This activity appears to be equal, as every student has the chance to read. However, stronger readers read longer passages than weaker readers, simply because it takes less time and effort for them to do so. In addition, Terry intentionally provides corrections in pronunciation for stronger readers more often than for weaker readers, lets stronger readers struggle longer and harder with more advanced words, overlooks incorrect pronunciation by weaker readers, and is faster to provide them with a difficult word. Terry explains this, in relation to Alexander:

Alexander wanted to read a page in the story to the class. He knows that reading is not his strength. But I said, “Great, I’m so glad you want to read”. And then he was having such difficulty reading that page that I know if I stopped him at every single mistake he wouldn’t ever raise his hand again to read for a long time. (interview 5)
Terry understood Alexander’s courage in taking this personal risk, and prioritized sensitivity and compassion, as moral underpinnings of equity, in providing him with this accommodation. When Alexander finished reading the passage, Terry said publicly, “I am so, so proud of you Alexander. That was great” (field notes, February 26, 2010).

Finally, students are given equal voice through the work that they produce. When Terry posts work on bulletin boards, the clothesline, the door, or in the hall, she posts everyone’s. The small class size makes this logistically possible. Yet, Terry never indicated that she was considering posting some and not others. I prepared several bulletin boards for her and was not given direction on how or where to place the work, or whose work was to be place in which location. It was randomly and impartially organized, despite obvious differences in the quality of work from different students.

While equal voice relates to Terry’s expectations for students, equal attention relates to her expectations of herself. Terry expressed this in two ways. In this first passage, giving personal attention is a goal to which she strives:

Fairness, in the sense that I should be able to give them equal treatment, equal attention at some point. If it doesn’t happen during the day then somehow throughout the week I’ve got to make up for the attention that I have not been paying them… I’m more concerned with making sure that they all feel like they’re being cared for. That they’re all getting attention from me, and that I’m not forgetting about any of them. (interview 6)

In this second passage, Terry’s desire to provide equal attention is expressed, retrospectively, as regret:

I really wanted to have a student conference at the end of the year with every single student, to catch up with them for five minutes, see how the year went, and what their thoughts and goals are for next year. I didn’t want to let them go and not give them that little message that they can carry forward. I like one-to-one with my kids where it’s just honest and heart-to-heart stuff. Zeth had a great conference with me. I caught up with Sammie the last day. I had a conference
with Heather and Noah too. But that was only four of the 15 kids. I just ran out of time. I would have liked to have this conference with all of them. (interview 11)

Equal attention is understood quantitatively, rather than qualitatively. Thus, the nature of the attention may vary to serve students’ particular needs. Bonnie receives more attention while doing seatwork; Kathy is affectionate and receives more hugs; Pia requires more help to start projects, but once underway can be left to work independently; Zeth requires more coaching for presentations; and Frances requires more emotional support and encouragement to manage anxiety. As is the case with voice, a notion of equity is embedded in providing all students with equal attention. I did not hear the students question this practice as unfair on Terry’s part, or note that a student was particularly privileged. Further, I could not identify a single child as teacher’s pet, even in hindsight. Terry pre-empted any thoughts along these lines by regularly reinforcing the larger context of equality, in noting that they were each different, with different needs, and that they each had a right for her to meet those needs.

If other children say, “That’s not fair. Why do we have to write in cursive?” What do I say? It’s the same conversation with any program modifications or any type of accommodations I make for students. “It’s like if you need glasses to help you see better. It’s not fair for them to have to write in cursive when they can’t think as fast and as effectively while they do it.” Same thing with kids who work on laptops. “I need glasses. He needs a laptop.” (interview 6)

While Terry does make an effort to compensate for lack of attention toward a student over the course of a day or a week, it was noted in observations that Gabby, who has very few particular needs and is quiet and shy, seemed to receive consistently less of Terry’s direct attention, overall. I did not hear her complain, and she did not appear to be unhappy. When she needed Terry, she was able to get attention readily. In addition,
Gabby was afforded much freedom in comparison with other students, including sitting with and partnering with friends, and often working in break-out spaces with minimal supervision. The limited attention seemed to coincide with increased levels of trust. This practice might be considered an example of unfairness from a perspective of equality, and thus, difficult to justify. Yet, it is not necessarily unfair from an equity perspective.

Interestingly, Terry identifies Noah, Bonnie and Kathy as receiving less of her attention, but not Gabby:

I think I should have done more with Noah. And Bonnie and Kathy even. There were other people who got more of me on a day-to-day basis than maybe those particular three. Noah always seems to be just outside of the main circle of radar. (interview 9)

Although embedded in equality, equity is most obvious in academic accommodations that Terry affords individual students. These are determined by Terry’s knowledge of the students’ strengths and challenges, and mediated by moral values of care, sensitivity, empathy, consideration and compassion. For example, extra time is provided for some students to complete a test. Often Terry will determine this need as the test is being handed in. On one typical occasion, she said, “Wait a minute. I’m going to check your work to make sure it’s the best you can do. Stay here, because I might give it back to you to do more” (field notes, December 8, 2009). This was observed regularly for math and language arts tests. Generally, none of the students are rushed to finish, and may use recess time at their discretion, if required. All students, nevertheless, are provided with the same minimum time to complete a test. This was illustrated when Terry announced, “I’m just going to wait for Bonnie and Frances to return, so that no one has less time than the rest for the quiz” (field notes, April, 13, 2010).
Students may also receive individual support from Terry during tests. Particularly for the first couple of math tests, Terry walked among the desks helping to interpret questions, giving hints, prodding students along, pointing out where they might have gone wrong, and indicating where they need to rethink. She explained this as follows: “I won’t help you with skills, but I will help you if you are stuck on understanding the question” (field notes, May 18, 2010). Terry does not post on the whiteboard the hints that she may give a few students. This would only be done if she had made an error on the test, or a question was ambiguous. Rather, she works with individual students who raise a hand, or are purposefully targeted by her because of test anxiety or a subject-specific weakness. She justifies this practice, as follows:

In math tests, I walk around and help some kids, because I know that they know the work. In a test situation they’re not always using what they know. And I know it’s got to be there, because they’ve done problems that are similar to it. So I want to make sure that they show me what they really know, instead of shutting down or not remembering, because it’s a test. Sometimes in a test situation it doesn’t feel the same, and they get a little bit stressed. I just want to be able to make sure that they have the opportunity to show me what they really know, instead of making mistakes when I know they know better. It gives them more confidence. I know this. I did it before. (interview 10)

From a pedagogical perspective, one might argue that this practice is not fair in the context of an evaluation. Yet, from a moral perspective it is an example of fairness as equity, and Terry’s explanation of it signifies compassion, sensitivity and consideration for her students.

In another example, Alexander is granted extra learning time prior to a language arts test. Terry also explains this in terms of equity as underpinned by compassion and sensitivity:
Before the language arts tests, Alexander goes into the hall to review the vocabulary. And then he can decide when he is ready and come back in and join the class to write the test. I don’t consult anyone on this accommodation. I just know that he would be able to succeed better if he had more time. And I want the others to know that they can have the same thing too, if they feel they need it. By all means ask for it and you can have the same thing. Just so you can show me, for real, what you can do. Instead of being pressured with time. It’s a confidence thing. Because if he’s pressured to do it when he’s not ready then he won’t show much at all. And then he won’t feel so great. He’s just as capable as everyone else, but he needs a little extra time. I’m not going to penalize him if he needs extra time. So if he’s going to succeed using other tools or extra time, then by all means. That’s what we’re about. (interview 8)

This passage also entails the principle of equality, as Terry is open to extending the same accommodation to other students. The following exchange illustrates how the students negotiate accommodations with her.

Terry: Alternative math groups are to make sure each of you gets what you need. It doesn’t indicate your overall ability in math. If you already know how to do something then you don’t have to re-learn it. You will do something else. I don’t want anyone feeling badly about not being in an alternative group. The next unit might be something different, and different students will be in the alternative grouping. That is the purpose of the pre-test, and each unit will have a pre-test.

Kathy: If some people get better in the unit can they move into the alternative group?

Terry: I’m open to that. We can see how well you are working through the unit and how much explaining you might need. (field notes, September 21, 2009)

Accommodations are also afforded in relation to presentations, such as book talks, skits, current events, and music performances. Zeth is particularly anxious about making presentations. I was asked on several occasions to provide extra coaching for him on being louder, going slower, periodically looking up from the page, and standing straight and still, but more generally to boost his confidence and sense of security. In preparation for school-wide concerts, Terry had Tom Sinclair, the school’s psychologist, coach Zeth
on more specific coping strategies. Zeth was not, however, excused from participating. All students were expected to have these experiences and to practice the related skills. Customized accommodations were provided to support each student’s success. Terry occasionally expresses this in terms of regret: “There’s some [students] that I’ve just felt like I could have done more for along the way” (interview 9).

Fairness as equity is also evident in the variety of opportunities the students have to participate in daily classroom tasks. Terry contextualizes this as moral in nature, by consistently articulating participation as helpfulness, cooperation and responsibility. All of the students are expected to volunteer their help, but not necessarily equally so. This is supported by the absence of a duty wheel or other system of assigning tasks, which teachers have previously noted as an aspect of their practice related to fairness as equality (Campbell, 2003a). Rather, Terry allows her students to volunteer according to their particular desires, interests, comfort levels, and abilities. Bonnie enjoys passing out books, worksheets and other materials, and did so often. Sammie is an organizer, and kept the shelves tidy. Kathy enjoys helping other students clean their desks and lockers, and often volunteered to do so. Paige maintained the whiteboard. She updated it every morning with the new date and school day; she erased information that was no longer needed; and created lists of students still waiting for a turn to present a book talk. Recognizing that Paige enjoys this task, Terry began to also give her daily messages to write. By the third term, Paige was Terry’s scribe. Terry did not feel the need to rotate this task to other students, possibly because no one else came forward requesting a turn. Reinforcing this system of participation as an example of equity, Terry provides these additional examples:
Some kids are more comfortable going out and checking, for example, with the grade-five teachers whether or not they are using the laptops. I know some kids won’t want to go to that end of the hallway because it’s the older kids. Sometimes I do make them do it, but I get them to go with a buddy. Then at least they are doing it in a scaffolded manner. They’re still doing it, but with support. You can see by their faces. If I say, “Alexander, would you mind going to the grade-five classroom and checking to see whether or not they have the laptops?” If his face isn’t eager and he’s hesitant, then I say, “Would you like to go with Conner?”… When a student takes another student over to the office, I always need two people to do that. There are some kids who just don’t care to do that. But then there are some kids who need a little bit of a break. So I keep all of that in mind. (interview 2)

This is discussed further below, in the context of classroom community.

It is important to note that while fairness as equality or equity is a moral concept, some examples identified above may not be examples of fairness or even morality in another teacher’s conduct, behaviours and practice, although, they may still be considered pedagogically good. Posting each student’s work on the board is equal, but not necessarily moral, if done for purposes of decoration or simply to fill the board for a parents’ open house. Providing extra help for a weaker or struggling student is equitable, but not necessarily moral, if done because it is in the teacher’s job description, and the teacher may be challenged or disciplined for failing to do so. Interview data helped to confirm the moral intent underlying Terry’s actions and activities, which I interpret as expressions of fairness.

It is also noteworthy that Terry does not express conflicting feelings between equality and equity, as other investigators report (Campbell, 2003a; Colnerud, 1997; Fallona, 2000). The dilemma described in Chapter Five, which concerns a boy whose mother was allowed to attend school with him, was not recognized as one of equity versus equality. Rather, Terry was concerned about lowering developmental expectations
for this student. In addition, Terry’s regrets in not being able to fully accommodate some students are generally related to time restrictions, and a not discomfort with the obligation for doing so. That equity and equality appear compatible in Terry’s practices is likely a reflection of the school context. Middlevale maintains an equity-based mandate to meet the individual learning, growth and developmental needs of each student, and provides many resources for doing so. The school’s website declares this intention as follows: “The child's opportunity for learning is maximized and students progress with their strengths challenged and their weaknesses addressed” (June 2009). Yet, the school’s five values of respect, responsibility, integrity, compassion and courage equally pertain to all students and are reinforced for all students. Terry also may not struggle to reconcile these two aspects of fairness because her concept of equality, as derived from a universal love and care of children, is often expressed and achieved by the equitable distribution of resources.

I did, nevertheless, note three events that might be considered unfair, from both equity and equality perspectives. The first involves the weekly line leader and key-card holder. This is a coveted responsibility that entails leading the class through transitions among the different rooms, and carrying the key-card that allows access to the various school buildings. It is the only duty that Terry assigns, every Monday morning in the upper right corner of the whiteboard. Terry began at the top of the class list and progressed in order, returning to the top when the last student had taken a turn. Although this appears to be an example of equality, there were not enough weeks of school to ensure every student the same number of opportunities. Those at the top of the class list had more. In addition, some weeks were shorter than others due to holidays and
professional development days, and when a student was absent they missed all or part of their turn while another student filled the role. There was no perceivable effort on Terry’s part to make-up for these inequalities. Further, such inequalities cannot be explained in terms of equity, because the needs or desires of particular students were not considered.

The second potentially unfair event involves in-class birthday celebrations. These were initiated and organized by parents, and merely accommodated by Terry. Consequently, there were several notable differences among them. Some treats from home were large and some were small. Some came with birthday napkins, candles, siblings, and parents, and some were simply sent with the child in the original packaging. One parent even prepared loot bags that were distributed to each student in the class. In addition, I was not aware if all of the children celebrated their birthdays in this way, including those with a holiday or summer birthday. Terry did not track this either, indicating that the inequalities were not based on consideration for individual student needs.

The final event involved a seating change in the first week of school. Terry determined the seating arrangement with the students’ comfort in mind. Seated together, Connor and Noah were rowdy and often disruptive. Terry instructed them as follows:

I know it is difficult for such good friends to not chat when they are sitting together. But if this is too difficult for you two, one of you could choose to move to the other seat at this table. I won’t make you. You can decide. But I don’t want you to continue like this. It makes it hard for you both to learn. (field notes, September 11, 2009)

After several additional reminders, over a couple of days, the boys’ behaviour did not change. Terry said, “Because you haven’t learned, I am going to move Conner over
here” (field notes, Sept 16, 2009). With his poor eyesight, however, Connor could not see the whiteboard clearly from this new desk. Gabby volunteered to switch tables so Connor could return to the front, but not be seated with Noah (field notes, September 21, 2009). Gabby was now at the back of the room, with two other female friends. Yet Bonnie, who Terry had intentionally seated with Gabby, was now at a table with three boys, none of whom were friends. These moves are diagrammed as Figure 5, entitled Seating Change. Although Bonnie did not complain or display any discomfort, I nevertheless wondered how fair this was for her, if she perceived it as unfair, and if Terry was being insensitive to Bonnie’s need for the comfort of a friend in this first week of school. I asked Terry for her thoughts on how this had unfolded:

I needed Conner to be here near the whiteboard because of his eyesight, and I didn’t want him to be here because Noah was here. I asked one of students at this table, “Do any of you mind moving over there?” Gabby raised her hand and said, “I’m okay with it”. And I said, “That’s really nice of you”. Instead of me, it being my decision, I wanted them to volunteer out of their own kindness, knowing the reason why he needed to be up there, and be willing to give up their seat. I wasn’t sure that it would happen this nicely so early in the year. (interview 2)

I did not want to risk my relationship with Terry or my position in the class so early in the fieldwork, by pressing the point that Gabby’s act of kindness might have been in conflict with sensitivity and compassion for Bonnie. As with the first two examples, the outcome of this situation is not justifiable in terms of equity or equality. Yet, all three might be understood as logistically reasonable from a pedagogical perspective.
Figure 5. Seating change

1. Conner moving away from Noah
2. Connor switching with Gabby

♀ girl  ♂ boy

Terry’s desk

White board

Final arrangement

Terry’s desk

White board
Respect

As a designated school value and an explicit aspect of the school culture, respect is readily visible in Terry’s conduct, behaviours and practices, particularly in how she addresses others by name, expresses gratitude, engages in presentations, places trust in others, responds sensitively to students’ needs and moods, and preserves students’ dignity. The discussion below illustrates these behaviours and practices, and includes additional moral values with which respect is associated.

Regarding the first, Terry is purposeful in publicly addressing others with their name. In doing so, she makes no distinction between the head of school, students, the custodian, or another teacher. When Sean visits the classroom Terry says versions of, “Good morning Mr. Patrick. How are you today?” (field notes, September 10, 2009). When a former student dropped by, she said, “Welcome Adam. What can I do for you?” (field notes, January 11, 2010). When a new boy joined Wendy’s class, Terry said to her students, “Introduce yourself to the new boy in the other class. Sometime this week say hello and welcome him. His name is Ronald” (field notes, January 5, 2010). Referring to the custodian, who is more informally addressed than the teachers, Terry asked the class, “Did you all say hi to George? He’s here to fix Paige’s desk” (field notes, April 26, 2010). Lastly, once per week an additional teacher helps Terry in the classroom. She enters quietly and sits at the back of the room, waiting until needed. Terry always pauses the lesson to welcome her, as follows: “Hello Ms. Talbot. We’re almost ready for you” (field notes, September 21, 2009). In specifying one’s name, Terry validates each as a person of significance and worth, someone whom others should know.
The importance Terry places on using one’s name is highlighted when she mistakenly addressed a grade-three student by the wrong name, while briefly substituting in that class. Terry quickly apologized, and for the rest of the session seized several opportunities to use the girl’s correct name (field notes, October 7, 2009). It is also noteworthy as an example of respect, that Terry knew the names of these students. Teaching grade four, she would have had only a limited association with grade-three classes.

Respect is also evident in the gratitude and appreciation Terry expresses toward others. She thanks the librarian, Ms. Laurie, after every library session the students have with her. At the end of the first learning buddies session Terry said to the grade-two students, “It was lovely meeting all of you” (field notes, September 10, 2009). After a subsequent session, she said, “That was a wonderful meeting. Thank you” (field notes, May 12, 2010). During a peacemakers’ training session, Terry had difficulty with the videotape. She laboured over it for the entire lunch period, even moving the group to a second location. The students did not complain, although, they appeared to be disappointed. In noting this, Terry said, “Thank you for your patience. I will do my best to solve this problem so we can watch it next time” (field notes, October 19, 2009). As is the case with addressing others by name, such expressions of gratitude and appreciation are accorded to adults and children alike. Additional examples are provided below in the discussion of honesty, as they illustrate both moral values.

A third way Terry expresses respect is noted in her full and deferential engagement with presentations and concerts. During school-wide assemblies, Terry rarely chats to other teachers, with whom she sits, and never brings a laptop as others
occasionally do. She keeps her eyes on the presenter, often a student, responding as appropriate with laughter, clapping or solemnity, and looking as though she is thoroughly enjoying herself. Terry’s behaviour is similar during in-class book talks, skits and current events presentations. Despite the intimate and more relaxed setting, Terry never interrupts, but frequently asks questions and makes comments at the end, showing that she was listening and is interested in what transpired. During the December and June concerts, Terry sits with her students and often has tears in her eyes, which she attributes to feelings of joy and pride.

Respect is also expressed in association with trust. Because Terry respects her students, she is able to trust them. In trusting them, she is respecting them. This chicken and egg relationship between the two moral values is noted by the independence and autonomy she affords the students. The students may move about the classroom freely, except during formal lessons, and are often encouraged to do so in order to help each other and be self-sufficient. During seatwork, Terry allows the students to spread-out into the hallway, and into break-out spaces such as the computer lab and library if available. Because direct supervision is limited outside the classroom, Terry trusts that the students will behave. Additionally, students may take supplies at their own discretion, and usually without asking permission. This includes markers, geometry equipment, extra copies of worksheets, coloured, lined or plain paper, and soccer balls. Students are also allowed to borrow Sharpie markers, the stapler, rubber bands, thumbtacks and paperclips directly from Terry’s desk drawer. Occasionally someone asked, “Can I have a Sharpie?” Terry’s reply was always a variation of, “You may. Help yourself, and thank you for asking” (field notes, September 16, 2009). I never heard her
instruct the students to ask, only that they return the supplies so they are available for others. The in-class library books may also be borrowed. Terry did not maintain a sign-out process. She expected that the books would be returned when the students had finished reading them. Lastly, Terry trusts what her students tell her, almost always giving them the benefit of the doubt. Terry asked Frances, for example, “Why do you need to go back to your locker? Is it because you are cleaning out your desk?”

“Yes”, Frances replied.

“Oh, okay then. Go ahead” (field notes, September 16, 2009). Regarding the potential need for a late slip from the office, Terry asked Noah, “Were you here before O’Canada?”

“Yes”, he replied.

“Okay. Thanks” (field notes, February 17, 2010). Noah was able to join the class right away.

Terry’s trust was signalled to the students in a brief, but public exchange with Connor. Connor noticed a lock hanging loosely from the cupboard door where Terry and I kept our purses and other personal belongings. He asked, “Why don’t you lock your cupboard, Ms. Kennedy?”

Terry replied, “Because I trust you” (field notes on September 14, 2009). That cupboard was never locked, to my knowledge, and I never worried about stowing personal items there.

There is a limit to Terry’s trust, however. Prior to tests, Terry has the students move their desks apart, and scramble their orientation so they are all facing different directions. She explains to the students, “So you are not tempted to talk or look at your
neighbour’s work” (field notes, December 3, 2009). There were no complaints or perceptible expressions of surprise from the students, despite that Terry’s language implied a lack of trust. This seemed to be accepted simply as a convention of schooling rather than a moral issue, and a necessary procedure given Terry’s usual encouragement for the students to collaborate.

A fifth illustration of respect is observed in the sensitivity with which Terry responds to the students’ needs and moods. On the first day of school, for example, Terry was aware that my presence in the classroom might cause anxiety among some students. Hoping to pre-empt their questions and concerns, she introduced me right away, saying:

Can you please turn around and welcome Gillian. She will be with us for the year. She is a researcher from the university, studying me, figuring out how I teach you. She’s not here for anything to do with you. She is here to watch me. But she is also someone else who you can ask to help you if you need help. (field notes, September 10, 2009).

By giving me a role within the class community, Terry also demonstrated respect for me, and for my work. In creating seating arrangements, Terry anticipates and considers the students’ social and academic needs. Specifically for the first arrangement, Terry intentionally placed friends together, and sat Zeth with a boy who would help him adjust to his new school. I observed during recess, in the first two weeks of the school year, that the students were playing in the same groupings as their desks. In another example, Terry’s class was preparing for a language arts test. Wendy’s class was involved in an interactive activity that generated quite a bit of noise through the closed, but adjoining door. Although Terry’s students did not complain, Terry was concerned about their ability to focus. I followed her next door, where she explained to Wendy’s students that
her class would be writing a test that required concentration, and asked for their “consideration” and “cooperation”. She acknowledged that they were not behaving badly, and under ordinary circumstances would not be judged as noisy (field notes, October 20, 2009). This was by no means punitive. Rather, Terry’s approach demonstrated respect for both groups of students.

In sensitively responding to students’ moods, Terry also shows respect for them. If they seem particularly restless, Terry might add an extra recess, extend the existing recess time, or alter her classroom activities. One afternoon, for example, Conner declared, “I need to go outside. I need some air.” Several students concurred, calling out, “Me too”. Terry agreed to take them out for a spontaneous and long 30-minute recess. Four girls did not wish to go outside, but were happy for the break, nonetheless. They were allowed to stay in the classroom with me, and have unstructured time playing hangman on the board (field notes, November 3, 2009). On another occasion, the students returned from recess quite reluctantly, likely because the weather was lovely. Recognizing that they were restless, Terry exchanged the math lesson that would normally follow recess, with a more interactive, hands-on coat of arms project (field notes, May 4, 2010). Terry explains her general attitude toward such accommodations, as follows:

We rush them. And we rush them to get to the next level that sometimes we forget to just take a step back and breathe. And I do that too. When it feels like they’re not ready to understand something, and I get it from the way that they’re looking and what they’re saying to me and what they’re not saying to me I just say, “You know what? We’ll just move right along”, or “We’ll just talk about that another time. It’s not important right now.” And if it’s me that has to give them the answer because they’re not ready to do it or they’re just not feeling in the mood maybe, fine. I’ll just give it to them. You’ve seen me when I’m up there and I just say, “Never mind this for now.” (interview 3)
Lastly, respect is apparent in Terry’s desire and efforts to preserve the dignity of her students. This entails avoiding negative practices, such as those that would embarrass, discriminate against, or neglect an individual. She reflects on the first, in the context of teaching a lesson:

I kind of look at them and see whether or not they’re paying attention before I even choose them. If they are paying attention and their eyes are on me, then I will call on them to answer. If they don’t know the answer and look like they are going “hmm”, I’ll just say, “Can someone else help?” Something like that. There may be moments when the more sensitive kids probably think, I don’t know the answer and I’m a little bit embarrassed. But I’m hoping that they get used to it and just try. I’m hoping it’s a safe enough environment that they’ll just say whatever, and help each other out. (interview 3)

The latter point acknowledges the nature of the community that Terry strives to create, where all feel safe, secure and supported. In these brief reflections, Terry indicates that the learning environment and the character of individual children inform her of what might be embarrassing and what might be helpful. There is also indication that her judgment of this evolves, as community becomes established and individuals become connected.

Terry is also careful to preserve students’ dignity when dealing with conflicts and misbehaviour. She will ask for a full accounting of incidents to ensure that false or discriminatory accusations are not made. Examples of this are recounted in the next chapter. She does not admonish students in front of others, although, she may briefly “call out for conduct of a particular kind”, a method identified by The Manner in Teaching Project (Fenstermacher, 2001; Richardson & Fenstermacher, 2000, 2001). In one example, Alexander and Noah were acting silly while lining up for music class. Terry moved Alexander to the end of the line, asking him publicly, “Do you know why I
moved you” (field notes, September 10, 2009). This and other similar rebukes are brief, and without further consequence. More sustained public rebukes are generally not directed at individuals, but at the whole class, and do not identify anyone in particular. Terry’s intention with this is illustrated by an incident following an overly noisy session with a supply teacher. Terry talked with the class about their behaviour. Assuming that she was referring to a particular student, the other students turned in unison to look in his direction. Terry reacted swiftly, saying, “This is about all of you, not a single person. So your eyes should not be anywhere but on me” (field notes, September 23, 2009).

When individuals are more purposefully targeted for a sustained rebuke, semi-private chats take place at Terry’s desk or a student’s desk, and may involve one individual or a small group. The rest of the class knows that a discussion is taking place, and might hear parts of it. This often occurs when the class is already aware of a situation, but the specific circumstances are relevant only to those involved, such as the situation with Noah and Kathy recounted anecdotally above. Issues that are sensitive or private are discussed in the classroom when the other students are not there, or in the hallway if they are. Although I was often aware when such conversations took place, they were kept private from me as well, highlighting Terry’s sensitivity in maintaining the students’ privacy.

Terry’s discretion in such instances demonstrates kindness, thoughtfulness and care, as she determines her particular approach, in part, by considering the students’ perspective. Sometimes the appropriate approach and venue are clear. At other times, Terry must use her instincts and best judgment. She explains:

In some situations I don’t do it privately and in some I do. And where I draw the line I’m not always sure because I don’t always do it consciously. I may say to
myself, “this is a good one-on-one talk”, or “this is a class situation”. How do I decide that? Well if everybody or several of them need to hear about it because they will come across it themselves then maybe it’s worth it to work through as a class, without embarrassing anyone of course. But I’m hoping that they’ll learn to feel less and less embarrassed about things that we talk about. I think they need to grow up and say, “If there are bad issues that we need to talk about, let’s just talk about them openly, without feeling like it’s going to make me feel embarrassed”. Because we’re all going to have these issues at some point.

(interview 5)

Once again, Terry references her vision of a class community, with an open and supportive culture that allows her to facilitate the students’ growth and development without compromising their dignity.

Kindness

Kindness is a way-of-being for Terry, derivative of her expressed love for humanity, and her care and compassion for the welfare and wellbeing of others. Consequently, most of Terry’s acts of kindness are informal and spontaneous. Few are formalized and pre-planned. These are performed year-to-year, and directed at all of her students. On the first day of class, for example, Terry placed on each desk a box of Smarties, a new pencil and eraser, a bookmark, and a note that read:

Welcome back! I hope you had a great summer! I am very glad you are in my class this year. I have put together a Grade 4 care package just for you, and a treat to welcome you to Grade 4. I hope this will be a special year for you. (field notes, September 10, 2009)

With this, she anticipated the students’ feelings and hoped to relieve any nervousness. To celebrate having written the first Math test of the year, Terry bought a box of Girl Guide cookies from Kathy to share with the class, explaining to me that tests are a time of anxiety, especially in grade four when they are a relatively new experience (field notes, October 5, 2009). Finally, Terry gives each child a special pencil on his or her birthday.
I did not notice if students who celebrated a birthday in the summer months or during a school break also received a pencil. If not, this may be an example of unfairness, and thus, an unethical practice despite a veneer of kindness.

Kindness, as a prioritized moral value for Terry, is truly revealed in the informal and spontaneous expressions of her classroom conduct, behaviours and practices. The examples recounted below are intentionally ordered to become increasingly more intimate. The first group arises from various aspects of schooling and classroom life. For example, Terry would like her students to acquire presentation skills, and related values of self-confidence and courage. Yet, she understands that some children are more naturally predisposed to this than others. Consequently, for their first presentation Terry provided an option, “If you don’t want to be up here by yourself, are you okay for me to read the poem for you?” One student accepted her offer (field notes, September 16, 2009). In a related situation, she excused Mark, who had recently joined the school, from presenting his reflection at the school-wide assembly. The morning of the assembly, Mark began to cry with anxiety, and could not be comforted. Terry asked Connor to present in his place (field notes, June 7, 2010). In this act of kindness, Terry prioritizes compassion over courage, both of which are school values, although, in conflict at this time. When Bonnie’s partner for a social science project was unexpectedly absent, Bonnie became overwhelmed with the readings and the required computer program, and began to cry quietly at her desk. Terry sat with her and said gently, “Not to worry. I will help you” (field notes, October 1, 2009). Bonnie also had difficulty with the first math test. Terry prompted her through, question by question (field notes, October 2, 2009). During a subsequent math test, Terry noticed that Heather was unable to focus. She was
aware that Heather had been involved in a confrontation at recess, and believed this to be the cause. Terry put her hand gently on Heather’s head and noticed tears welling in her eyes. She leaned over and told her quietly, but firmly, “Panicking is not allowed. It’s not productive. Come on. You can do it. Take one section of information at a time. What is first? Good. Now do the next part” (field notes, May 18, 2010). Heather did complete the test, but Terry was still not satisfied that it represented her best effort. The next day, she asked Heather to rewrite certain questions, explaining that she would like Heather to have a chance to do her best work. The confrontation at recess was dealt with at another time.

Kindness is also evident in Terry’s concern and sensitivity for her students’ social situations, and in how she works with them to resolve related problems. In consulting with Wendy to determine the rooming arrangements for the grade-four overnight, for example, she worried aloud that a proposed grouping of girls might create a difficult situation for Kay: “I don’t want Kay to be left out by those other girls” (field notes, May 26, 2010). She and Wendy rearranged the groupings until Terry was satisfied that everyone would be comfortable. In the following statement, Terry is concerned about Paige, and expresses kindness in how she intends to respond:

She’s recently having other girls complain about her behaviour. And with Paige, that is very surprising because she’s not used to being in trouble like that. She won’t be able to handle a lot of constructive criticism about it. So I have to be more gentle with her. (interview 5)

Terry was also concerned about the boys’ social dynamic toward the beginning of the year. She determined that Jonathan and Tom, as male role models, would be more effective in coaching them than she would, and asked them both to be involved. Although not directly engaged in the solution, Terry monitored the situation and
consulted regularly with the boys, Jonathan and Tom. The care and concern with which she identified and approached this situation is understood as kindness.

Terry demonstrates sensitivity and care toward the students’ home and out-of-school lives, and responds with kindness to situations that are not within their control. When helping Kay plan her time around homework, for example, she said with understanding, “I know you have a busy night tonight Kay. It’s a hard night for you to do homework because of karate” (field notes, May 26, 2010). Although she consistently reminds students to tidy their uniforms after recess and before going to another classroom, Terry refrains from commenting when shirts are not ironed, have taken on a yellow hue, or are torn. While tidiness relates to all of the students, the latter situation relates to only a few. Terry worries that such comments may be an embarrassing reflection of their families. In addition, if students are by their lockers when the national anthem plays, Terry does not insist they have a late slip from the office or reproach them for being late. The kindness in this accommodation is revealed in her explanation:

Sometimes when they come to school isn’t really in their control because they are brought by their parents or nannies. Kathy is always late, but I know from teaching her brother and sister that it’s not her fault, most of the time. So I figure that as long as they’re in the hallway fine. But if they’re in the hallway and they take 10 extra minutes to come in after the anthem is played, then I’m more liable to not want to give them an easy time of it. It only bugs me if they are here on time and they spend too much time in the hallway. (interview 8)

The day Kathy did not bring a lunch to school Terry walked to the grocery store and bought her a soup. She justified this by saying, “I don’t want her going hungry and I know that household is not terribly organized. It’s okay. I’ll just get her a soup” (interview 9). Terry neither appeared angry nor frustrated when Kathy’s lunch was later dropped-off, because it had not been Kathy’s fault. She put the soup away for another
time, without Kathy knowing about it (field notes, April 22, 2010). When Zeth did not bring money to spend at the Global Village, described in Chapter Seven, Terry gave him 10 dollars of her own money, so he could participate with the others (field notes, March, 26, 2010). I do not know if she was reimbursed, but I was not aware of her ever bringing it up again, or being concerned.

Still, Terry’s kindness was more fully revealed in the smallest of considerations for the students, as fellow humans. These moments were so naturally enacted and seamlessly integrated in classroom life, that they could easily have been missed had they not been so consistently observed over the school year. For example, at Terry’s suggestion she and I walked farther down the hallway to enter the drama studio through a second door, so as not to disturb the group of peacemakers eating their lunch just inside the first door (field notes, October 19, 2009). During a library session, Terry noticed that Gabby and Mary were squinting from the sunshine streaming in through the bay window. Although they did not complain, she pulled the blinds whispering to them, “To make you more comfortable” (field notes, September 17, 2009). Terry noticed that Noah’s tie appeared to be knotted too tightly around his neck. She helped to loosen it, asking, “Does that feel better?” (field notes, September 10, 2009). Zeth had not yet returned from the December break, and Conner was sitting alone at their desk. Terry said, “If you are feeling lonely over there you can join another group” (field notes, January 5, 2010). That Terry noticed these moments of discomfort for her students, illustrates attentiveness, compassion and sensitivity. That she acted on them, illustrates kindness.

Finally, the depth of Terry’s kindness is illustrated in how she handled a most private and sensitive incident regarding Bonnie. This is recounted anecdotally.
“I need to run something by you”, Terry said to me during a quiet moment alone. A couple of weeks into the school year Terry noticed that Bonnie was touching herself inappropriately in class, and not briefly, but for prolonged moments. “Have you noticed anything?” I had not. “Would you mind watching her a bit, and letting me know if I’m imagining this?” I agreed to do so, and by the end of the next day was able to confirm the observation. After a week with no improvement, Terry called home, uncharacteristically asking me to leave the room while she did so. “I’m not looking forward to this call”, she admitted with visible anxiety. I moved toward the door and closed it behind me.

Recess ended and the students returned in a flurry to the classroom, with me closely behind. Terry seemed more herself, as she launched into the social science lesson. It was not until after lunch that we found ourselves alone again. “So apparently Bonnie’s mom was waiting for my call”, she began. “She gets this same call every year about this time from the teachers.” Terry briefed me on their conversation, relief in every breath. The family’s paediatrician would be consulted and a referral to a specialist initiated. Bonnie’s parents are confident, nevertheless, that this behaviour is related to anxiety and not sexually motivated; after all, she is a young ten year-old. Bonnie did not appear to be aware of her actions, so they were trying to gently and discretely raise her awareness, and let her know that this was private behaviour, meant for alone time. In addition, Bonnie’s mother would provide her with a squeeze ball to keep her hands otherwise occupied during class. “She asked if I would just remind Bonnie to use it, and to keep her informed. So that’s what we do”, Terry concluded.

During the next couple of weeks, Terry would often approach Bonnie’s desk when she noticed her engaged in this way, and place the ball in her hands, or matter-of-factly tap her on the shoulder to redirect her attention. Except for the ball, there was little distinction in how Terry treated Bonnie and in how she redirected the attention of others who were off task. And then, the behaviour simply stopped. (field notes, October 20, 2009).
During this time, the other students seem oblivious to what was taking place, and there was no perceptible change in Bonnie’s demeanour or social situation. This is a credit to Terry’s sensitive discretion. Additionally, Terry demonstrated courage in assuming responsibility. She might have deferred this situation to Tom, as it is well within the scope of his practice as school psychologist. She might also have chosen to ignore it, or pretended not to have noticed. Given the eventual outcome, there would likely have been no harm in doing so. Yet, by her own admission, this would have been inconsistent with her personal values and professional practice.

One might argue that ritualized acts of kindness, and kindnesses emerging from aspects of schooling and classroom life should be an inevitable part of teaching practice. However, Terry was under no professional obligation to perform the more interpersonal and intimate acts of kindness. It is these acts, and the several moral values with which they are associated, that authenticate for me the morality of all Terry’s acts of kindness. Yet, one should not have the impression that Terry is motherly toward the students. Regarding physical attention, she may pat, tap or rub a child’s back, but only occasionally. She does not initiate hugs, but will return them, and does not encourage students to pour their hearts out, but listens when they do. As Sean notes, “Terry’s not gushy. She’s not mushy, but the children know she loves them” (administrator interview). Reflecting on this with me, Terry wondered if she should hug the children more spontaneously (field notes, April 26, 2010).

Honesty

Honesty entails both self-honesty and being truthful to others. Terry’s reflective nature, acknowledged in the previous chapter, is the foundation of self-honesty, as it
allows Terry to know and understand herself as a person, a professional and a teacher. Placing importance on such self-awareness, Terry admits to regularly reflecting on the efficacy of her practices: “I kind of had to learn things about myself, what I have to do. But that’s an ongoing process of reflection. ‘Have I done what I’m supposed to do too?’” (interview 1); “You always look back. I always think about what I should have said” (interview 9). In this way, Terry is able to identify personal strengths and weaknesses. An example of the latter is revealed in the following reflection:

I’m not sure that I am always empathetic. It’s maybe where I’m lacking. Because I think maybe if I were always empathetic maybe I would have more patience. Or I maybe would not come down as hard on Zeth. (interview 8)

Whether others perceive her exactly as she does herself, Terry’s efforts toward self-honesty enable her to be truthful in representing herself, in admitting oversights and mistakes, in giving credit to others, and in providing feedback. Several examples of each follow.

In representing herself honestly, Terry allows the students to know her on a personal level. She reveals aspects of her out-of-school life, as well as her inner world of emotions, shortcomings and weaknesses. For example, Terry posted several photographs of colleagues, family and friends on the bulletin board by her desk. She explains:

When they ask why they are there I say, “Because they make me feel good, and I look at them if it’s a bad day and it’s a little bit of a relaxation point for me”. But usually they don’t notice them unless they are up here asking me a question. During recess, when they’re slightly more relaxed and they’re not working, then they look around a little bit. It’s nice for them to see that I do have a life. That it’s not always about school for me either. (interview 3)

The poses in the photographs are similar, and do not reveal Terry’s relationship with the subjects. Previous classes were aware that Terry has a boyfriend, although, I never heard
any reference to this in the current class. Terry tells me, with a chuckle, that some of the girls used to ask her if they could be flower girls at her wedding. Terry did not enter into a discussion on this with the girls, vaguely responding, “We’ll see”. While not dishonest, this answer demonstrates that Terry does have a limit to the truths she will reveal to students, something Fallona (2000) also identifies.

Furthermore, Terry is emotionally honest with students, expressing a range of emotions and courageously allowing herself to be vulnerable in this way. The following passages reveal some of the emotions she openly and knowingly displays.

Even in those moments when I feel like I am not at my best and I am getting frustrated more easily with them, I’m open. Even emotionally I’m honest with them. Yesterday, Conner wanted to ask the veteran how many “dudes” he killed. It bothered me a lot, because at the Remembrance Day assembly there was a slideshow of 132 photos of soldiers that had been killed this year. Then there was a song that said they had moms and dads and children to say goodbye to. I was already feeling overly sensitive when Conner asked. Maybe I should have said, “I understand where you’re coming from because I can see that it’s a question you probably want to know the answer to”. Instead I said, “Is that something that he is going to want to brag about? Why would he want to do that?” I was emotionally out there. It was an honest response to how I felt. (interview 4)

So I said, “Here are your actions and it’s affecting me. I do actually go home and think about you. It’s not like I let it go and I don’t think about it. This is what you’re doing. When I go home, or when I wake up in the morning and have to go to work, it doesn’t make me feel good”. I said that to the class last year, more than once. Not to hurt them, but just to make them aware. (interview 9)

I tell them when I’m really frustrated, “You know what? I have about this much patience right now”. So they know why I’m upset with them, and why they cannot push my buttons right now. Because this is where I’m at. (interview 3)

Several other emotions were also expressed. On the first day of school, Terry admitted to the class that she was nervous too (field notes, September 10, 2009). On the way to the Remembrance Day assembly she grabbed a couple of tissues, saying when questioned,
“In case I cry” (field notes, November 11, 2009). When the girls were sharing stories of being bullied, Terry said, “This makes me want to cry, because I know how much this hurts” (field notes, October 22, 2009). While privately disciplining Noah for kicking his grade-two learning buddy, she openly cried in front of him (field notes, April 13, 2010). At the end of the first week of school, Terry told the class, “I have thoroughly enjoyed these two days with you” (field notes, September 11, 2009). Terry had visible tears of pride after Alexander read aloud to the class (field notes, February 26, 2010). Finally, regarding humour Terry says, “If something is humorous, I will laugh about it, because that’s the way it was, and that’s an honest reaction to it. I should give them an honest reaction” (interview 6). The following anecdote illustrates this latter point to be the case.

It’s Tuesday, mid-morning. Terry will return to the classroom a few minutes after the students, having been on recess duty outside. The students know this, and would typically assume their seats to read quietly while waiting for her. I’m not sure whose idea it was, but as the students came into the classroom on this particular day, they were informed by others, “We’re hiding on Ms. Kennedy. Hurry.”

With enthusiasm and much creativity, they tucked themselves into nooks and crannies, hoping to be invisible, and trying to remain quiet and still. Several crouched behind and under Terry’s desk. Connor was behind the hallway door. Noah sucked in to squeeze behind my chair, between the file cabinet and computer desk. Frances went into the cupboard. No one was sitting at a desk, as Terry would expect. They waited. I watched from my perch, trying myself not to laugh.

“Where is everyone?” Terry asked me when she returned, genuinely perplexed. I looked at her and shrugged with my eyebrows raised, hoping to be convincing. Turning around she walked back into the hallway to look for her class.

Unable to contain themselves any longer, giggles began to emerge. Terry returned and began to laugh as well. “Oh, I see. You are hiding on me. Very
funny you lot.” Slowly heads revealed themselves, and the students moved to their seats still laughing but thoroughly pleased with themselves for having pulled one over on their teacher. (field notes, April 6, 2010)

The students were correct in assuming that this prank would be acceptable to Terry, that she would take pleasure in it and not be angry, and that they would not be in any trouble.

Also a means of representing herself honestly to students and staff, Terry publicly and sincerely acknowledges personal shortcomings and weaknesses, as they become relevant. The following two statements illustrate this. The first was said to the class, and the second privately to me.

Some people are really neat and organized. You go into their cupboards and all the things are really neat. I’m not like that. I need to see it, or I’ll forget about it. So Ms. Bell helps me with this. She’ll keep things for me so I don’t forget about them. (field notes, October 2, 2009)

I’m willing to let them take over that because I know I’m not strong with my memory. I used to be able to know the entire schedule. I used to remember all of it. I can’t do that anymore. So I have to rely on them to remember it for all of us. (interview 10)

When introducing the spelling program to students, Terry said, “We are using a new spelling program this year. While I get used to it, I’ll have to refer to my notes. I’m sorry if that slows things down a bit for us” (field notes, September 14, 2009). When Terry does not know something, she may ask, “Who can help me answer this one?” She acknowledged to me, “I am not always the expert in the classroom. I don’t know everything” (interview 8). This attitude was signalled to the students, as well, when Terry announced, “If anyone else can’t find the word search words, like me, you can ask Pia” (field notes, September 11, 2009). In another example, Terry and Wendy both felt uncomfortable with the science unit on structures, particularly the pulleys and gears
building project. They invited another staff member to support them in working with the students, admitting to the class, “Mr. Casey is going to help us out, because we aren’t very good at this stuff” (field notes, February 5, 2010). In openly and honestly presenting herself as a flawed and developing person, Terry also demonstrates humility.

Allowing students to know her more personally is a foundation of Terry’s moral agency. It enables her to enter into reciprocally caring relationships with each student, where she is also the one cared-for, and to participate as a member of the class community. These themes are explored below. It should be noted, however, that Terry maintains a distinction between being friendly with the students and being friends. The flower girl example, above, is typical of how she draws this line.

Terry is also truthful in admitting oversights and mistakes, apologizing, and taking responsibility for corrective action. She expresses her views on this as follows:

I’m human and I’m allowed to make mistakes. They need to know that I can make mistakes. They don’t have to see me as somebody who’s perfect. I still require respect, regardless.  (interview 8)

Often oversights are attributed to Terry’s memory lapses, noted above as a self-professed weakness or shortcoming. She readily admits such mistakes: “Yes. You need a pen for corrections. Sorry. I forgot” (field notes, September 30, 2009); “Do not forget to do this because I will forget to remind you” (field notes, March 26, 2010). On one occasion, she forgot to email an assignment to Zeth, so he could continue working on it at home. She said, “I’m sorry Zeth. I forgot. We will work on it today, together” (field notes, January 14, 2010). Because Terry is open with the students regarding her poor memory, they become quite comfortable and adept at compensating, reminding her of a variety of
school and classroom issues, beyond the schedule. Terry expresses her gratitude for this with variations of the following: “I forgot, didn’t I? I’m glad you reminded me.”

Terry also admits to and apologizes for a variety of mistakes beyond simply forgetting. For example, she began a math lesson by apologizing for answering a question inaccurately the previous day. She corrected her mistake, and made sure everyone understood, before proceeding with the current lesson (field notes, September 16, 2009). When the students did not do well on test questions related to perpendicular lines and congruence, Terry told them that she did not teach that skill adequately, would reteach it, and would exclude those questions from their score on this test. In a related example, Terry announced, “Our fieldtrip to the museum showed that Ms. Bell and I didn’t do a good job teaching you about minerals. So we’re going to do that now” (field notes, October 19, 2009). When Mr. Roy was co-teaching with Wendy and Terry, he publicly corrected Terry on a couple of points. She responded by saying, “Thank you Mr. Roy for clarifying that”; and “I didn’t know that. Very interesting. Thanks for adding that Mr. Roy” (field notes, September 30, 2009). Terry did not supply enough coloured cue cards for all of the students to complete an assignment. She told the class, “This is my problem. I did not plan for enough. I’ll have more cards by tomorrow” (field notes, September 17, 2009). The final example, recounted by Terry, also illustrates emotional honesty.

There was a particular incident last year that I am not proud of. A boy was arguing with me and I argued back. Luckily it wasn’t in front of everybody. Afterwards I apologized to him, and he apologized. He apologized first because I sent him to Jonathan. But then I told him why that didn’t make me feel good, that whole exchange didn’t make me feel good. And I cried in front of him and said, “I’m really sorry and I know that you’re feeling this way too.” (interview 9)
Giving credit where it is due is also a sign of honesty and truthfulness. There were many instances when Terry did this happily and without hesitation, to both adults and children alike. Two were recounted above in relation to Mr. Casey and Mr. Roy. In addition, Terry announced to the class, “Ms. Laurie did a wonderful job putting this reading list together for us. It takes a lot of time and effort to read all of these books and put down a little description for you” (field notes, September 30, 2009). Terry also acknowledged to me her appreciation for how the grade-two learning buddies’ teacher handled a behavioural problem between the two groups of students: “Carol did a fantastic job of talking through this with the students” (field notes, April 13, 2010). Terry similarly credits students. The following are some of the public comments she made during the year:

Yes. Put your chairs up. Good thinking Conner. (field notes, September 17, 2009)

Connor has a really neat trick for multiplying numbers in the 90s that his nanny taught him. I wanted him to show you, himself. (field notes, June 9, 2010)

Look how Gabby has done it. That is another good way to set things up. Thank you Gabby for sharing that with us. (field notes, February 5, 2010)

Kay brought up something that was quite perceptive. Please be as detailed as possible. As Kay pointed out, there’s more than one time that happened. (field notes, October 20, 2009)

Sammie has a really good idea, as another option. (field notes, October 22, 2009)

Thank you for asking those questions, Zeth. That’s helpful for everyone. (field notes, September 15, 2009)

Lastly, honesty is evident in the truthful feedback that Terry provides to students on their academic work, behaviour, and general conduct. She echoes one of Campbell’s
(2003a) research participants, in noting that the students will know if she is not sincere in this, and she will lose credibility in their eyes:

The honest reactions, the responses that I have to a piece of writing, for example, are true. It’s my real response. If I fake it, I think somehow they will get that it’s not a real response…. They see what I look like when I really mean something. If I don’t mean it, I’m pretty sure they think, “She didn’t really mean that”.

(interview 6)

Consequently, Terry feels no conflict in giving negative feedback, when warranted, and does not worry about hurting the students’ feelings. Feedback is situational and compartmentalized, as relevant to a specific behaviour or assignment. This is illustrated by the following passage:

The other day, I had to tell them straight-up, “As a whole class and around Christmas time, you’re supposed to be giving. You’re supposed to be more kind. You’re supposed to be more compassionate. And yet, you are ganging up on each other and complaining about each other. And it’s just not nice. It doesn’t make you a nice person.” And I will tell them, “You’re not a nice person right now”. Those kinds of things they may not be used to hearing from a teacher because teachers try to be encouraging all the time. But if I see that they are being nasty or brutal to someone else I’m going to tell them they are not being nice.

(interview 5)

In this statement, Terry links nice behaviour to the Christian holiday of Christmas, implying that it is a Christian value. This might be considered offensive to those of different faiths, and misleading in regard to her expectations for all students, at all times.

Positive feedback is similarly honest.

I don’t like compliments that aren’t real. When I tell them that they’ve done a great job I really do mean that they’ve done a great job. But if it’s not good enough then we always pick on the good stuff and say, “Here’s how you can add this and this and this”. (interview 6)
The integration of positive and negative feedback that Terry implies in the last part of this statement is demonstrated in the following three passages, where she describes how she coaches students on issues of a social nature.

I may say something like, “Zeth, I really like who you are and I think it would be a real shame if you continued this way, because you’ll end up alienating yourself and you won’t have friends. And that would make me feel sad for you”. (interview 4)

The other person I wanted to catch up with was Heather. I wanted to tell her, “You are happy. You are strong, and you can deal with things. So deal with them. When you talk to your mom be honest”. Because Heather tends to go home and tell a different story. If her mom saw her on a day-to-day basis at school then she wouldn’t be so frantic about things that she thinks are going wrong in Heather’s life. (interview 11)

You’re a wonderful person, Sammie. Be happy with who you are. Others will respect you more, though, if you just let go a little and tell it like it is. Don’t be so concerned about denying everything. It will be okay. (interview 11)

As Noddings (2008, 2010) recommends, Terry confirms each child’s inherent goodness, to preserve his or her sense of self-worth and self-confidence in these teachable moments. Because Terry knows her students well, these positive comments are genuinely attributed.

Terry’s efforts to give honest and truthful feedback to students are validated by feedback she received: “One of the comments that came back to me from a former student is, ‘That’s why I like Ms. Kennedy. She just tells it like it is’. It’s true” (interview 5). Terry provides the following concrete example:

Sammie never quite trusts the good things others say about her. So she comes to me. For example, in the personal comment sheet they all had to write one compliment about each other. She was reading the top one, and it was in cursive and very messy. She wasn’t sure if it was a compliment or an insult. So she came and saw me and asked, “Is this a compliment or an insult?” And I said, “That
says you have a strong voice. That means a powerful singing voice. It’s a compliment.” She trusted that, but only because I told her. (interview 11)

Providing feedback that is open, honest, frank and candid, whether positive or negative, often entails courage. Inspired by the Japanese teacher identified in the previous chapter, and her own sense of responsibility towards the students, Terry does not shy away from feedback that might be difficult to give. This includes being the first teacher to identify Noah’s need for remedial teaching and learning, debriefing Sammie on why she did not go farther in the speech contest, and confronting Sammie on her tendency to tell lies and take items that do not belong to her. As with admitting oversights and mistakes, and giving credit to others, these are also examples of fairness and respect.

Concluding Remarks

Identifying and delineating particular moral values is potentially misleading in regard to Terry’s moral agency, for three reasons. Firstly, excluding moral values from this discussion should not imply that they are not important to Terry, or are not evident in Terry’s conduct, behaviours and practices. For example, in interviews Terry identifies integrity as the most important moral value.

Integrity is the one that’s the most difficult, and the one that’s most important. It is doing what is right. And there are so many grey areas in different situations as to what to do, and what the right thing would be. That’s the challenge and that’s the difficulty of integrity. But that’s what makes it so important. Because in the end, what’s the glue that holds that person together, in order to be able to pick the right thing to do? (interview 6)

As integrity is often expressed in terms of self-knowledge, consideration for others, good judgement, and honesty (Lickona, 2004; Ryan & Bohlin, 1999), it is embedded in the
discussions above. Terry recognizes the complexity of this moral value, and its connectedness with others:

If you think of the origin or the real meaning of integrity, it is to do with your whole being. So in that sense it ties in with self-awareness. I think it links to that whole self-awareness and awareness of others piece… And then knowing how to learn about yourself so that you know what kind of person you are and where you need to be. Is this the right thing for you? That’s still a link between your whole being and knowing who you are. For me, integrity is that you’re always doing what you’re supposed to be doing. (interview 9)

Despite not believing that she is empathetic enough, empathy is also inherent in Terry’s conduct, behaviours and practices, as it underpins the moral values of fairness, respect, kindness and honesty. Thus, many of the examples above demonstrate Terry’s empathy toward others, as they inform her on when and how to be equitable; enable her to still respect students when behavioural corrections are required; identify for her moments when a child is in need of kindness, and allow her to give honest feedback without compromising students’ dignity, for example. Terry identifies the connection between empathy and respect, in particular, when she refers to the Golden Rule. “But when I say, ‘How would you feel having it done to you?’ and ‘Is that what respect is?’… Respect is doing things unto others as you would want done unto yourself. Golden Rule” (interview 2). She demonstrates this in an incident that occurred while determining the eighth seating arrangement with the class. Connor and Noah made a comment about not wanting to sit with Zeth. It was loud enough for most of the students to hear, including Zeth. Terry reacted swiftly. She recounts what she said:

Stop right now. Although Zeth is smiling, his feelings are hurt. Think about what you have said and how you would feel if that was said about you. I’m stopping this. It isn’t going well anymore. I don’t like this at all. (field notes, April 22, 2010)
Still visibly upset, Terry later reflected on this incident, as follows:

Zeth was smiling, but his feelings were hurt. However, nothing was coming from him either, during the process. He wasn’t participating. He wasn’t really putting in his own thoughts or feelings. He was sitting there and taking it. All of them were talking about his feelings, and he had said nothing. And then I was thinking that it is going to be uncomfortable for him if we continue to talk about it and focus on it. There was just too much focus on him, and he was becoming more anxious about it. So I stopped it. I didn’t follow-up with him that day. On Friday we tried it again and it went better. Maybe I should have followed-up, but I felt that it was better for him to let it lie, once we got the seating right. (interview 9)

Although Terry’s empathy for Zeth resonates in her words, this incident might also be considered an example of showing respect for his feelings, and an act of kindness in advocating for him.

Also potentially misleading is the suggestion of a hierarchy of values, with fairness, respect, kindness and honesty prioritized over others, as Lickona (1991) and Lickona and Davidson (2005) prioritize respect and responsibility; as Cooper (2010) prioritizes empathy; and as Goodman and Lesnick (2001) prioritize integrity. There is no evidence to support a hierarchy of values in Terry’s moral agency, or to support Terry’s claim of prioritizing integrity at the expense of empathy.

I don’t relate to [empathy] or connect to it as I do with integrity. For me, integrity is so much like the big picture of what I’m hoping for. (interview 8)

In fact, when pressed Terry indicated the importance of many moral values, as the following exchange indicates:

Gillian: Are there other values that you would put up there with integrity?

Terry: Throw some out.

Gillian: What about empathy?
Terry: That’s linked to compassion. All these things are linked. But compassion is linked to empathy because without empathy you cannot feel for the other person, what they’re going through. So you can’t have compassion for them without empathy.

Gillian: Is fairness a big issue for you?

Terry: In discussions that pop up. They’re, at this age, very much into justice and what is fair. And sometimes it’s too black and white for them. I may say, “You haven’t done your homework, but other people have. So it’s not fair that other people have to wait for you”.

Gillian: What about caring, caring relationships?

Terry: I’m more concerned with making sure that they feel like they’re being cared for. That they’re getting attention from me, and that I’m not forgetting about them.

Gillian: What about respect?

Terry: That’s important. If you care about somebody then you’re respectful toward somebody. So that’s still caring. (interview 6)

Finally, although I attempt to acknowledge some of the connections and associations among various moral values, the discussion still underrepresents their highly integrated relationships with each other. Rarely is a moral value expressed in isolation of others, and often, a moral value is given meaning and authentic expression by its associations. The latter was identified above as particularly significant in relation to respect and kindness. Thus, Terry’s conduct, behaviours and practices have been labelled as representing one moral value or another, at my discretion. Other researchers might label each example differently, and organize the discussion differently. Yet, it is unlikely they would disagree that Terry’s moral agency entails fairness, respect, kindness and honesty, and the additional moral values I have noted to be in association with these four.
Modelling Morality

Modelling moral values, as both teaching morally and teaching morality, assumes a direct connection between the moral character of teachers and the moral development of their students (Fenstermacher, Osguthorpe & Sanger, 2009; Osguthorpe, 2008), and thus, anchors the two prongs of moral agency (Campbell, 2003a). By simply behaving in ways that are morally defensible and in accordance with moral values, teachers coincidentally and unknowingly demonstrate for students how one should behave (Campbell, 2003a; Hansen, 1993; Jackson, Boostrom and Hansen, 1993). Some teachers also model particular behaviours purposefully and knowingly, as a means of moral instruction for students (Campbell, 2003a). Accordingly, modelling has been identified as an important strategy in almost every approach to moral education. This was reviewed in Chapter Three. Here, I build on the discussion in the previous section to illustrate that the moral values visible in Terry’s conduct, behaviours and practices convey messages and lessons to students, as a means of moral education.

Terry is aware of modelling morality, and purposeful in maximizing its educative opportunities. This was not always the case, however. For as long as Terry can remember, she has strived to be a good and righteous person, and to do what is good and right in any given moment. Yet, until she gained teaching experience, and mastered the technical and mechanical aspects of practice, she was not overly conscious of her general conduct and behaviour as a means of instruction. She illustrates this with the following example:

I became more conscious of how I was greeting people in front of the students, as I got more comfortable teaching. I said to myself, “Okay, you will greet people, and you will be open about it, and you will be natural about it”. (interview 4)
Such purposeful modelling began as a means of demonstration, and Terry still acknowledges the importance of this: “At nine years old, it’s easier to understand certain things if they see me do it” (interview 5). She explains further, echoing the title of Sizer and Sizer’s (1999) book, *The Students Are Watching*:

> Everything that the adults do, the children see. And regardless of whether or not you see them watching you, or hearing you, they are. So you might as well show them what you want them to see. (interview 4)

Terry illustrates this belief in the context of making mistakes and managing interruptions. That Terry admits mistakes and apologizes was established above, as honesty and truthfulness in her character. In the two passages below, she provides examples that recognize the educative function of such behaviours, in terms of student development related to patience and honesty, respectively.

> I make mistakes and it’s okay to make mistakes, and I want them to know that it’s okay for them to make mistakes if it’s okay for me to make mistakes. I’m not going to feel badly if I make Math mistakes, so they shouldn’t feel badly if they make Math mistakes. I know some of them are still very concerned about making mistakes. Some of them will always be harder to get out of that mode. Kay and Pia don’t like to make mistakes. I’m hoping that if I make mistakes and I don’t make a big deal out of it, then they might become more patient making mistakes themselves. (interview 8)

> I think that if I never apologize for something that I have done, it means I expect them to think that I cannot make mistakes, ever. And they know when I’ve made a mistake, and they understand when I should be apologizing. (interview 10)

This view starkly contrasts Campbell’s (2003a) report of a teacher who expressed the belief that apologizing to students would undermine her authority with them and their trust in her. For this and other practices, Campbell questioned that teacher’s ethical knowledge.
In addition, Terry is aware that the students notice her reaction to the many interruptions during the school day, which include school-wide announcements, staff and student visitors, and phone calls. Such interruptions randomly occur during lessons, tests or seatwork, and when the students are reading aloud or giving presentations. This situation became particularly intense when Wendy was unexpectedly absent for three days. The supply teacher could not be properly prepared to assume the range of responsibilities, and required much support from Terry, on the fly. She often appeared in the adjoining doorway, saying, “Sorry to interrupt, Ms. Kennedy, but I have another question”. Questions included, “How do I call in the attendance?” “How do I get internet access?” “What do we do for an assembly?” Each time, Terry responded to the interruption with “That’s okay”, and paused her own activity to provide assistance (field notes, week of October 19, 2009). This response was typical for all interruptions, even those of a less urgent nature. Terry explains why, in relation to modelling:

If I react in a negative way to whatever’s happening here or there in terms of external interruptions then it gives them permission to do the exact same thing. Then a phone call comes and it may be an important phone call, and all they have left is just a negative reaction to it, because they see me do it. And it could be somebody who needs my attention. So I can’t just shrug it off. I know they’re watching all the time, and any time I look angry or unhappy about something they pick it up, and then I don’t want them to treat it in a negative way. (Interview 4)

Accordingly, I never observed negative behaviours from Terry, such as rolling of her eyes, complaining, sighing, or showing frustration. Some might argue that in prioritizing interruptions and allowing her attention to be diverted from the students, Terry is, in fact, disrespecting them and the activities in which they are engaged. She mediates this with variations of the following comments, made to students prior to and directly following an
incident, respectively: “Excuse me for a moment”, and “Sorry about that. Please continue”.

As a strategy for moral education, modelling also lends support, credibility and authenticity to moral messages and lessons imparted by other strategies. This was noted in Campbell’s (2003a) research, and is affirmed by Terry:

If I teach morality without being a model of a moral person, students won’t take me seriously. If they are reflecting on the ideas they will see that I’m not following them, so why should they. (interview 5)

Terry illustrates this conviction with her participation in community service: “I don’t want to be a hypocrite, which is why it’s important for me to find ways to help the community. I teach them to contribute, so I should too” (interview 1). In another example, modelling how to greet others with respect authenticates the following instruction Terry gave to the students: “When someone says good morning, you say good morning back. That’s being respectful” (field notes, September 30, 2009). Terry tells the students, “Mistakes are natural. Don’t get frustrated. Just do it again” (field notes, September 17, 2009); or “Mistakes are okay. If you didn’t make mistakes you would have nothing to learn…. I learn from my mistakes” (field notes, December 9, 2009). These messages are also convincing, because Terry behaves accordingly, herself. The importance Terry places on this aspect of modelling is reinforced by her remorseful recollection of the following incident:

When I lost my temper several times last year it always felt bad. It always made me feel badly thinking about it because I’m the role model, and I’m the adult. And if a kid is losing his temper in front of me, and arguing with me, then, as a role model I shouldn’t be arguing back. But I did. (interview 9)
Terry was aware that messages of respect, compassion and patience, which she was otherwise conveying, were undermined by her own behaviour in this incident. It should be noted that I never observed behaviour of this sort from Terry.

The Classroom Community

Classroom community, as an aspect of teaching morally, implies that creating community is a morally justifiable pursuit for teachers, and that teachers should be morally compelled in this pursuit. Accordingly, the characteristics of community are moral in nature, primarily anchored in sentiments reflecting human dignity, welfare and wellbeing. In a context of psychology, Nucci (2009) claims that classroom communities fulfill four basic needs of children: belonging, autonomy, competence and fairness. Belonging provides a sense of connection, which contributes to trustworthiness and feelings of self-worth. Autonomy affords opportunities for decision-making, self-control and self-determination. Competence involves mastery of tasks, skills and friendships. Fairness intersects with these three needs to substantiate their moral context, and ensures that children are treated with respect (Nucci, 2009). All four needs are encompassed in Solomon et al.’s (1996) definition of community as a social grouping where members experience a sense of connection, commitment, belonging, caring and support; and where they participate and contribute in collaborative decision-making, planning and deliberation toward shared purposes and common goals. The latter part of this definition reflects three communal processes that characterize Furman’s (2004) ethic of community. The first process—knowing, understanding and valuing others of the community as unique individuals—is facilitated by deep and intentional listening, and getting to know one another activities. The second process—full participation and inquiry by everyone in
the community—is encouraged by creating spaces and structures for meeting, conversing and thinking together. The final process—working toward a common good—is informed by action research and data gathering activities. Taken together, community can be understood as both ends and processes.

In striving to realize her vision of community, Terry’s practices entail attention to both ends and processes. Her efforts to foster caring relationships among the students represent a desired end or result, as relationships enable students to experience connection, belonging, caring and support; and to know, understand and value one another. Her efforts to promote a collaborative classroom culture are process oriented, as collaborative cultures entail students’ meaningfully participating in and contributing to classroom life, working toward common goals, and gaining competence and autonomy in doing so. The means by which Terry fosters caring relationships and promotes a collaborative culture are discussed below, as they function to both create and sustain her classroom community.

*Fostering Caring Relationships*

Johnston (2006) echoes both Nucci (2009) and Solomon et al. (1996) in asserting that classroom relationships allow students to feel connected, not isolated, worthwhile, and safe. Terry makes a related observation, associating community with relationships characterized by caring for each other with thoughtfulness and responsibility.

It’s a community that you’re trying to grow, and a community means that you take care of each other, not just yourself. And this is the age where they can start looking to take care of other people. This is where they need, I think, to start thinking about other people, because it isn’t just about them anymore. And you can actually look at other people and say, “I need to do something here”.

(interview 4)
Building such relationships among the students was an immediate priority for Terry: “If I don’t build relationships right from the start, now, then later on it’s going to be really hard to backtrack and try to build on that” (interview 2). As such, she initiated two getting to know you activities on the first day of school. The first, a class-wide conversation, began with Terry sharing a small fact on each student, such as:

- I know something about Conner. I know that Connor loves hockey.
- I know Heather has a sister.
- I taught Bonnie’s brother. How is he doing, Bonnie?
- I know that Kathy has pets.
- I know that Sammie spent the summer in Europe.

No child was left out. The students were engaged in this conversation, laughing and offering their own comments. For example, Gabby added that her sister and Heather’s sister were friends, and Kathy listed all of her pets and their names (field notes, September 10, 2009).

The second activity is the Classroom Survey, represented in part as Figure 6. To complete the chart, students were required to canvass their classmates, not only friends, on various items. “Don’t forget to ask me and Gillian too”, Terry announced, signalling that we were also included as part of the community. After several moments, the students returned to their seats and Terry initiated another lively, but brief, discussion, by asking for example, “How many of us like pizza?” and “What kinds of pets do we have?” (field notes, September 10, 2009).
With both activities, Terry’s intention is to encourage dialogue among the students so they may get to know each other. This includes recognizing the similarities and commonalities among them, and identifying differences and the diversity of the group. The latter is particularly significant, as Terry’s pedagogy increasingly requires students to offer, request and accept each other’s support, in a variety of academic and social issues for which each may be differently inclined. For example, Pia became known as the class artist, and was often called upon to advise or assist others with their drawings. Connor is accomplished at math, and often offered to explain questions or correct worksheet answers. Kathy is good at conflict resolution, and helped the girls, in particular, work through several social problems. This expectation is pedagogically effective, as students do not need to always depend on Terry for help, and may, at times,
receive the support they need more quickly from each other. It is also moral in nature, because it necessitates spontaneous behaviours of responsibility and helpfulness. Yet, as a foundation for building caring relationships among the students, it entails more implicit moral values of inclusiveness, acceptance and tolerance, as Terry ensures that each child is validated for his or her exceptionalities, and for the ability to contribute to the community.

The process of building relationships among students continued throughout the school year, primarily facilitated by the variety of groupings to which they were assigned. This includes nine different seating arrangements. In determining the first, Terry prioritized placing friends together, hoping that existing friendships would provide for a comfortable and happy transition to grade four. She explains:

I spoke with the grade-three teachers from last year to see who needed to be with whom, just for the first while. Or who didn’t need to be near whom. And then that’s how I start off. In the beginning of the year, it’s a new grade and a new teacher. In order to help make them feel comfortable, I like to make sure that they have somebody they can turn to or somebody that they’re near, helping them feel comfortable. So they come into the class and can say, “Oh yeah, I’m next to you”. If they’re good friends and they can work together, well then they can be with each other for the first couple of weeks of school. And if they don’t work together well, then I separate them into different desk groups. Same for kids who don’t get along well. (interview 2)

As the school year progressed, the criteria for determining the seating arrangements shifted to prioritize students’ learning needs over social needs. “Some kids need to be closer to me, because I need to keep tabs on their work and whether or not they’re managing their time or behaviour” (interview 2). Accordingly, in the first two arrangements the boys remained in pairs. For the third arrangement, Noah was placed at a table with all girls. In subsequent arrangements, Alexander, Connor and Zeth also sat at
otherwise girls’ tables. Keeping the boys together was a social consideration that was not sustained. Zeth and Sammie were seated side-by-side in the fourth arrangement, despite having been in open conflict and declaring that they did not like each other. Terry was not disturbed by this, but was pleased when they began to exchange friendly comments: “I had hoped it would come to this point. This shows that they are starting to see themselves as a community. They are coming along” (field notes, December 3, 2009).

Terry’s comment reveals that community and classroom relationships are a priority, irrespective of other concerns. It also reinforces the intertwined nature of her academic and moral learning goals, and demonstrates that academically orientated pedagogy may also nurture a moral agenda.

Additionally, Terry considers the orientation of desks, for the potential to foster relationships among students. The small size of the classroom limited the possibilities to two orientations, diagrammed in Chapter Five as Figure Two. For most of the school year, four desks were placed together, creating four small working groups among the students. The desks were rearranged on three occasions into a horseshoe pattern, opening to the front of the class, facing the whiteboard. Students were not able to work in groups with this arrangement, only with the person next to them. Although this challenged Terry’s collaborative pedagogy, she noted the benefit to their sense of community: “I can see everyone’s face, and everyone can see everyone else” (field notes, December 1, 2009). Ending the year in a horseshoe was intentionally symbolic of how they had become a community, or single unit, as opposed to smaller groupings.

Perpetual group work and partner-work also provided opportunities for the students to variously interact. Occasionally, students worked in groups determined by the
school’s house system, according to which of the four houses they were assigned upon entering the school. In this class, the four groups were uneven, with two students in the smallest group, five students in the largest group, and three and four students in each of the other groups. More often, though, groups and partners were designated by Terry. Sometimes Terry’s criteria related to academic goals and an ability to successfully complete a task. At other times, the criteria were driven by Terry’s desire to impart moral lessons:

    I like putting them in mixed abilities groups, because they have to learn to be with a variety of people and abilities. It may teach them to be more helpful, or to be more patient, respectful and responsible. (interview 3)

Partners were also randomly assigned using playing cards and numbered pick-me sticks. The students picked a card from different decks or a stick from different sets, and found their matches among the other students. Alternatively, Terry picked two sticks from a single set and matched their numbers to the students’ numbered position in the class list. In all cases, she coached the students on appropriate responsive behaviours that would not be hurtful to others, and reinforced the value of working with different students. One such example follows:

    Keep your feelings to yourself about who your partner will be. Remember that your body language can give away your feelings too. Don’t slump. You wouldn’t like it if someone said, “Oh no!” about you, or slumped in their chair with a frown. You never know what a great partnership you can make. It also isn’t nice to shout, “Yeah!” That could make other people feel bad too. Remember, good friends may not make the best project together. This is an opportunity. Your best friend may not be the best person for you to work with. (field notes, January 5, 2010)

    Terry, nevertheless, monitors the groupings herself, and occasionally makes changes, saying variations of: “This is not a good idea. Let’s pick again”. She explains:
Sometimes you’ll notice if I’m doing pick-me sticks during the year, and I come up with a pair that isn’t working, that I know isn’t going to work out right, I say to them, “At this point, I’m going to make a different choice, because at this point in the year you’re not ready to work together”. (interview 2)

In clarifying this further, Terry references cooperation and respect as expectations for effective group work and partner-work: “I know how difficult it would be if the partnership did not work out well. So I knew I had to put people together who would be able to cooperate respectfully, more or less” (interview 8). Alternatively, Terry may leave a group intact, despite reservations, but with a reminder or warning. In the following example, the warning is based on behaviour related to completing the task, and is not directly moral in nature:

Sometimes I give it a chance. If it’s Noah and Conner with the pick-me-sticks, for example, I give them a heads-up. And I say, “You two get to be pairs. However, here’s what I’m looking at. If you two are working together well it means that this and this get done, and done well. That means I don’t have to come up to you several times during my walkabouts and say, “Focus, you’re chatting too much”. If I don’t have to do that often, then you get to stay together and work together. But if I have to continue telling you and reminding you to focus, then I will move you apart. (interview 2)

These opportunities for students to interact with their peers do not inevitably produce caring relationships among them, or a classroom community. Maximizing the positive potential of seating arrangements, desk orientations, group work and partner-work, and minimizing the negative potential of group work that concerns Oser (1994), also involve the consistent infusion of non-moral and moral values into classroom life. When Terry says, for example, “Don’t rush. We are all friends here” (field notes, September 16, 2009), and “This is not a competition among you” (field notes, September 11, 2009), non-moral values of camaraderie and support are conveyed. These are also
underpinned by moral values of inclusiveness, cooperation and helpfulness. When Terry asks for a show of hands in response to questions such as “How many of you got them all right?” “Who got one or two wrong?” “Who got more than that wrong?” she encourages values of openness, accountability and mutual support, along with moral values of honesty, trust and respect.

Regarding the latter incident, the students did raise their hands accordingly, and often offered a comment. On one occasion, Connor called out, “I got it wrong and I know exactly where” (field notes, March 26, 2010). Weaker math students similarly participated. For example, Bonnie raised her hand with the others to indicate when and where she had not done well, and would publicly ask Terry how to interpret her results when in the lower range. This provides some evidence that Terry’s moral messages relating to relationships and community had been internalized by the students, and were operational in the class. Further, there was no evidence of classroom-based cliques, despite very close friendships between Mary and Gabby, Sammie and Pia, and Noah and Connor. Although not discouraged by Terry, these relationships simply were not as relevant in the context of Terry’s pedagogy and classroom life, as they were at recess, lunch or home.

*Collaborative Classroom Culture*

The concept of collaborative cultures harkens back to Dewey’s ideas on democratic classrooms and their implementation in the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools (ucls.uchicago.edu/index.aspx). Such cultures were similarly conceived and rendered, several decades later, in Kohlberg’s Just Communities approach (Power & Higgins-D’Alessandro, 2008). In both articulations, teachers share control of classroom
life with their students, and collaborate to solve problems and make decisions. This is
reflected in Furman’s (2004) second and third communal processes, summarized as the
participation of every community member in working toward a common good. Terry
connects these ideas with her vision of community:

If it’s a community, then we all have to have some say and everybody has to be
able to have their ideas out there. It’s just like working in a group or in pairs, if
you want to come together in any kind of work situation or social situation you
need to share ideas and thoughts about it. (interview 2)

To facilitate this process, Terry empowers the students: “If I never gave up my control, I
feel that they would never have the confidence to be themselves” (interview 8). Several
examples of Terry giving control to students were provided above, as expressions of
respect and trust. Two additional examples are described below, determining seating
arrangements and defining the classroom’s physical conditions and space.

The students initiated most of the seating changes, with comments such as, “Can
we change seats?” (field notes, October 2, 2009), and “Time to change tables” (field
notes, November 4, 2009). Terry always agreed, and within a week of the request a new
arrangement was collaboratively determined, averaging one per month. Paige, Frances
and Bonnie consulted with Terry on the second arrangement. They were not specifically
selected for this, but had initiated the change and took ownership of the task. Subsequent
changes included the participation of more students, or the entire class. Terry always
guided the process with variations of the following comments: “Be mindful of different
students’ needs”; “You know what your needs are, so consider them”; “Friends can sit
together, but you have to make sure you are making a good choice about your ability to
work well together too.” She provides the following examples of student needs that
relate to seating:
They have to be able to work well, and some kids work better when they don’t have to make an effort to change their position in their seats. For example, if you’re facing the door, let’s say Zeth and Bonnie, you have to turn around to look at some parts of the whiteboard. That extra effort may mean that when I teach at the whiteboard I’m going to have to remind them to look up because they have trouble focusing. So those are the ones who have to face the whiteboard naturally. (interview 2)

Terry expects the students to both advocate for themselves and accommodate each other. Advocating for themselves nurtures moral values of self-confidence, self-respect, courage and honesty. Accommodating others nurtures moral values of kindness, thoughtfulness and sensitivity. Terry notes this moral intention, in saying, “Instead of me, it being my decision where they sit, I wanted them to volunteer out of their own kindness” (interview 2). She, nevertheless, keeps a close watch and occasionally intervenes. The following anecdote illustrates how one seating arrangement was negotiated.

“Time for a change!” Terry agreed with Sammie, and asked Paige, Noah, Mary and Gabby to grab markers and head to the white board. Mary drew a diagram of the four desk groupings, while the other three stood by expectantly. “Consider who needs to be near the front because of seeing or focus issues”, Terry reminded the students from Paige’s desk at the back, where she had seated herself. Sammie declared, “I’m not good with projects or spelling. So I should be near the front”. Terry replied, “Remember that you can get help for that by coming up to my desk too. That’s really not the same thing as having to sit near the front all the time”.

Conner called out, “I need to be up there, because I can’t see”.

Frances echoed, “I also have trouble seeing. I can see where I am now so I should stay here”. The four students at the board began to place initials on the diagram of desks, accordingly.

“Bonnie needs to sit near my desk”, Terry added in a matter-of-fact tone. I turned toward Bonnie for her reaction to this potentially embarrassing declaration,
wondering if it was a breach of trust on Terry’s part. Bonnie did not show discomfort. Perhaps she hadn’t heard. Perhaps she was comfortable with everyone knowing. Perhaps they already knew from previous related discussions. Regardless, the comment was passed over quickly with a barrage of other student needs. “Remember also”, Terry interjected, “that those easily distracted shouldn’t face the door. I think about this when I do seating plans. You need to think about this too.”

Terry then sat back in the chair and watched. Initials were written and erased, as information was randomly called out, and the students at the board tried to accommodate them all, while also advocating for themselves. After a few moments of lively discussion, Terry suddenly announced, “There is a private concern, and I’m going to say that Sammie shouldn’t go where you have put her.” Gabby erased Sammie’s initials. Kay volunteered to switch positions. No one asked why, although, they were likely as curious as I was.

“I haven’t heard from the boys, except Connor. Mark, where are you going?” Terry asked the boys to go to the board and put their initials where they thought they should sit. Predictably, they sat themselves together, prompting Terry to comment, “You boys can’t be silly though”. The process continued in this way, with more writing, consulting, erasing and rewriting. (field notes, March 5, 2010)

Not all collaborations on the seating arrangement were as positively accomplished as this one. Difficulties with the eighth were recounted above. Rather than determining the eight arrangement on her own and imposing it on the students, however, Terry facilitated a do-over the next day, both obligating the students to try harder, and demonstrating her belief that they were capable of accomplishing the task. She left the ninth and final arrangement completely to the students. That Terry continued to pursue this group decision-making process, even when it did not go well, illustrates the depth of her
commitment to this collaborative process, as a defining quality of her classroom community.

The students were also empowered to control several of the classroom’s conditions and the classroom’s physical space. Terry signalled this by announcing, for example, “If the sun is shining in too brightly for you, feel free to close the blind” (field notes, April 30, 2010). When the students found it too noisy in the hallway or in the adjoining classroom, they closed the doors. If the room became stuffy, they opened the doors or windows. If they were hot, they turned on the ceiling fan or turned off the lights. If they were cold, they closed the windows or shut-off the fan. The students did not seek Terry’s permission for making these changes, but were always encouraged to consider the comfort of others, as well as their own.

As both an indicator and an outcome of sharing control, the classroom’s appearance increasingly assumed the character of its students. The year began with the counter surfaces clean, the clothesline dotted only with coloured pegs, and bulletin boards bare, except for the themed borders around their perimeter. Several brightly coloured posters were strategically affixed to the limited wall space. Learning materials were stored in designated places, neatly organized and aligned with book spines facing out, and thoughtfully situated to create stations for particular resources, materials and supplies. In the early weeks of school, this physical space strongly reflected the presence of its teacher.

As the year progressed, the students’ presence emerged and threatened to eclipse the teacher’s presence. Student handwriting often dominated the white board, tracking presentations and activities, making announcements, and updating information. Counter
surfaces were littered with work-in-progress, such as creative projects, structures at various stages of construction, and oversized pieces of written work that did not fit into cubbies or duotangs. Completed assignments were strung along the clothesline, back to front, and stapled to two bulletin boards at the back of classroom. The windowsill often exhibited forgotten pencil cases and other misplaced personal items. Colourful and themed water bottles adorned students’ desks. Even Terry’s personal spaces were not exempt from the students’ presence. On the board by her desk, Terry posted the class photograph, and drawings, letters, cards and poems that students had given to her, alongside her own photographs, memos, lists and notes. She told me, “It makes me happy to see their work there” (field notes, November 2, 2009). Yet, posting their work, as such, has deeper implications. It symbolically connects Terry with the students on a personal level, and generously designates the entire classroom as shared space. The overall effect was reminiscent of a child’s bedroom, initially conceived and staged by parents, but gradually evolving into the organized chaos that reflects the child’s ownership and energy.

Concluding Remarks

At the end of the school year, two activities acknowledge the community that Terry and the students had become. The first celebrates the unique individuals that comprise the community. In a mock ceremony, Terry presented all of her students with a Sillies Award and a small gift, such as a lanyard, bookmark, magnet, marker, or pencil. Examples of awards included the following:

- Shiny shoes for Pia;
- Losing stuff for Frances;
• Biggest hair for Zeth;
• Best pigtails for Mary;
• Cuts and bruises for Heather;
• Love of perfection for Kathy;
• Loudest voice for Connor;
• Loss of most pens and pencils for Bonnie;
• Leaving water bottle everywhere for Noah.

The students and Terry laughed and nodded their heads in agreement, as each came to shake Terry’s hand and receive the gift. There was no evidence of anyone’s discomfort, and no snickering or snide comments. The students seemed to understand the activity’s goodwill and good intentions (field notes, June 9, 2010). This is contrasted with the teacher in Campbell’s (2003a) study, whose ethical knowledge is questioned, in part, because she intentionally used the personality and behavioural quirks of some students as terms of reference for establishing the classroom culture. This behaviour was interpreted as mean, disrespectful and unkind. Terry’s classroom culture, instead, was established on moral values of respect, kindness, care, helpfulness, tolerance and sensitivity, and caring relationships among the students. In this context, poking a little fun at oneself and others is, simply, that.

In the second activity, Terry and the students recollected their shared experiences, as they watched a slideshow of photographs Terry had taken of the class throughout the school year. Every child was represented several times. Again, they laughed. Terry frequently commented on how far they had progressed in their physical appearance and
friendships. Each student was gifted a DVD copy of the slideshow, as a memento (field notes, June 9, 2010).

These two activities signal the realization of Terry’s vision, as declared on the first day of school with the Classroom Survey, to build community on both the diversities and similarities among its students. As such, Terry navigates a balance between encouraging and celebrating individual qualities, and identifying and working toward common goals. In fostering caring relationships among students she helps them feel a sense of connection and belonging, despite their differences. In empowering them through collaborative classroom processes, she encourages individual and collective autonomy and competence.

Promoting Community Values

Classroom community blurs the boundary between teaching morally and teaching morality, by providing a context in which morality is inevitably and necessarily promoted and practiced (Lickona, 1991, 2004; Noddings, 2002, 2008; Nucci, 2009; Richardson & Fenstermacher, 2000, 2001; Ryan & Bohlin, 1999; Wynne & Ryan, 1997). As recognized above, sustaining caring relationships and collaborative processes require care, sensitivity, respect, and inclusiveness. Students are given opportunities to gain competence in expressing these moral values. This was illustrated with the eighth seating arrangement, when a do-over was required because Zeth was not being respected and included, and the students were not being sensitive and caring toward his feelings. These moral values are conveyed to students in a variety of ways that transcend the classroom community, and are discussed throughout this dissertation. Helpfulness and responsibility, however, seem to be primarily conveyed by Terry in the context of
community, as they both define and support its qualities. Terry articulates this as follows: “I want them to start being more aware of the needs of the whole class. When we did the house circles activity we talked about how we had to work towards becoming a good, helpful community” (interview 2).

Terry instils and upholds expectations of helpfulness and taking responsibility for others, in relation to both the collective and individual needs of students. Regarding collective needs, students volunteer their help for daily operating tasks, such as handing out and collecting books, worksheets, duotangs, journals and supplies; collecting garbage after activities, and emptying the recycling into the hallway bin; sweeping the floor after lunch; tidying up shared spaces before re-locating, including the computer lab, drama studio, music room, gym, library and hallways; running errands and accompanying students to the office, another classroom, or elsewhere in the school; answering the classroom phone if Terry is unavailable; erasing the whiteboard or writing a note on it; and wiping desks and counter surfaces before the weekend. Terry signalled her expectations for this, as follows:

I would like two volunteers to hand out math books. (field notes, October 19, 2009)

Since you are up, would you mind getting another one of these from the library please? (field notes, January 5, 2010)

Would you mind booking the laptops for two o’clock today? (field notes, March 24, 2010)

Would you mind closing the door for me please? (field notes, September 17, 2009)

Can you please go next door and ask Ms. Bell if we can borrow the large protractor? (field notes, January 21, 2010)
As a member of the community, Terry participates as well, even cleaning and tidying what might be considered the students’ mess. For example, on one occasion she instructed, “Have a look on the floor. Get down on your knees like me. Pick up anything you see that is for garbage or recycling” (field notes, March 24, 2010). On another occasion, Terry tidied the hats, mittens and boots strewn throughout the hallway, prior to a tour for prospective parents (field notes, October 22, 2009). She explains, “I have to let them know that I will take responsibility as well” (interview 1). In this way, Terry models the moral values she is more directly teaching. “Showcasing” the desired behaviours in the actions of others (Fenstermacher, 2001) was also evident when she announced, “Thank you, Gillian, for emptying the recycling, again” (field notes, March 24, 2010).

The students are also expected to attend to each other’s more individual and personal needs at school. This is less procedural and relies on compassion, as Terry explains:

So that’s basically compassion for others because without the compassion for others, and if you are only interested in what is happening to you, you can’t be aware and observe what people need. So being helpful to others means taking them and yourself a little bit out of who you are, and saying, “Wait a minute. Not about me. What do I need to do?” (interview 6)

Terry signalled this expectation with the following comments:

Okay. Help each other along. (field notes, September 21, 2009)

If your desk is too messy you can help each other, or ask someone for help. (field notes, September 10, 2009)

Can someone please push in Frances’ chair for her? (field notes, April 26, 2010)
Some people are just more tidy than others, and that’s okay. If that is you then offer help to others. Ask for help and offer help. (field notes, September 10, 2009)

In a more specific example, when Heather broke her foot and hobbled on crutches Terry constantly asked the class, “Are we looking out for Heather and helping her with her foot?” and “Who is helping Heather right now?” (field notes, October 2, 2009).

Regarding the academic program, such forms of helpfulness included coaching each other on presentations, participating in each other’s skits and book talks, and correcting and editing each other’s work.

As part of the larger school community, Terry models related behaviours in her interactions with colleagues. For example, rather than sending her class to the library across the hallway, Terry accompanied them and stayed for the entire session with Ms. Laurie. She explains why, noting both responsibility and helpfulness:

I don’t think it is right to just leave my class there. This is my class and I’m responsible for them. I should be here to help Ms. Laurie. Some teachers use this as prep and then they don’t come back. Ms. Laurie needs to be able to help the students find books. I sign them out for the students so she can do that. (field notes, September 17, 2009)

This was the case also for school-wide concert rehearsals and computer sessions, during neither of which Terry had any direct responsibilities.

Many of the students independently assumed a range of responsibilities throughout the year, spontaneously helping each other, and readily accepting the help of others. Connor often offered help in math, by asking, “Do you need help? I can help you” (field notes, September 17, 2009). Despite hobbling on crutches, Heather still held the door open for others to pass through (field notes, October 5, 2009). One day after lunch, Mary and Gabby cleaned everyone’s desk with Lysol wipes (field notes, December 16, 2009).
Mark took down the chairs from each desk one morning, so the other students could sit right away when they entered the classroom (field notes, May 5, 2010). Upon returning from recess, Zeth handed out math textbooks, because math was scheduled to occur next (field notes, June 7, 2010). Finally, when Mary knocked over her own geometry set and tissue box during a test, Gabby tidied it up, having finished her test first (field notes, April 13, 2010). None of these actions was directly prompted by Terry; yet, she acknowledged and reinforced them with comments, such as “Yes, that would be helpful, thank you” (field notes, September 30, 2009); “Thank you for thinking ahead” (field notes, April 13, 2010); “Isn’t that so nice of Mark to hold the door open until everyone has passed through?” (field notes, April 15, 2010); and “Very helpful of you Gabby. Mary, did you thank Gabby?” (field notes, April 13, 2010). When the students take responsibility for and help each other in these ways, they are supporting Terry’s vision of each child’s happiness at school.

Behaviours that demonstrate self-responsibility were similarly acknowledged. For example, Terry announced, “I like how Alexander is just going about his business along with our routines. That’s very nice of you Alexander. Makes life easier for the rest of us” (field notes, April 20, 2010). In the latter part of this statement, Terry associates self-responsibility with helpfulness, suggesting a moral intention toward consideration for each other. Publicly acknowledging and reinforcing desirable and exemplary behaviours in this way was identified by The Manner in Teaching Project (Fenstermacher, 2001; Richardson & Fenstermacher, 2000, 2001) as showcasing, and is considered a means of moral instruction in the classroom.
There were still moments of disappointment for Terry, when her expectations of helpfulness and responsibility were not met, and some students were generally less helpful than others. She recalls an incident where Alexander and Zeth had been asked by her to accompany Noah to the office five minutes before recess was to end. The two boys ran away instead (field notes, October 19, 2009). In another incident, while on crutches, Heather asked Kay to bring her a laptop from down the hall. Kay refused. Heather asked a second time, and Kay refused a second time, but went to get herself one. Terry did not observe this incident, and was not pleased when I related it to her, explaining with a shake of her head, “Kay tends to do only what Kay wants. Sometimes Kay is very considerate, particularly related to issues of social justice, which she enjoys bringing to the class’ attention. Not always on a personal level, though” (field notes, October 22, 2009). Terry reflects more broadly:

They are generally ready to crawl outside of themselves and their own, personal needs. And this is a good time to push it. But they do it at different times, are ready for it at different times. Hopefully by June they’re well on their way to thinking about other people and then they continue that journey at their own pace. (interview 4)

Although a duty wheel or system of assigning duties would equalize students’ helpfulness and responsibilities in a way that might to be considered fair (Campbell, 2003a), Terry believes it would, in fact, undermine other moral values she hopes to impart:

Not having assigned jobs does seem to reinforce in a more natural way that we are responsible for helping each other, whenever. Because if they do have labels, if they do have jobs, what they tend to say also is that, “It is not my job to do that. It’s so and so’s job.” Then I need to say, “But, can you not help out?” No one can say, “That isn’t my job”, because it is everyone’s job to help. Something like that would undermine the kind of community that I’m trying to build, because I think that it’s very narrow. (interview 3)
Terry does not want her students to empty the recycling bin, for example, simply because it is their turn to do so, or to assist a classmate out of obedience or fear of punitive action. Rather, Terry hopes that they will volunteer for tasks because it is helpful, responsible, sensitive, kind, caring, considerate and compassionate to do so. This is both possible and desirable in the context of Terry’s classroom community, where students are connected to each other in caring relationships, and empowered to share control of the classroom and classroom life.

_The Ethic of Care_

The individual relationships that Terry fosters with each of her students are distinct from those she facilitates among the students in her effort to form community, although, there is a connection noted below in the discussion on students as _carers_. I was alerted to this distinction by observing residual relationships between Terry and former students. While on recess duty, she was often surrounded by a group of older girls, with whom she easily chatted and laughed. Several regularly visited the classroom to say hello. Terry explains how deeply connected she feels to them, forecasting her intentions with this current class:

They’re former students. That’s why when they graduate in grade eight I get all teary eyed too, because look at where they’re at, and look at how far they’ve gone from when I had them in grade four, and look at what they’re doing. I get really connected to them. Sometimes they come back. So for example, the grade-fives have a connection with me and Wendy, if they’re still doing peacemakers. In grade six, they may still have a connection to me if they play field hockey. And then they just keep coming up and talking to me. But by grade seven or eight, they may not even say hi anymore. At graduation, when I look at them sitting facing the audience, and we stand up and applaud them, sometimes they look at me. Last year I remember there was a girl in the first row. She barely said hi to me anymore by the time she was in grade seven or eight, but at graduation I can see her looking at me. And I’m giving her the thumbs-up. I started crying,
because she’s come a long way. I had her in grade three, and I had her in grade four. Another girl has graduated and she’s actually come back once already this year to say hi. So that’s nice. She visited me. (interview 4)

Because it appeared to be girls, and rarely boys, who continued their connection with Terry, I wondered if her effort to form relationships was gender-specific. There are no data to support this, however. The girls and boys seem to have the same opportunities and expectations, as noted by Terry’s desire to provide students with equal voice and attention. In associating this with care, Terry echoes care ethics:

I do like to make sure that they each have sometime during the day, some kind of conversation with me. Because I don’t want them going out of school and feeling like they were forgotten or that they were ignored. If I was a student and my teacher didn’t talk to me, I would think that my teacher doesn’t really care about me. (interview 2)

Further, the following passage suggests that Terry does, in fact, emotionally invest in the boys:

I feel good when somebody does something and I can say, “I had that person in grade four”. I feel good about that, and I say, “Look how far they’ve gotten, and wow look at what they’re into now”. So I’m proud that way, just seeing how far they’ve come. I think if Zeth continues to make progress socially and emotionally, the way that he is making progress, I think I’ll feel most proud about him and where he’s come from. I’m really tough on him, so honestly, I’ll be most proud of him. (interview 9)

My observation is likely a result of girls being more inclined toward relationships than boys (Gilligan, 1982), and thus, maintaining their connections longer, as well as being more visibly demonstrative in their expressions of care. This should not be confused, however, with the degree of care that Terry demonstrates for all of her students.

Appreciating the end result, I was able to recognize Terry’s early efforts to form and maintain caring relationships with each student. I identify two mutually supportive
processes that she utilizes on an ongoing basis—gathering information about her students and interacting with them. The information she gathers allows her to initiate interactions; the interactions provide her with additional information. This cycle begins prior to the first day of school. Terry reads comprehensive reports prepared by former homeroom teachers, and contacts them directly to clarify any points of confusion. Of interest are the students’ academic histories, including best and worst subjects; and personal and social situations, including friendships and social difficulties. Information gathering continued on the second day of school, with an activity called Tell Me All About Yourself, represented in part as Figure 7. This questionnaire asks students to identify their preferences in a variety of areas. The answers were intended for Terry’s private consideration, not a class discussion. The students did not, however, have time to complete the questionnaire. Terry noted that the last question related to happiness, friendliness and care, which is most relevant to her vision, might be too sophisticated for the start of grade four. She indicated an interest in returning to it at a later date, but never did. This represents a general lack of enthusiasm for pre-packaged activities related to non-academic curricula. Terry rarely used such materials as intermediaries for imparting moral lessons and messages, mainly only in health class where she followed a set curriculum, and then only rarely. Although this activity is designed to help her know the students, something she does prioritize, its applicability was limited. The information Terry gained through frequent informal and personal interactions with students soon made any potential information from it superfluous.
Informal and personal interactions that Terry initiates with students are embedded in the everyday events of classroom life. For example, Terry welcomes the students at the door or in the hallway most mornings. This allows for small exchanges, comments, an anecdote, or hugs. She eats lunch with the class three of the five school days per week. Although Terry often sits at her own desk, she chats and jokes with the students. Indoor recess, in the event of inclement weather, is similarly spent with students, rather than engaging in professional work. During special activity days, Terry wanders through the various events and displays with different groupings of her students. Lastly, Terry rarely chats with other teachers while on recess duty, intentionally remaining approachable and accessible to students. She explains: “I want the students to know that
I’m there for them… I hope it comes across to them that I’m not in any way so above them that I’m not approachable” (interview 2). Watson (2003) references Noddings in confirming that eating lunch with students affords teachers an opportunity to build caring relationships with them. This opportunity seems relevant also in these other types of interactions that Terry encourages. Terry makes this point in the context of helping students to solve problems:

I might say, “It’s about you and me, and it’s just about that question”, or “It’s just about this problem you’re having, and it’s nobody else’s business”. I would hope that it makes for a closer connection just with me, knowing that I’m paying attention to just them on this issue, that I’m giving my time to help them sort things out, and it’s one-on-one time, rather than in front of everybody else. (interview 4)

These regular and ongoing interactions with students provide Terry with further information about them. She acknowledges this: “The more that you allow them to talk about things, and the more that you listen to where they’re coming from, the more you understand about who they are” (interview 7). Terry also uses such information to initiate interactions, targeting individual students as follows: “How was your sister’s piano recital last night, Heather?” (field notes, December 8, 2009); “Mary, did you like how the book started off?” (field notes, September 21, 2009); “How was skiing, Alexander?” (field notes, January 5, 2010); “What did you think of the hockey game last night, Connor? I know you watched” (field notes, February 24, 2010); and “I took your grandma’s advice, Zeth, and I’m eating more quinoa. I bought the bread she recommended too. It’s yummy” (field notes, March 24, 2010). Terry is conscious to include all students in this way:

But there are some who don’t speak a lot, who I don’t get to know right away. For example Conner and Zeth, because they’re so out there with their
personalities, it’s really easy to read them. But the quieter ones like Gabby and Alexander, and sometimes even Mary, those are the ones I have to make more effort to get to know because they’re just in the back. They do their thing. Those are the ones that I remind myself to go and check-in with. (interview 2)

Terry might do this by eating lunch with a smaller group of students, for example. She describes one such occasion:

Paige and Frances were alone at their desk. Noah wasn’t here and Zeth had moved over here to sit with some boys… I just saw this as an opportunity to be with them. I can enjoy their company. And it might help make the other girls realize that they can too. I wanted to give them a little bit of attention. I just felt that I needed to do that. (interview 7)

Several previously discussed themes are also implicit in this passage, including fostering relationships among the students themselves, modelling inclusiveness and compassion, and providing equal attention to all students.

Terry’s ability to maximize the potentials of both knowing and interacting with students is aided by years of experience teaching children of this age. Although Terry recognizes that each child is different, certain personality types manifest and become useful guides in how she connects with them. She indicates this, with some caution:

It is about learning from the kids you’ve had in the past, and from knowing them. I learned so much from handling different types of emotions, the anxiety piece. Zeth is a highly anxious kid. Had I not had a really anxious kid in the past I would not have been as calm or confident with Zeth. It takes a lot of time to learn about the children. I have also learned how to observe the common elements, so it’s not as time consuming for me as it was maybe 10 years ago, because of all the different kids that I’ve had. Although sometimes, I can be type-casting too quickly. But you learn both ways. (interview 11)

Further, Terry’s openness and honesty with the students; her physical, emotional, intellectual and psychological accessibility to them; and her consistent fairness, respectfulness and kindness enable the students to also know her, and to interact with her
on several levels and in a variety of circumstances. This is particularly important in fostering and maintaining the reciprocal aspect of caring relationships (Noddings, 2002, 2008, 2010).

There is evidence that the students do reciprocate Terry’s care. Drawings, letters, cards and poems, which they made for Terry, accumulated throughout the school year on the bulletin board by her desk. One card, in particular, which all of the students signed, read as follows corrected for spelling and grammar:

To Ms. Kennedy,
You’ve been here for this year and hopefully the next too. You stood here with us all year long. Together we are strong. And when you smile the sunshine falls upon your face and brightens up the room. You’ve understood our problems and helped us work them out. For us you are our world, our sunshine and moon. Just knowing that you will be there waiting for us when we get to school gets us up in the morning. And all we are trying to say is, although we have not been here long you’ve taught us all we know. Together we are strong. Merry Christmas.

Promoting Relationship Values

Similarly to classroom community, mutually caring relationships between teachers and students provide a context in which morality is inevitably and necessarily promoted. The teacher models how to care for others and be in caring relationships, along with a range of related moral values, including care, compassion, respect, empathy, love and trust. To sustain the relationship, students must also learn to express these moral values in their behaviour toward the teacher. Further, when students are secure in caring relationships with their teacher, the teacher’s conduct and behaviours have a
powerfully positive effect on the students’ conduct and behaviours. Given the opportunity, students will attempt to emulate the teacher (Noddings, 2002, 2008, 2010).

Yet, the unequal power position of teachers and students in the classroom naturally places teachers in the position of *carer* and students in the position of *cared-for*. This undermines the reciprocity of such caring relationships, and the potential for students to practice the relationship values that the teacher models. Terry compensates for this by deliberately creating opportunities for students to be carers, in the context of a classroom community. Expectations that students will help each other and take responsibility for each other were discussed above. More particular to the notion of caring relationships, however, is Terry’s expectation for students to ensure each other’s happiness at school. She expresses this in terms of The Golden Rule:

> You want to be happy coming into school so make sure that people are happy when they come to school. And lend a hand if someone needs it, if someone’s feeling a little hurt or down or lonely. (interview 1)

This was communicated to the students, as follows:

> If someone is unhappy about being in school or someone is unhappy when they leave for the day, I need you to really step up. I need you to help. Even if you are scared that you might get in trouble, you still need to step up whether taking responsibility or helping the person cheer up. It’s not all about you. You need to take care of each other, to help me with that. (field notes, October 1, 2009)

On several occasions, Terry also prompted the students with versions of: “What can you do if you see that she doesn’t look happy?” Consistent with care ethics, and distinguished from a virtues perspective of care, this entails several moral values, including care, helpfulness, courage, responsibility, kindness, and selflessness. The following anecdote illustrates how Terry places students in the position of carer, upholds expectations that they will care for each other, and imparts a variety of moral values.
The weather had the promise of an early spring by the beginning of March. The physical education teacher, Mr. Smithson, took the girls outside to enjoy the sunshine and for a game of capture the flag, usually a favourite. When they returned to the class Bonnie, Kathy and Sammie were crying, the rest of the girls seemed to be in various stages of shock. Mr. Smithson followed on their heels, and beckoned Terry from the hallway. When she returned a few moments later it was lunchtime. Several students had already begun to unpack their bags. Terry asked the boys to take their lunches next door to Wendy’s room, and the girls to remain with her. She unpacked her own lunch, and sat at her desk in quiet thoughtfulness. Then began.

Terry: Everybody, heads up. Before we talk about what happened, a quick note. I don’t want you to leave for March break feeling like this. It’s not that bad so let’s just calm down. Who can explain? Someone who is neutral, not directly involved in this.

Heather: We were playing capture the flag and we quit. Then we saw Pia was crying.

Frances: Everyone was yelling and saying, “You’re not my friend anymore”. People weren’t following the rules.

Terry: What is at the root of all this? What is the main part of the problem?

Heather: We didn’t want to play because they said we were cheating. They started screaming at us. Several girls started to call out at once now. Terry settled them down. Bonnie, Kathy and Sammie continued to cry into their desks, not touching their lunches.

Terry: Why are these three girls so upset then?
No response.

Terry: Is there one humungous issue? What could that be?

Frances: It started because Pia was crying.

Heather: I don’t think it was about Pia crossing the line. I think it was about Pia being sad. It was about both teams yelling at each other.

Terry: Do you really feel that you no longer like each other? Don’t you still like each other?

Frances: Yes, but we always have trouble with capture the flag.

Terry: What is it about that game that messes you up so much?

Several of the girls call out suggestions: “The rules keep changing”; “People get involved when they don’t have to”; “Some people are very competitive”; “Some people take over”.

Terry: This game makes you care more about winning than you care about each other. Can we agree then that only those involved in a situation will deal with that situation, and that you won’t be so competitive, that you’ll care more about each other? It’s a game that always brings out the worst part of your competitiveness. Let’s cool off and we can talk a bit more later. (field notes, March 5, 2010)

Terry did not forget the incident during the two-week break that followed. While dismissing the girls for their first physical education class upon return to school, she reminded them of the problems last class, and asked them to put each other first and to take care of each other. “No game is worth the kind of upset you experienced last class. Think of and try out some solutions for this. Let me know
later how it all went and what worked.” The girls returned after the class all smiles, proud to report that the game went well and there was no fighting. (field notes, March 24, 2010)

Terry’s expectation for students to be carers is evident, as well, in relation to the academic program. For example, she considered the following when determining partners for a science project:

- Zeth needs someone calm.
- Heather needs someone with good ideas, because she has trouble coming up with them herself.
- Can’t let Alexander get distracted. Who can keep him on track?
- Frances is a very hard worker, but she works too fast and she is messy. Kathy will help keep her work neater. Can she put up with her quirks though? (field notes, January 5, 2010)

Learning buddies provides another opportunity. Terry’s students were paired with students from a grade-two class, taught by Carol Lindsay. They met each week in the library for an activity, in which Terry’s students provided learning support for Carol’s. Activities included crafts, reading and writing. Terry tells them, “Your job is to help your buddy with reading or their projects, whatever they are working on and need help with” (field notes, September 10, 2009). She also notes a higher obligation for them to be role models: “The grade-two’s look up to you, just like you looked up to your buddy when you were in grade two” (field notes, September 10, 2009). In reinforcing both helpfulness and modelling for others, Terry places her students in the role of carer.

To maximize the learning potential of being carers of others, Terry provides feedback to the students on how well they fulfill the role. This may be either corrective
feedback or praise. Corrective feedback was observed, for example, when Noah kicked his learning buddy. Although, this behaviour is unacceptable anytime and under any circumstances at Middlevale, Terry was particularly distressed because Noah had breached his position of carer in the relationship. She told him, “I am so disappointed because this is not the impression I had of you. I thought you were a great partner and that you are always so helpful to Irene” (field notes, April 13, 2010). Feedback in the form of praise often involves “showcasing” for others (Fenstermacher, 2001). The following example also involves Noah. Terry announced to the class:

Noah did three things that were really kind. He asked Bonnie if he could use her desk before he just sat down at it. He got her another chair when she couldn’t find hers. And he saw that Alexander was upset and he moved over to him to help him out. (field notes, October 1, 2009)

Noah’s acts of kindness are expressions of virtuous conduct. In the context of a classroom community, where students are involved in caring relationships with each other, they also represent the behaviours of a carer, caring for others.

Conclusion

In attending to her conduct, behaviours and practices, the classroom culture, and individual relationships with students, Terry focuses on moral values that underlie the structures of schooling, professional practice, and classroom life. This includes, among others, fairness, respect, kindness and honesty, as they inform procedures and routines; helpfulness and responsibility as they inform the performance of duties and tasks; and empathy, sensitivity, compassion, and love as they inform power and authority. With a focus on moral values, Terry ensures that she treats the students, the academic work they produce, and their time together with the upmost regard; that she and the students attend
to each other’s welfare and wellbeing; and that the learning conditions are moral and morally justifiable. These are moral ends in and of themselves.

Yet, by making visible these moral values though modelling; by providing students with opportunities to practice being helpful to others, and responsible for themselves and others; and by engaging students in reciprocally caring relationships, these ends also have an inherent instructive outcome that may contribute to students’ moral growth and development. They are examples of teaching morality. The next chapter takes up this theme of teaching morality more specifically. In doing so, it is organized around practices that Terry intentionally employs, as a moral educator, to further a vision for the social-moral development of her students. Importantly, it is understood that teaching morality in a context of moral agency depends on teaching morally. Thus, the practices discussed in the following chapter are situated in the discussions above, which remain inevitably relevant.
Chapter 7: Teaching Morality

Teaching morality addresses the prong of moral agency related to the teacher as a moral educator. Fenstermacher, Osguthorpe and Sanger (2009) define this as: “To teach morality is to convey to another that which is good or right… the teacher is providing to another person the means for becoming a good or righteous person” (p. 8). In focusing on this theme, the topics in this chapter are organized around more direct practices that Terry employs to advance the moral development of her students. These include virtues instruction, discussions, discipline, and service activities, each of which is described, in this order. The instructive outcomes of modelling morality, creating classroom community, and engaging in caring relationships, identified in the previous chapter, remain relevant for the implicit and explicit moral messages and lessons they convey. Additionally, teaching morality depends on teaching morally, just as being a moral educator depends on being a moral person (Campbell, 2003a). Fenstermacher, Osguthorpe and Sanger’s (2009) definition assumes that teachers know what is good and right, and that by providing a means for students to be good and righteous, they are themselves, good and righteous. That Terry teaches morally is a most significant context for understanding her moral education practices, as they are discussed here.

As with the delivery of other curricula, teaching morality entails assessment. The research questions and literature review anticipate this theme to be relevant to Terry’s moral agency. Yet, the methods that Terry utilizes for assessing her students’ moral development are less formalized, overt, direct and visible than those described in the literature and outlined in Chapter Three. Further, Terry was not accountable to parents, students or administrators for conducting such evaluations or for their results, and no
reporting on this was expected, even in the context of Middlevale’s Character Development Program. Rather, assessments of this sort are undertaken at Terry’s discretion, and serve to further her vision. The final section of this chapter explores how Terry assesses her students’ moral growth and development.

*Virtues Instruction*

Direct instruction on particular virtues or moral values, terms used interchangeably here, has been identified as a moral education strategy by both The Manner in Teaching Project (Fenstermacher, 2001; Richardson & Fenstermacher, 2000, 2001) and The Moral Life of Schools Project (Jackson, Boostrom & Hansen, 1993). Such lessons are also the foundation of traditional character education, as discussed in Chapters Two and Three. Terry’s research and participation in creating Middlevale’s Character Development Program deeply involved her in the character education literature, particularly the work of Thomas Lickona, and influenced her moral agency practices to include virtues instruction.

Observation data identified virtues instruction as both formal, pre-planned lessons, and informal, spontaneously interjected messages. Virtues lessons were quite visible, and generally derived from the school’s values, the language arts curriculum, and the grade-four health curriculum. One of the four units of study in the health curriculum is called Character Education, and entails five themes: respect, responsibility, growing and changing, what would you do, and peace-seeking. Terry and Wendy did not follow the curriculum as laid out in the guide. Instead, they used their discretion to create lessons from among the different topics and activities. Lessons on respect and responsibility were explicitly taught, because they are also school values. Virtues
messages were not as visible as the lessons, occurring in-the-moment and passing with the moment. They usually did not reference curriculum, but advanced an aspect of Terry’s vision for classroom life, and the students’ growth and development.

Examples of Terry’s virtues lessons and virtues messages are anecdotally presented below, arranged according to the particular virtue or moral value that is communicated—compassion, courage, cooperation, respect, responsibility and inclusiveness, respectively. Compassion, courage, respect and responsibility are school values. Respect and responsibility, as noted above, are also part of the grade-four health curriculum. Cooperation and inclusiveness, although informally reinforced throughout the school, more particularly underpin Terry’s vision for a class community, and enable her collaborative pedagogical approach to teaching and learning.

Compassion

It was the second day of school. The students quietly watched as Terry wrote five letters on the whiteboard: R R I C C. Gesturing toward them she said, “Somewhere around this room are five very important words that start with this”. Several of the students pointed to the poster behind Terry’s desk that contained the school’s values. Along with Terry, the class recited in unison, “respect, responsibility, integrity, compassion, courage”. Terry continued, “Tell me what you know about any of these words”. The students called out several ideas. Terry listened, nodding at each, but without commenting. When the class quieted, she said, “They’re all really closely related—respect, courage, responsibility”…. She paused for comments from the students. No one responded.

Terry placed a large pad of chart paper on the whiteboard. At the top of the first page she had pre-written the word compassion, having selected this virtue as their first priority. “Let’s talk about what this word means, what it looks like. Give me your ideas.”
Kathy raised a hand, “You show it by helping people if they’re hurt”.
Bonnie added, “Being really nice”.
Terry nodded, “Another word for compassion is being kind, or nice, as you say
Bonnie. If something happens at recess, how can you show compassion?”
Frances called out, “You could let everyone who wants to play with you play”.
Terry recorded these comments on the chart paper, and prompted the students
further, “Some of you are going to be trying out for sports teams. Some will
make it on the teams, some won’t. What could be compassionate in this
situation?”
“You could say, ‘You did a good j
job. Sorry you didn’t make it’”, Paige
replied.
Terry continued, “And what if you got onto the team? How would your
reaction help other people? When you get in you feel happy and proud. But how
could your reaction help your friend who didn’t get in?” The students were silent,
and Terry continued. “You see? There are two sides to this—your reaction will
either make them feel worse or better. So feel proud and happy, yes. Just keep
others in mind. Be gracious about it if they didn’t get in. Don’t go whooping all
over the place”. Terry recorded this as good sportsmanship. She paused and
looked at the students, waiting for further comments. None were forthcoming
from this group of students, whose opinions would, in the near future, be difficult
to cap. At the end of this lesson, the chart paper read as follows (field notes,
September 11, 2009):

**COMPASSION**
- Helping people
- Being kind to others
- Including others
- Showing good sportsmanship

This lesson on compassion was delivered within the context of the school’s
classroom program. At the time, Terry did not explicitly note associations with other
aspects of classroom life, her vision of community and happiness, or her efforts to foster caring relationships with and among the students. These contexts were, nonetheless, made relevant in the informal and spontaneous messages on compassion that Terry continued to impart throughout the school year. For example, while the class was making holiday cards for their learning buddies she announced, “Take your time. Make it look nice. This is not about you. This is about you doing something for someone else, to make them feel better” (field notes, December 15, 2009). Other examples are recounted elsewhere in this report, including in the classroom community and care ethics discussions.

Courage

Although courage is a school value, the formal lesson on courage was not delivered within this context, but rather, as part of a language arts unit called Risks and Consequences.

The students took turns reading aloud the story about a mouse, a crow and a cat. The mother mouse, Mrs. Frisbee, was desperate to return home as quickly as possible with medicine for her sick son. She decided to take a short-cut knowing she might encounter the dreaded cat. Hurrying along, Mrs. Frisbee came across a crow named Jeremy, who was caught in some wiring. He called out to her, “Can you help me?” Knowing that every second counted for her son’s wellbeing and her own safety, she nevertheless stopped to untangle the crow. As feared, the cat appeared just as she was finishing, and threatening them both. Grateful for Mrs. Frisbee’s help, Jeremy said, “Hop on my back”. She did and he flew them both to safety.

“So what do we learn from this story?” Terry asked as she closed her book. The students replied with various comments related to reciprocated helpfulness. Terry prompted them further, “But helping another when you risk yourself takes courage, don’t you think?” Flipping over the compassion page of the chart paper,
Terry revealed a fresh page with the word courage written at the top. “Can you give me some examples of courage from the story?” she continued. As the students called out, Terry recorded them without comment or judgment, as shown below. She then asked the students to think about their own lives. “Besides the story now, what can we say about courage?”

With only a moment left of class time Kathy offered, “To make friends with people from different countries or backgrounds”. Terry recorded this final comment and dismissed the class (field notes, September 21, 2009).

COURAGE
- Helping someone else when it puts you in danger
- Jeremy tried not to panic as the cat came closer
- Jeremy had the courage to put his trust in Mrs. Frisbee
- Mrs. Frisbee took the route with the cat
- Mrs. Frisbee went to get medicine and came home to her son
- Asking people for help
- To make friends with people from different countries or backgrounds

The lesson continued the following week, with two guiding questions: When is a risk worth taking? How can concern for others help us to overcome our own fears? The students were asked to reflect on both questions, in the context of the story and in the context of their own lives. Over the next few days, they each wrote a paragraph describing a risk they had personally taken, and the consequences of taking that risk. The stories recounted positive outcomes, for example, of successfully trying scuba diving for the first time, and taking home a particularly feisty dog from the kennel, who then became a beloved family pet. The paragraphs were illustrated and posted above each student’s locker in the hallway, as a badge of honour for their courage. (field notes, September 30 and October 2, 2009)
Informal and spontaneous messages on courage were delivered throughout the school year, often arising from in-class and school-wide presentations and performances, such as book talks, skits, reports, speeches, announcements, and concerts. These messages were targeted at certain students, who found these activities difficult and needed support. Terry also seized opportunities to convey courage messages to the entire class. On one particular occasion, for example, while reviewing the vocabulary from a language arts story on runaway slaves, also part of the Risks and Consequences Unit, Terry explained the word *asserted* as follows: “You are assertive when you stick up for a friend and say, ‘Stop bothering my friend. She is not happy about it’” (field notes, December 1, 2009). With this statement, Terry makes explicit her expectations for student behaviour related to courage. In none of these instances, however, did I observe Terry referencing the formal lesson on courage or the poster that read, *You’ll always miss 100% of the shots you don’t take.*

Courage was more purposefully revisited with the girls, when one of the boys in Wendy’s class called Paige “fat”. The boys from both classes were separated to discuss the situation with Jonathan and Tom. What follows is an excerpt from the girls’ discussion with Wendy and Terry.

Wendy’s student: At my old school, my friends made up this thing where you just say, “thank you”, if someone insults you. I like that.

Wendy: Is that what your teachers taught you at your old school?

Wendy’s student: Yes, and not to let it bother you.
Terry: We aren’t saying that it won’t bother you, or not to let it bother you. You can’t let people think that it didn’t hurt. You need to tell them that it isn’t okay. Say, “We were having fun but that wasn’t cool. That wasn’t fun”. You need to have courage to do this. They need to know that it hurt your feelings or made you feel uncomfortable. You need to tell them.

Although Paige remained quiet, several girls raised their hands, and shared additional stories that related to similar incidents with the boys. Terry reiterated her message.

Terry: You need to stand up to them and tell them. Boys and girls are different and that’s okay. But you have to be clear if you want them to understand you. Boys need to do that too. Give them your message very clearly even though that might be hard. If you need help with that then come to us, and we will help you.

Wendy: We try to help each of you all the time, but we can’t be there for everything. We try to teach you skills so you can deal with most things on your own, as you get older. I hope with you being strong and maybe getting help from adults then it won’t continue to happen. (April 19, 2010)

Terry later discussed this with me, in relation to her particular goals for Paige’s growth and development.

It is courage. I want Paige to stand up for herself, to be less agreeable. When we had that talk about the recess incident, name calling, calling her fat, I talked to her. I said, “It’s not okay that he said that”. And then we had the health conversation with Wendy about clearly communicating how you feel. Hopefully she’s starting to want to develop courage to do that. I’m keeping an eye on it. So when we were doing seating she said to Noah, “I’m always in the back”. She didn’t say it out loud to me, but I caught it. And I said, “Paige, say something if you don’t want to be in the back. It’s still your choice”. But she just said, “I’m good”. So I’m working on that to develop. (interview 9)
The formal lesson on courage was not cited in this discussion either. Nevertheless, the message of a positive outcome when one has the courage to take a risk is the same, whether scuba diving on vacation, or advocating for oneself or a friend. It should be noted, again, that moral values do not operate in isolation. In this example, courage is associated with respect, particularly self-respect for the girls. I am told that respect for others was the primary message that Jonathan and Tom conveyed to the boys, in their discussion.

Cooperation

Although cooperation is related to helpfulness, Terry distinguishes the two values by implying, in the following statement, that cooperation entails a reciprocal working relationship. Prior to their first group project, Terry announced, “You will be working with other adults in whatever you choose. The more people you work with, the trickier it is. This is a way for me to see how we are working together” (field notes, September 11, 2009). This message was reinforced on another occasion, by more specifically “showcasing” (Fenstermacher, 2001) her own and Wendy’s behaviours: “See how Ms. Bell and I are working together? I’m reading the instructions while Ms. Bell is doing the experiment. That’s how you work in groups” (field notes, April 6, 2010). In this way, cooperation identifies more as a verb, as in to cooperate, or an adverb qualifying how one works with others, as in cooperatively. Helpfulness, as discussed in the context of community and caring relationships, identifies more as a character trait, or adjective describing a person. As such, it does not necessarily entail reciprocity. One may be helpful to another, regardless of the other’s behaviours. The following anecdote recounts
the students’ first group project of the school year, and demonstrates how cooperation was conveyed in this context by Terry.

Terry asked the students to organize into four groups, according to the school’s house system. This meant the groups would be uneven in number, with one group comprised of two students, another of three, another of four, and a final group of five students. Each group was given a piece of Bristol board that was pre-cut into a circle. Terry instructed the students: “Divide your circle into wedges, according to how many you are in the group. Each of you is responsible for creating a drawing for one wedge. But here’s the thing, your drawing has to connect with the drawings of the neighbouring wedges. And the overall theme for your circle must relate to your particular house and the values that your house promotes. That means you will all reflect the value of respect, plus either compassion, courage, integrity or responsibility.” Terry continued, “Here’s the most important part. You need to work together and plan this out. Discuss how you will do this. You have to talk it out. Talking is important. You have to cooperate with your peers and give them a voice too.”

After these instructions, expectations and values were conveyed, Terry dispersed the groups. One went to work in the hallway; another in the library, and two remained in the classroom sprawling across the floor with their many supplies. Terry floated among them, continuing to informally and spontaneously reinforce cooperation, as well as related values. “Don’t shut down the ideas of others in your group”. “Offer up different ideas”. “How can you say those are hideous? That’s not cooperation or compassion”. “Why can’t he offer up his opinion?” “I like the way this group is cooperating and helping each other.” With varying degrees of craftsmanship, the groups finished their circles over the course of a week, in time to hang them from the clothesline for parents to see on curriculum night.

The largest group of five students, however, did not work well together. In agitation, Sammie ran over to get Terry. “Zeth is drawing our house as a burning
building! None of us want him to do it, but he won’t stop. He won’t listen to us.”

Terry walked over to the centre of the classroom, where the group was stationed.

“This is a group project. You all have an obligation to tell Zeth your objections clearly, and Zeth, you have to talk about all the ideas and listen. Talk it out before you start.” Knowing that this was not the first time the students were asked to do group work or the first time they had heard about cooperation, Terry removed herself to let them try again.

But Zeth continued to colour the house red, and draw flames from its roof. The rest of the group sat and watched, looking completely helpless and more than a little stunned. Terry returned, and reiterated the same values, but this time more directly and forcefully. “What I see here is not a sharing of ideas. Everyone in the group needs to be happy. Everybody needs to be able to live with the decisions. I can see this is not the case.” She prompted them, “So how can you talk with each other and come to an answer? What questions might you ask when you have a problem with ideas? What can we do when some like the idea and others don’t like it?” Terry paused for a moment so the students might have time to reflect. No one answered, so she continued. “Here are some questions to ask, why are you doing it? Why might some like this, but others not like it? This project is about learning how to get along, and you have to be respectful of each other to do that. You also have to be responsible for what you’re doing and saying. These circles will be hanging up and people will see them. Your parents will see them. Other members of our school community will see them. You all need to feel proud of what you create.” Zeth was the only one in the group who did not make eye contact with Terry, but he did stop colouring.

Although her comments were addressed to everyone in the group, Terry was aware that the problem stemmed from Zeth’s behaviour. Yet, she did not want to target him. He was having several difficulties integrating into the new school environment. “All of them are against him. They get it. But he needs to also get the point” (interview 2), she later reflected while trying to decide how she would proceed with helping him. (field notes, September 11, 2009)
Following this activity, the first health class was devoted to a formal lesson on cooperation. Although cooperation is not a theme of the health curriculum, Terry and Wendy determined a need to reinforce cooperative behaviours among the students. The lesson described below was delivered to the girls, while the boys were in physical education class. The boys had a similar lesson during their health class.

“What is cooperation?” Terry asked the class.

The students called out, “work together”; “get along with other people”; “you’re not alone in this classroom”.

Terry continued, “What does cooperation look like? Give some examples or a situation”.

The students responded, “sharing stuff”; “playing with people”; “a game without fighting”. Terry flipped to a fresh piece of chart paper and recorded.

“Good start. Working in pairs is easy. What about larger groups? Why is that harder?”

Kathy replied, “There’s more people to share with”.

“Yes”, Terry agreed. “What about coming up with ideas? You have to talk and listen. There are more opinions. You have to be respectful. You have to compromise. Sometimes you can’t have it your way. You have to give and take in a group situation. That’s part of cooperation too.” The girls proposed several additional comments, which Terry recorded as follows:
Distinct from previous lessons, this discussion was followed by a group activity. “I would like to see cooperation”, Terry announced. She randomly assigned the girls to groups of three, with one group of four. The groups were to make a cooperation cube, so that each of its six sides represented a scene that portrays this value. The variety of themes the girls depicted included playing, singing, reading and doing chores together, sharing, holding hands, taking turns, listening, and making new friends. The cubes were hung on the clothesline in the classroom for a week. When they were taken down, Terry asked the students if she might keep them as a reminder of how nicely they had been prepared, referencing not only the product but also the process. (field notes, September 16 and October 2, 2009)

As Lickona (2004) recommends, this activity provided an immediate opportunity to apply what had been formally discussed about cooperation, and to practice cooperative behaviours as they would be consistently needed in this class. Terry reinforced her expectations during the activity, with informal and spontaneous comments such as, “Are we cooperating?” “No one’s bossing anyone around, right?” (field notes, September 16,
2009). Similar messages were conveyed throughout the year, such as, “I will choose some very cooperative people to go line up” (field notes, October 5, 2009).

In teaching cooperation, both formally and informally, Terry is also intentionally teaching values of negotiation, communication and listening, and moral values of respect and responsibility. She expresses this as follows:

It’s a negotiation rather than controlled by just an individual. And then if there are difficulties in the partnership we would hope that they would be able to learn to negotiate, with maybe some help from us. There was one particular group of three who had a lot of trouble working together and there were a lot of arguments. And that also is valuable because from that you take away if things aren’t working well, how are you supposed to work through conflicts? So putting them in groups helps to develop better communication and negotiation skills. Learning to listen to the other person’s ideas, and knowing that the other person has as much value as you. Therefore, you have to say, “Okay, what’s your idea?” And then working through and making sure that your idea and their idea are in the project, not just your idea. So that’s basically what we’re trying to work through. Respect, remaining respectful even though you recognize there are differences, and then making sure that you put in your share of the responsibilities. (interview 8)

Respect

Respect is arguably one of the most widely prioritized moral value in the context of schooling. Lickona (1991) and Lickona and Davidson (2005) identify respect as one of two key virtues, along with responsibility, that should be instilled in youth. Moral agent teachers articulate respect as one of four moral values they prioritize in their conduct and professional practice (Campbell, 2003a; Rosenberg, 2008). At Middlevale, respect is one of the five school values. It is referenced verbally on many occasions, and in writing on many internal and external communication pieces. Respect was chosen to be the common value for the four houses in the school’s house system, obligating all
members of the school community to consider their actions and behaviours accordingly.

Lastly, respect is a theme in the grade-four health curriculum.

Consequently, Terry delivered two lessons on respect and imparted several related messages. The first lesson occurred during a boys’ health class, while the girls were in physical education. Although part of the health curriculum, it was delivered earlier than scheduled, in response to antisocial behaviours between the boys and girls.

“In what ways can you see professional sports players showing respect?”

The boys answered, “Shaking hands at the end of a game”; “If a player falls sometimes players help them up”.

Terry continued, “So, it doesn’t have to be someone you are friends with?”

“If someone gets hurt at recess you help them”, agreed Connor.

“How about at art camp? Is it the same?”

The boys again called out, “If someone makes something, say, ‘nice sculpture’”; “If someone says, ‘I’m really bad at this’, say ‘No you aren’t’, because everyone makes a really big effort and that makes them more confident.”

Terry pressed, “Does it mean that if you’re good at soccer you’ll be good at everything else? Or if you are good at art, will you be good at everything else?”

The boys responded in unison, “No”.

“So, if you are a really good musician, people may tell you, ‘You are really good’, but if it is writing, you may have trouble with it, and someone can say they will help you. That is showing respect.” Terry paused to let this message sink in. Then she continued, “Here’s another situation. If you are at the theatre and watching a movie, or watching a play, how are you going to show respect?”

“Don’t tell what happens if you have already seen it”; “Don’t throw popcorn at their face if you don’t like the character. I saw that once”; “You still need to clap”; “You don’t make noises if you don’t like it. Keep your negative comments to yourself”.

Terry validated these answers with a nod, and probed further, “When the play has started, what do they ask of the audience?”
“Turn off cell phones”; “No talking”.

“Sometimes the ushers don’t let you back to your seat right away when you go to the washroom. Why is that?” Terry asked.

“It’s annoying”, one of the boys replied.

Terry agreed and added, “Sometimes it is also distracting to the actors”.

One of the boys, who had not yet participated, interjected, “If you see how in a magic show the magician appears, like you see the door, don’t go up and say ‘hey look. Here’s how it happened’”.

The boys fell silent. Terry rose from the edge of her desk where she had been perched, and handed around a two-page worksheet, entitled How Do You Show Respect? She began to read the first page with the class, but the boys were noisy and continued to call out, having difficulty transitioning to a more independent activity. Terry seized the moment, “I’m sorry, I was talking right now. You are not being respectful of me or of each other”. The few remaining moments of the class proceeded uneventfully. (field notes, November 17, 2009)

Terry did not associate this lesson with any of the incidents that prompted its earlier than scheduled inclusion, and the generality of the discussion raises doubts that the boys made the connection themselves. This is supported by the fact that Terry had the occasion to spontaneously deliver a message on respect, in the midst of a formal lesson on respect. The irony of this brings to mind Noddings’ (2002) concern for the relevance of a didactic approach to virtue inculcation in relation to how students understand their own behaviours. Further, this is the only virtue lesson for which Terry used prepared materials. As with the Tell Me All About Yourself activity, summarized in Chapter Six as Figure 7, she did not review the completed worksheets. This supports the earlier assertion that Terry does not find pre-packaged materials to be particularly helpful or relevant to the moral education she provides for the students. The worksheets are
represented in part as Figure 8, entitled Respect Worksheets. They are part of the curricular materials provided for the health unit.

**Figure 8. Respect worksheets**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOW DO YOU SHOW RESPECT?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You are showing respect when you...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Talk politely to others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Listen when others are talking and do not interrupt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Get to places on time and don’t keep friends or family waiting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Take care of your clothes, books, games, and other possessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Obey the rules your mom and dad have set at home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Offer your seat on a bus or train to an older person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Treat everyone fairly and kindly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Greet adults you meet for the first time with a firm handshake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Look people straight in the eyes when you talk to them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Show concern for other people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Care for your environment by recycling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Follow classroom rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Help a teacher substituting in your class for the first time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Discuss how you show respect...**

- At a school assembly
- At a ball game
- In a synagogue, church, or temple
- In a movie theatre
- To people in authority

**In what other ways do you show respect?**

**WHAT IS RESPECT?**

In your own words, describe what the word respect means.

Find the word respect in a dictionary and write its definition.

Describe a time when you were especially respectful to someone.

Describe a time someone treated you with respect.

(Schwartz, 1997)
The second lesson on respect occurred the following week. With Terry’s endorsement, but in apparent isolation of other activities, Frances delivered a presentation on how women had won the right to vote in Canada. She read to the class a letter her grandmother had given her, relating the difficulties that women of the Suffrage Movement endured while protesting for their rights, including police arrest and physical abuse. The class applauded politely when she finished.

Terry rose from her chair and moved to the front of the class. “Last week there was something I was concerned about. It was comments made by the boys to the girls and by the girls to the boys. Bad comments about the opposite gender. I heard someone say, ‘wouldn’t it be better if we had an all boys’ school or an all boys’ class?’ And ‘all boys are smarter than the girls’. That just isn’t true. You have to be very careful of what you say. I don’t want you to think that it is okay to say those things because it isn’t. It’s not respectful to talk like this.” The class remained quiet. After a brief pause, Terry related this message to Frances’ letter. “When you make those general comments about girls it is similar to the prejudice that women faced. It is a form of prejudice, where you are judging the person simply because they are female. It is also prejudiced to say general things about all boys”. Terry let a few moments of silence pass, before dismissing the class for lunch, hoping that the message was internalized. (field notes, November 24, 2009)

It was not, however, and unacceptable gender-based comments continued. A week later and without preface, Terry again addressed the class on this, but with more impatience and anger than was typical of her behaviour. “What was I saying about respect the other day? I had very specific things I was trying to get across.” The class was silent. She continued, “Here are some ideas. Don’t say bad things about other people. Don’t insult anyone, especially the opposite gender. Hands are for greeting and not for hurting. You don’t have to be best friends with everyone, but you do have to be polite. Remember?” Again, no one responded. Terry continued a little more gently, knowing that she had their
attention. “I know it’s really easy when you are a girl to be annoyed by boys, and if you are a boy to be annoyed by girls. But what I’m trying to tell you is you have to try really hard not to fall into the same habits that other people may be into. If other people are saying bad things about girls then you shouldn’t join in. And if you are saying those things then you shouldn’t be. Today I heard that someone in this class said, ‘boys suck’, and no one stopped them. You need to stay away from that language. If you say that all girls or all boys are bad, you know it’s not true. When you talk to each other individually, you know it isn’t all bad. Sometimes you are helping each other. That’s not bad. I know it’s really hard, but it won’t always be hard. We do need to be kinder to each other.”

“So, let’s deal with one thing at a time. When we do things to annoy other people it may be amusing. We all do it maybe to siblings or best friends. We do it because it can be fun. You just have to know where to stop. You girls have to gauge the reaction of the boys. Look at their facial reactions. If they are getting more and more frustrated then you know you’ve gone over the line, and you have to stop. You really need to watch their faces. And you also have to know if you are on the other end that you have to say ‘stop’. And that is hard because you don’t want to look like a party-pooper, or that you’re not cool, or that you’re not fitting in. You have to be strong and courageous enough to say ‘that isn’t fun anymore’. That’s the first part. Let’s work on that.” (field notes, December 1, 2009)

These messages were contextualized as respect, but include courage, helpfulness and kindness. Terry also notes for students vices of prejudice and discrimination, which she indicates to be inappropriate and intolerable.

Several spontaneous messages related to respect were also conveyed throughout the school year. For example, while working through an ongoing conflict between Zeth and Sammie Terry declared, “I don’t get it. This is very disrespectful behaviour from
both of you” (September 30, 2009). She also conveys respect for one’s property, illustrated in the following brief exchange:

Terry: I need to talk about things we repeatedly talk about. Do you appreciate when people sit at your desk and play or take things from your desk?

Several students: No.

Terry: Just like at my desk. Some rules we need to follow to get along. Don’t touch without permission. Frances has lost silly putty two times this year, missing from her desk. It means to me that people aren’t respecting other people’s properties. (field notes, December 15, 2009)

This example supports the previously noted observation that Terry associates rules with underlying moral values. The rule she identifies above, regarding permission to touch items that belong to others, is presented as respect. Several other examples of messages on respect are recounted throughout this report, and although not repeated, are relevant here as well.

Responsibility

Responsibility for others was discussed in Chapter Six, as a learning outcome of building classroom community. In the lesson and messages described here, Terry focuses more on responsibility for oneself, specifically one’s own behaviour and conduct. This became a particular priority for Terry in the third term, although, related messages were imparted earlier.

Terry began, “Over the past two weeks we have had issues. We’ve had issues at recess. And then last week there were issues with learning buddies. The buddies weren’t happy with us. They were kind of disappointed. And then today
at assembly Mr. Patrick read a poem. All of these things can fit under responsibility. How can these fit under responsibility?”

Heather suggested, “Saying sorry?” Terry asked her to rephrase this as a sentence. “Say sorry when you hurt somebody.” Terry went to the chart paper on the whiteboard, turned to a new page, and began recording.

“This can also be a physical hurt”, Terry prompted.

Connor called out, “When you do something wrong, don’t run away from it”.

“Yes”, replied Terry. “Lying just makes things worse. It makes it harder when you have to admit to it later. Nor do we like to hear at the grade-four level, ‘I don’t remember what happened’”.

Kathy added, “Sometimes we have that problem at peacemakers. When you have problems with the little kids and they say, ‘I didn’t do that’. We say, ‘Tell the truth or you will just get in more trouble’”.

The class remained silent for a few seconds, and then Terry asked, “What else?” When no one replied, so she continued, “Okay, now we have to look at the big picture. Why do you think I leave responsibility for the end of the year? At the beginning of the year we talked about compassion and courage. I have a specific reason why I chose this as the last one we do.”

Frances suggested, “Because you wanted us to know that we have to commit to what we are doing”.

“That’s an all year thing. What is it about the third term?”

Kathy tried, “The talent show comes around and really bad things can happen”.

“Two people have mentioned this now. Same with track and field, right?”

Sammie added, “There’s also responsibility for your speech”.

“Okay. All good answers. But the end of the year means what?”

Connor yelled out, “Grade five!” as if he has just cracked a surreptitious code.

Terry asked him, “So what is it about the end of the year and going on to grade five that has to do with responsibility?”

“You have to have responsibility”, he replied.

Terry added, “Also at the end of the year you can say to me better, ‘here are my responsibilities’, because you’ve had the whole year to understand what that
means. At the end of the year, I’m expecting you to handle your work a lot more independently. You’re not going to need as much guidance as you did in September. I’m putting more of the responsibility on you to figure out how to progress. I know that in grade five the teachers are going to expect that you are able to do certain things a lot more on your own than I expected of you in September. That’s what I’m preparing you for.” Terry recorded the following comments (field notes, March 30, 2010):

RESPONSIBILITY
- Say sorry when you hurt somebody
- Admitting that you did something right away is better than avoiding the issue or lying. (e.g. peacemakers with little kids)
- You have to stay committed to your clubs or sports
- Responsibility to do with speech work, academic work in general

Taking responsibility for oneself was also communicated informally and spontaneously, as in these public announcements:

Two things happened this week that worry me. Two conflicts between students in this class. I said at the beginning of school that what you say and what you do will cause a reaction. Consequences will be good or bad. In grade four we are asking you to be a lot more responsible for what you say and what you do. (field notes, October 22, 2009)

I'm not managing your behaviour. I don't want to do that. You need to be patient and wait for your turn. (field notes, May 4, 2010)

Alexander and Noah, I let you have those toys trusting that you would bring them out only at appropriate times. If they are a distraction you need to figure out where they should be. This is about you taking responsibility and me being able to trust you. (field notes, June 7, 2010)
In addition, with the following brief exchange Terry simultaneously “showcases” (Fenstermacher, 2001) Noah for demonstrating responsibility, and sends a related message to Connor.

Terry: Noah has chosen his spot in the line well. He has put himself at the end where he won’t be tempted to talk.

Connor: Good for him.

Terry: Yes. He is a role model for you, not an opportunity for you to be a smart-aleck. Noah has chosen well. You need to decide too what is best for you, and what is best for the class. If you are somewhere where you don’t think you can control your talking then you need to make a better choice. I want you to get to the point where you can do that. (field notes, January 11, 2010)

In focusing on the moral aspects of responsibility, rather than the conventional aspects associated with following school rules and more general expectations, these lessons and messages on being responsible for one’s own conduct and behaviour are distinguished from messages Terry also conveys related to responsibility for one’s schoolwork. Accordingly, they were derived from circumstances that arose in classroom and school life, primarily related to behavioural and social problems. They support Terry’s efforts toward her vision for the holistic growth and development of students, as she notes:

I try to progress them on, or for them to show more progress in their ability to manage themselves, in all aspects, not just their responsibility for academics, but also responsibility for each other and dealing with conflicts in a better manner. (interview 9)
Inclusiveness

Inclusiveness contributes to forming and maintaining the type of classroom community Terry envisions. With the following spontaneous and informal lesson, Terry reinforces her expectations regarding inclusiveness, by noting for students that exclusion is unacceptable.

Terry allowed the students to pick their own partners for the reading session. “Remember that we are uneven in number today. Some group will need to have three people. Take in the extra person. Don’t exclude because you all know how that feels to be excluded.” The students, nevertheless, had some difficulty applying the concepts of inclusion and exclusion. Terry noticed that Frances was reading on her own. “Frances, do you want to work by yourself?”

Frances replied, “No”.
Terry asked, “Did you try to join a group?”
“Yes.”
“What happened?” Terry continued.
“They told me ‘no’”, Frances said, choking back tears.
“That is disturbing. Can you please come with me and we can talk with them.” Kay, Pia and Sammie were reading aloud, as a group of three, but became quiet when they saw Terry and Frances approach. “Frances is feeling very unhappy. Can you explain to me why that might be?” Terry asked.

Understanding immediately what this was about, Pia replied, “We were already a group of three, and we didn’t know that we were allowed to work as a group of four.”
“But you didn’t ask me. Frances was just excluded by you without any discussion. That much you do know about. What do you think we can do about this?”

Pia continued to speak for the others, “She can work with us.”
“Can we also apologize to Frances? And next time, could you please ask me before excluding anyone?” The girls readily agreed, having meant no harm, and moved over making room for Frances to sit.

A similar situation also occurred with the boys. It became apparent to Terry that other students understood they could be a group of two or three, but not a group of four. The message of exclusion and inclusion seemed to be lost in this logistical detail. At the end of the session, Terry reviewed the values, addressing positive behaviours related to kindness and responsibility toward others, and negative, hurtful behaviours. “That was an interesting test for me. Usually I make myself in charge of putting you in groups. How do you think it went today?”

Connor, whose group formed without incident, replied, “Fine”.

Terry pressed, “In the beginning, was there some difficulty? I originally said pairs or groups of three. That may have been a problem. But some things were said to other students that weren’t the best choice. What did we learn about resolving issues?”

Sammie answered, “Next time we’ll ask if we are allowed to have four”.

Terry continued, “Some people were unhappy. If you make someone unhappy, you have to resolve it so we are all happy. I saw some really touching experiences. People really stepped up to help and make them feel better. Cheer each other up so everyone goes home happy. Don’t walk away. Please be kind to each other”. Finally, and intending herself as well, Terry noted, “We’ll learn from our mistakes”. (field notes, October 1, 2009)

Terry was objecting to how the students were simply turning away their peers, once their group had met the quota, without helping to ensure that everyone had a group to work with. In this regard, inclusion is associated with moral values of sensitivity, compassion, helpfulness and taking responsibility for each other’s wellbeing. It is also associated with Terry’s vision of happiness. Terry did assume some responsibility for
this, however, in acknowledging that her instructions may have obfuscated this moral message, and that the students likely did not have sinister intentions, but were attempting to be obedient. This may represent a point of confusion for students between the convention of doing what adults say, and moral values that seem to conflict with one’s interpretation of what is said. In clarifying her expectation, Terry pursued the moral message rather than the conventional message.

Terry also signals her expectations regarding inclusiveness, in the following prompt, while making holiday cards for the grade-two learning buddies.

If some buddies don’t get a card, they will feel left out. Their feelings will be hurt. Please make sure that we make cards for all the buddies, if someone is away today. If you know they celebrate other holidays besides Christmas you can make their card for that holiday instead. (field notes, December 15, 2009)

This associates inclusiveness with fairness. By noting a harmful outcome should the students not be fair, Terry identifies this act as moral in nature (Nucci, 2009). The final example of a spontaneously delivered message on inclusiveness involves the last seating arrangement of the year. Terry instructed, “I’ll allow you to sit next to who you want. But you must be inclusive. No one can say, ‘She didn’t want to sit with me’” (field notes, June 9, 2010).

Concluding Remarks

The formalized lessons recounted above were observed to be Terry’s most unnatural and contrived expression of moral agency. The following comment, made by Terry, suggests why this might be so:

I don’t lecture them about this too too often because then it feels like here we go again. Here’s the compassion; here’s the courage; here’s the respect. It isn’t connected to anything this way. (interview 2)
This is consistent with Terry’s lack of enthusiasm for pre-packaged learning programs and materials, and her former rejection of moral education as a piece of curriculum. Terry prefers instead to impart virtues more spontaneously and informally, as they become relevant to individual student needs and classroom life.

Further, as is the case in Chapter Six, the virtues and moral values that have been particularly named in this discussion—compassion, courage, cooperation, respect, responsibility and inclusiveness—were not the only virtues that Terry directly imparted to the students, just the most prominent and prioritized. Integrity, for example, was observed to be the subject of a direct message only once, despite also being a school value:

> You will all be admired and respected more by people if you are able to say what you did. That is being a person of integrity. Explain to me that you made a mistake. That is much better than me having to get it out of you. I have to be able to trust you to behave with integrity by this point in the year. I cannot be there every time. (field notes, June 7, 2010)

In fact, integrity is the only school value that Terry did not address in a formal lesson. She regrettably attributes this to a lack of time:

> I never got to integrity. I was thinking about it for the last two weeks of school and I never got to it. I really felt it would have been perfect at the end of the year, because I thought here we are, we’re reflecting and we’re older, and we’ve done all these things together. I thought it would be great just to finish off and to close it all with saying you’re doing the right thing all the time regardless of who’s looking at you or not looking at you. And also you are doing things that are good for the benefit of others as well. I thought it would be a really nice way to just close out the year. Never got to it. (interview 11)

Discussions

Noddings (2008) acknowledges that “talk of some kind” (p. 169) is recommended in all forms of moral education. In the context of care ethics, “talk” is referred to as
dialogue, and is considered to be “the most fundamental component of moral education from the care perspective” (Noddings, 2008, p. 169). As moral education, dialogue engages participants in a mutual search for understanding. Accordingly, it is open-ended, where the outcome is not pre-determined, but emerges. Further, dialogue involves two parties and is typically reciprocal, with both speaking, both listening, and both reflecting (Noddings, 2008). In the context of cognitive development, outlined in Chapter Two, “talk” is referred to as discussion. As moral education, discussion encourages new thinking among the students, on issues of a moral and social nature. “Students hear differing perspectives and points of view, and experience challenges to their own positions coming from peers as well as the teacher” (Nucci, 2009, p. 102). Despite these different theoretical positions, the terms dialogue and discussion are used interchangeably here, as they manifest similarly in Terry’s practice. I give precedence to the term discussion, however, to include “talk” that occurs with groups of students and the entire class, not only between two people. Regardless, Terry expresses desired outcomes relating to both care ethics and cognitive development, namely to strive for mutual understandings and nurture relationships, and to develop students’ moral reasoning and decision-making abilities:

When you talk things out loud, ideas become clearer and you get practice in expressing yourself very clearly, and people get a chance to listen to you and understand who you are, a little bit better. There’s such value in being able to say the ideas out loud and hearing other people say, “Well no, you don’t understand”. No one is encountering your views if it all stays in your head. So when you’re being challenged by other people, especially your peers at this age, there’s some meaning. You are forced to actually reason out much better. (interview 7)
Consequently, Terry routinely seizes and creates opportunities for discussion, as they emerge in the classroom from a variety of activities and circumstances. She explains:

There are some things that we do that are more naturally geared to developing students’ moral judgment, moral reasoning, ability to process moral matters, ability to identify moral issues. So whether it’s a newspaper article that talks about something like that and we briefly discuss it, if they want to. And then sometimes it comes up in stories that we read, or recess issues that happen. So day-to-day stuff, as well as some curriculum materials lead to those discussions more naturally, I think. (interview 9)

Examples of such discussions are recounted, to illustrate this range of opportunities and the range of issues that are addressed in support of Terry’s moral education goals. This first anecdote arose spontaneously at dismissal time, and involved the entire class.

“Please put this letter into your agenda and give it to your parents tonight. It’s from Mr. Patrick”, Terry announced as the class lined-up.

Conner initiated the questioning. “Ms. Kennedy, what’s lice? It says here that someone has it.”

Terry replied, “They are little bugs that like to live in hair. They don’t cause harm, but they are a bother and they need to be treated with a special shampoo that gets rid of them.”

“What do we need a letter about it?” Mary asked.

“Because lice travel from one head to another easily, and we can all get it pretty quickly. This way everyone can be watching out and we can hopefully prevent that from happening”, Terry said. Several children began to ask at once, “Who has it? Who is it?”

Bonnie speculated, “I think it is Amy because she isn’t here.”

Kathy concurred, but wondered, “Why would she need to miss school?”

“Why do you think the letter doesn’t say who it is?” Terry asked over their voices.
“Because when they come back to school people will treat them different and won’t want to play with them”, Frances explained.

“Right. Does it matter who has it?” Terry asked.

“Not really”, Alexander offered tentatively. He seemed as curious as the others to know who has lice, but was starting to sense that it isn’t his right to know.

Terry nodded, “They have a right to their privacy, don’t you think? How would you feel if it was you? Would you want others to know?” Everyone was watching Terry with undivided attention, but no one answered, understanding this to be a rhetorical question. “Make sure you think about treating others like you would want to be treated if it were you. That is a great guideline for a lot of things. We talk about that a lot, don’t we? All we need to know now is that we should check our own heads to make sure that if we have lice too, we get the treatment so it doesn’t spread. There is no need to know anything else about it. And, if one of you does happen to find out who it is, I hope you will keep it private and not spread that around. That would be gossip, and it could be very hurtful to the person. Do you all understand that?” Everyone nodded. The issue was not brought up again, to my knowledge, and I never found out who in the grade had lice. (field notes, September 30, 2009)

With a series of questions, Terry directed the students’ thinking toward the morally correct decisions to not pursue their curiosity in this instance, and to protect the privacy of the student with lice. In doing so, she conveyed messages related to sensitivity and respect, and by referencing The Golden Rule, evoked empathy.

Terry is often solicited by smaller groups of students, for her help to solve problems of a social nature. For this, she draws on protocols from the Peacemaker Program and the teachers’ coaching workshop, both of which were described in Chapter Five. The following anecdote recounts one such occurrence.
The June talent show is a really big deal, for the girls in particular. They begin in February to self-organize into groups, and to plan their song and dance performances. It is a potential hotbed of conflict, and Terry braces for it every year, even though it is considered extra-curricular.

Kathy and Frances pair-off early and decide to do a musical number together. They ask Bonnie to join them and make it a threesome. A couple of weeks go by without incident. Then suddenly, Kathy and Bonnie inform Frances that they have lost interest in what they were planning to do, and do not want to do it anymore. “Besides”, they tell her, “we are in other groups as well, and busy with those performances”. Frances is upset. She is not involved with any other group. In tears, she approaches Terry for help. “I have no one to be with”.

“Bonnie, Kathy and Frances, can you please all come to my desk for a few minutes?” Terry requested first thing the next morning. “I hear there is an issue about the talent show, and not everyone is feeling happy. I want to know what is going on.”

“Bonnie and I don’t want to do what Frances wants to do”, Kathy begins, with confidence.

“So have you talked about it? Have you talked about options?” Terry asks. A bit more hesitantly Kathy rephrases, “Well we don’t want to do it. And she wants to do it”.

“You just quit me”, Frances says bluntly.

Bonnie responds, “But we are too busy now. I have another dance and so does Kathy.”

“So that is a different issue. Let’s take turns and tell what happened”, Terry directs them.

Each girl recounts her version. Occasionally, Terry reminds them to not interrupt, “You will be next”. Frances speaks last, and tells Kathy and Bonnie that she now has nothing to do for the talent show and that no one will let her join a group because they are already working on their performances. Bonnie and Kathy, both sensitive girls, falter as they hear this. “Do you each understand what the others are saying now?” Terry asks. The three girls nod silently. Terry
continues, “So tell me, Kathy and Bonnie, how does it make you feel to hear Frances’ side of things?” Kathy and Bonnie had been struggling to hold back tears, and now cry openly. Terry turns back to Frances, “Do you understand things differently now that you’ve heard Kathy and Bonnie?” Frances replies that she does. “So what I’m understanding is that this is a matter of exclusion, even though you might not have intended it to be that way. I know you two girls would never do that intentionally to Frances. But we do have to fix this. You have left Frances with nothing and no one for the talent show.”

Terry lets Bonnie and Kathy settle a little before continuing. “It’s okay. That’s what happens when we talk openly about problems. It’s a good thing. We can’t solve this right now, though. Think about possible solutions, all three of you, and let’s keep the conversation open. Maybe by tomorrow we can have something decided that will be good for everyone.” With this, she sends the three of them into the hallway for a private chat together. “Come back when you feel you are ready.” A few moments later the three girls return, holding hands and smiling, with eyes still red.

The next day Kathy and Bonnie tell Frances that they are willing to do something with her. However, Frances has been able to join another group and is feeling much better. “So now we need to think of some strategies for the next time there is a conflict like this one, so no one’s feelings are hurt. We have not always been carefully considering our decisions and choices. We need to do a better job of that.”

Kathy offers, “We could ask for a private conversation with each other”.

Bonnie adds, “We could walk away to cool down”. Terry simply smiles and nods at the girls, quite satisfied, and sends them out to join their peers for recess. (field notes, March 4 and 5, 2010)

In this example, Terry is less directive regarding a morally correct decision, allowing the girls to generate the solution or resolution collaboratively. She focuses, instead, on the
process of discussion, to ensure the girls are fair, respectful, empathetic and tolerant. In addition, Terry identifies for them the moral core of exclusion and inclusion.

Terry recalls this third example from a former class. A discussion spontaneously arose among the students in regard to an upcoming fieldtrip to the zoo. It illustrates how Terry encourages the respectful sharing of ideas, even when these ideas are opposing. Different from the first two examples, Terry’s role is minimal; she does not express her own opinion or guide the students in theirs.

So two strongly opposing views is always interesting. Going to the zoo we had an issue whether or not the zoo is the right thing. Someone believed that you shouldn’t keep animals in cages and within small areas. She didn’t want to go to the zoo, didn’t think it was right. And then others said, “Well some of those animals are endangered and having them breed is helping to keep the species going”. It was really good to have a debate because that’s where you get the meaty stuff. We try to debate and respect each other’s opinions. It doesn’t mean that you have to change the other person’s opinion. But I like the students to see how you can talk about two opposing views and still relate to the other person well. It’s not about changing their minds. It’s just being able to speak their minds freely still being able to listen to each other. To open their minds up to different things, and to being more open about differences. (interview 1)

Terry is expressing two morally educative outcomes from this one discussion, encouraging moral behaviours of respect and tolerance, and stimulating moral reasoning by exposure to new ideas on moral issues.

Finally, the current events unit of study, in the second term, generated several class-wide discussions. Each student was responsible for reading and presenting four magazine or newspaper articles of their choosing. Terry explained to the students, “You can take anything from sports. You can take anything from National Geographic for Kids, about animals, about endangered environment stuff. You can take whatever you’re interested in” (field notes, January 11, 2010). Presentations were followed by questions
to clarify information, and a discussion to generate deeper understanding. Often the issues were of a moral and ethical nature. One particular series of discussions is recounted in the service activities section, below, for its relevance to imparting values related to serving others in need. Although not repeated, it is relevant here as well, for also supporting the development of students’ moral reasoning and decision-making abilities.

These examples demonstrate that Terry may or may not remain neutral during discussions. She says:

Sometimes it isn’t right for me to give my own opinions or my own judgement, because it might just be my perception of things. However, having lived a longer life than them and knowing more things about the world, I feel in most cases I need to give them that extra, a different point of view. (interview 7)

This decision is made in the moment, and depends on the issues and views raised by the students, and how the moral core is addressed. On one hand, Terry posits, “It’s not our business to put forth what our judgement is and what our solution is. The thing is to listen to them and to ask them questions, and see if they can come forward with the solutions” (interview 3). This was illustrated by the zoo discussion. Two opposing opinions were presented on the ethics of keeping animals in a zoo. Terry did not express her own opinion or challenge the students likely because both were interpretations of respecting animals, and the moral core was not in dispute. At other times, Terry feels compelled to direct the students toward what she perceives to be a morally justifiable decision, opinion or stance. She explains why, in relation to her education goals:

When I’m not comfortable with them having a certain perception, then I want to change it. Usually I try to respect everybody’s opinion. But when there’s something that I don’t agree with and I can’t leave it, then I have to give them the right direction or a different way to think about it. Otherwise, I wouldn’t be
teaching them anything. They’d just stay with the same thinking and that wouldn’t be right either. If it’s something that is so blatantly wrong, then I would definitely say, “I don’t think that what you just said can be said like that”.

(interview 7)

The lice discussion illustrates how Terry works to change the students’ opinions when a moral value is at stake. Finally, Terry may not want to change the students’ opinion, but to present an alternative perspective. In the following example, Kay is applying the moral value of helpfulness, and Terry is presenting, as an alternative, the value of autonomy.

Kay couldn’t understand why Afghani people didn’t want Canadian and American soldiers there to help them. She couldn’t understand why in Afghanistan people would want to hurt Canadian or American soldiers. And I said, “It’s okay. You don’t understand that. It’s okay not to understand that and to have your own opinion. However, they want to be able to solve their own problems and they don’t want foreigners in their land solving them for them”. She still didn’t get it, but at least there’s another way to look at it. (interview 7)

When the issue is political in nature, Terry remains neutral on the politics, but repositions the issue as moral. For example, during the current events discussion on Afghani people Terry focused on empathy and sensitivity, rather than the politics of peace and war. She provides the following additional examples:

If the issue had been with whether or not to give the same rights to gay people, I know where I stand with that. But in that particular case, because it’s political, I wouldn’t tell them that this is the right way. However, what I would say is, “You have to keep an open mind. And you have to make sure that people have equal rights, or human rights. And are you treating them like human beings who are equal to you, if you are saying certain things about them?” Or, “You want them to have the same rights as you”. So then it becomes, “You can have your own opinions about that kind of stuff. But just make sure you see it as a way of dealing with human beings equally”. What if someone were to get an article about prolife or abortion issues? In that case I can say to them, “Everyone has a right to believe in what they believe in. So if they believe in all babies having the right to live, by all means they have a right to believe that. But if you strongly
believe that then you also have to keep an open mind that the other side has a right to their belief”. (interview 7)

Terry does not, however, welcome all discussion that is initiated by students, revealing that sometimes discussion might not be positive or productive. She illustrates this with the following two examples. In the first, Terry expresses concern for implicitly supporting a morally negative attitude of intolerance and exclusion among the girls.

We had a tough time last week with the girls. And we’re still having a bit of an issue with the girls, because they’re starting to get on each other’s nerves. And so then they would come up and talk to me, in a foursome, about other people, and what other people are doing that they don’t like. The ganging up feeling is so uncomfortable for me. They said to me that they needed to talk. But on the other hand, at these moments when I know that things are happening, it’s almost a cycle where if I do give them a lot of time and attention to continue to talk about it and to focus on it, then they feed on that as well. (interview 5)

In this next example, Terry is concerned about contributing to Zeth’s insecurity, and lack of courage and confidence.

And Zeth right now is very anxious about the concert again, because he hates too many people looking at him. But I know not to bother saying anything about it to him, and trying not to focus on it with him. When he said to me, “Now it’s the concert coming up again”, I just said, “Yup. But you did it last time, and you didn’t die”. He may say, “Yes I did”. But I don’t talk about it at length with him because I think he has a tendency to think and think and think about it, mull it over till it makes him crazy with anxiety. Better to just get on with other things. (interview 9)

Terry’s experience, instinct, and knowledge of individual students allow her to make this judgment regarding the limitations of discussion and the nature of the messages that might be communicated. This is the case, even when the discussion is open-ended and reciprocal (Noddings, 2008), and exposes students to alternative perspectives and viewpoints (Nucci, 2009). The negative potential of discussion is an interesting insight.
that contributes to Oser’s (1994) concern for the morally negative outcomes or side effects of teachers’ pedagogies. He notes that each teaching decision has a number of possible negative consequences, of which several are immoral. Examples relating to group work are recounted in Chapter Three. Oser advocates for teachers to consider the possible negative consequences, as Terry has, when making pedagogical decisions.

While these discussions may encourage students’ moral reasoning, nurture caring relationships among them, and necessitate the expression of moral values, they also afford an opportunity for Terry to model non-moral values of listening and suspending judgment, and moral values of respect, care, tolerance, and patience. Terry credits the teachers’ coaching workshop for helping her to develop and apply these values in her practice:

The coaching workshop was very eye-opening in the sense that this is what we normally do when we listen. When we listen to adults we interrupt a lot, and we put in our judgements to situations. If someone was telling me a problem I did judge. Also, before the coaching workshop I used to be in such a hurry when I listened. If they had a problem after recess I always tried to hurry things up, and before they finished telling me their story I used to interrupt and say, “Is this what happened next?” because I was trying to hurry them along. And after the workshop I learned that it has nothing to do with what I think about the situation. I learned to step back and take myself out of it and just listen… I learned to be a better listener, and I learned to ask questions that are pertinent to what the person’s telling me, and not to just make assumptions about the problem. So now I always say to the kids when I’m listening to them, “I’m not making a judgement here. I’m just asking.” (interview 6)

Reflecting on her current listening abilities, Terry says, “I think I’m a good listener. I do try to listen with the kids” (interview 4). Of interest is Terry’s use of the word with, in saying “listen with the kids”. This might be passed over as a miscommunication that was meant to be “listen to the kids”. Yet, the word with is consistent with how Terry
generally places herself in relationship with the students. It also suggests the significance of these relationships to discussions. Accordingly, Terry observes that the students are not as forthcoming at the beginning of the school year, prior to the establishment of a relationship with her: “If it’s too early in the year, usually they don’t talk to me about what’s happening. But later on they start to be more open” (interview 1). In support of Terry’s claims, I observed her to be fully and attentively engaged with the students in discussion, nodding, questioning or laughing, as appropriate. She is neither hurried nor distracted, as she bends, crouches or sits beside a student, intentionally to be at eye level and hold eye contact. Her explanation of these behaviours is reminiscent of the discussion in Chapter Six on respect:

I want to be on level with them. I don’t want them to think that this is me up here and this is you down here, and you’re below me and you’re not as important as me. And also, I want them to know that I really pay attention to whatever it is that we’re discussing. (interview 4)

*Discipline*

In Terry’s practice, discipline is an educative process that helps students make right and good choices and decisions regarding their own behaviours. As such, discipline is related to self-control and self-regulation, and maintains the ultimate goal of self-discipline. Terry articulates these goals, as follows:

Because more and more, that’s where I’m heading. Part of being independent and being responsible is knowing yourself and becoming more aware of what your needs are. So if you think, “Okay, I’m really close to my friend and I’m chatting too much”, I want them to get to the point where they can think it through and say, “I need to get work done. So maybe this is not the best choice. I can talk to my friend at recess. But this is not the right choice for now”. (interview 2)
Terry explains further:

A boy sees a very good friend doing a certain thing, it affects the boy and he wants to do the same thing too. And as long as the role model is a good role model then I say nothing and I keep going. If the person is not a good role model then I would take the follower and talk to him or her. I might say, “I know you are very good friends, and I am not questioning the friendship. I think it’s very good that you are good friends. I just want you to realize that sometimes your friend isn’t going to make good decisions. And in that moment when your friend isn’t making good decisions, I want you to know yourself, within yourself, whether or not it’s the right decision for you too. Do not do it just because your friend is doing it.” I don’t break them up or anything, but I am making the follower more aware of the times when he or she could break away from doing the same things. That it’s okay to do that and still be friends with the person, but not necessarily do everything the other person’s doing. (interview 6)

The inherent beliefs and assumptions expressed in these passages conform to the theory of developmental discipline (Watson, 2003, 2008). Although Terry does not position her practices as such, and is not familiar with the theoretical underpinnings, she demonstrates the use of indirect, proactive and desist control techniques, as the theory describes. I discuss her practices in the context of these three techniques to highlight particular features relevant to moral education, but not to suggest that Terry, herself, thinks about discipline practices in this way.

Indirect controls are pre-established and not linked to a particular occurrence of poor behaviour. Rather, they serve as general guidelines for desirable behaviours and caveats for undesirable behaviours. As such, they function to increase the potential for the former and to limit the possibility of the latter, in a variety of circumstances (Watson, 2008). Watson (2008) identifies classroom rules as important indirect controls. The recommendation to establish such rules in collaboration with students is ubiquitous in moral education literature, regardless of the philosophical orientation (Hildebrandt &
Zan, 2008; Jackson, Boosstrom & Hansen, 1993; Lickona, 2004; Richardson & Fenstermacher, 2000, 2001). Yet, the idea of classroom rules represents a key distinction between the literature and Terry’s moral agency. As previously mentioned, Terry does not maintain classroom rules. She explains:

I don’t know if there are any hard set rules in this class, aside from the fact that if someone’s talking you have to listen. I don’t do rules. Teachers are always saying that it’s really good. And there are a lot of books that say it’s really good to have your class come up with things that they are agreeing to for the entire year. Like a student pledge. And that the teacher should do a pledge as well. But I never find that I refer to it beyond that. It just never worked for me. (interview 3)

Even the rule that Terry identifies as listening when someone else speaks is frequently articulated to the students in terms of respect and helpfulness, and not as a rule:

When she’s talking, you are remaining respectful and listening. (field notes, October 2, 2009)

Everyone who speaks should be heard. That’s being respectful (field notes, September 14, 2009).

I think you have forgotten that when someone is talking you need to listen. Even if you aren’t interested, you must listen. That’s respect. (field notes, September 15, 2009)

It is not helpful for anyone if you talk while others are talking? So if it is not helpful behaviour, please don’t do it. It is probably causing someone a problem. (field notes, September 15, 2009)

This lends credibility to Terry’s comment: “What makes the rules right anyway are the values they represent” (interview 10).

Consequently, the establishment of classroom values represents the indirect control used by Terry. In addition to listening, Terry’s students learn that they should not be disruptive, particularly while working outside of the classroom; they should not eat in
front of other students when it is not recess or lunch; they should share with everyone or no one; and they may leave the classroom at their discretion, but only if the need is urgent during a lesson. Although general conventions of classroom life, these are not stated as rules, but as moral values of respect, fairness, consideration and thoughtfulness for others. As such, they do not require a process of collaboration and consent, because, unlike conventions and rules, they are universally and objectively understood as good and right regarding human interactions. Terry reflects that rules, may in fact, obfuscate or undermine these moral values, and remove the obligation for students to reflect on their actions and make morally right decisions. In the absence of rules, Terry believes that the students learn to behave according to what they “should do, rather than rules that should be followed” (interview 2). This goal is consistent with Watson’s (2008) belief that “moral action must be taken for moral reasons and not to avoid punishment, gain pleasure, emulate a powerful model, or please authority” (p. 179). Watson’s assertion that rules be ground in moral principles, and Terry’s priority on moral values over rules serve the same educative purposes—to stimulate students’ reasoning on moral issues, and to help students make good and right choices and decisions regarding their behaviours.

While indirect controls are broadly applied, proactive controls are linked to particular events or activities where misbehaviour is anticipated. These controls include suggestions, guidelines, explanations and expectations that are specified in advance, to pre-empt the possibility of poor behaviour and signal what qualifies as good behaviour (Watson, 2008). This was evident in Terry’s practice, prior to fieldtrips, assemblies, special activity days, or events. Terry explains her intent:

I learned from last year’s class. If I give them a “here’s what I’m looking for”, “here’s what it’s going to be like”, “here’s what I’m expecting”, they’re okay.
They get it. There are no surprises and they know what they have to do.
(interview 9)

Two examples illustrate this. The first occurred in relation to a visiting author. Terry said to the class, “It is a privilege to have a real-life author visit us. Take paper for an autograph if you want, but we should first find out if it would be okay to ask for an autograph. Don’t just shove the paper in the author’s face” (field notes, November 25, 2009). Terry is signalling to students the need for behaviour that is considerate and sensitive to both the situation and the author, although, she does not name these moral values. The second example relates to a message Terry wrote on the whiteboard (field notes, December 8, 2009). This is reproduced as Figure 9, entitled Whiteboard On Rehearsal Day.

Figure 9. Whiteboard on rehearsal day

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Good Morning!

This is rehearsal day so please be patient and expect changes in our schedule.

SMILE!
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In this example, Terry does name the moral value that characterizes the behaviours she expects, but is less specific regarding those behaviours. Accordingly, her instruction obligates the students to interpret for themselves what is meant by patience and what patience might look like. These two examples are representative of how Terry
encourages the students to pre-emptively reflect on their behaviours, in regard to pro-social and moral values.

Lastly, desist controls are reactive, used to stop negative behaviour that is already taking place. This includes teaching students to make alternative and better behavioural choices, while also preserving their sense of competence, autonomy, belonging and dignity. Watson (2008) suggests seven guidelines for doing so: (a) address the cause of the problem; (b) prioritize solutions, not consequences or punishments; (c) highlight harmful effects; (d) engage students in problem-solving and making restitution; (e) maximize student autonomy and minimize adult power; (f) assume the best student motives consistent with the facts; and (g) focus on behaviour, not the individual student.

Three examples, recounted below, demonstrate and typify the educative use of desist controls in Terry’s practice, with varying combinations of these guidelines. The first anecdote involves an incident with Tom Sinclair, the school’s psychologist.

The behaviour of the grade-four boys during music class had not been good for a couple of weeks. In consultation with Terry and Wendy, the music teacher asked Tom to sit in and provide some support. After the second session, Tom returned to Terry’s classroom with the students, and asked Terry if he might have a few words with the class. Leaning on a stool at the front of the room, he began. “I want Ms. Kennedy to hear this too. What I just witnessed about your behaviour in music was not good. If I was someone who didn’t know you, I would think that you were a group of rude children. Now I know that isn’t true. I know you are not at all rude kids. You are sweet kids. And Ms. Jacobs knows that too. That is why she is very patient with you. I wanted to tell you my thoughts on this. I think that I owe it to you to let you know.” Terry thanked Tom for taking the time to be with them in music, and to talk with them now. With a smile and a wave, he left the class.
Terry closed the door behind Tom, and assumed his position by the stool. “That’s the second time a teacher has told me about something that’s happened in music. I didn’t say anything the first time, because I thought you might be able to fix it on your own. I wanted to give you that chance. If you are responsible for this behaviour, please ask yourself, ‘Are you being influenced by somebody else?’ If the answer is yes, you are still responsible for your behaviour. So you may need to move somewhere else. In that case, you need to tell Ms. Jacobs that you need to move. Make a decision about this before you get into trouble. You are old enough to decide this.” Terry paused and looked at each face before continuing. “The next time you have music, not tomorrow but the day after, you owe Ms. Jacobs an apology. I will walk down with you, and we need to apologize for what happened. My hope is that you will not need another talking to by Mr. Sinclair. I know you. You are excellent with me. I understand that you have other kids in music as well, and that means lots of distractions. Now you need to step-up and do better. I don’t want anyone else telling me that you are not behaving.” (field notes, October 1, 2009)

In this incident, Terry addresses the cause of the problem, as allowing oneself to be influenced by students from the other class. She prioritizes solutions, not punishments, such as requesting a seating change. She insists the students make restitution at their next music class, by apologizing to the music teacher. She maximizes student autonomy and minimizes adult power, by telling the students that they must initiate the solution and take ownership of the apology. She assumes the best motives consistent with the facts, by indicating that the students are capable of good behaviour, and are likely misguided in this circumstance; and she focuses on the behaviour, not individual students. In doing so, Terry is stimulating students’ moral reasoning abilities, conveying moral message of responsibility, honesty and consideration for others, and modelling moral values of fairness, respect and trust.
The second anecdote relates to the students’ behaviour with a supply teacher.

Terry is rarely away from school. In the fall term, however, the school’s field hockey team, which she coaches, played in a tournament. A supply teacher was brought in for the day to cover her classes. Knowing that the supply teacher had not been pleased with the students’ behaviour, she asked the next day, “How did everything go with the supply teacher yesterday?” The class responded almost in unison, “Fine.” Terry replied, “All fine?” The students remained silent, and some lowered their gaze. Terry continued, “I heard that you were very noisy. What happened?” Again, no response. Terry continued. “When you are working they should not be able to hear you next door or across the hall. Just do your work. I know you can do it because you do it every day with me. What else can we think about this situation? What can we do about it?” Kathy raised her hand, although she is rarely the noisy one, “Next time we will stay quiet and do what the supply teacher says.” “Thank you Kathy. I think that is a good idea.” (field notes, September 23, 2009)

In this incident, Terry again focuses on behaviour rather than individual students, and solutions rather than consequences or punishments. In asking students to provide the solution she preserves their autonomy; and in asking them, with incredulity, “What happened?”, she credits them with the best possible motives under the circumstances. The moral lessons are similar to those above.

This final example of a desist control involves a group of students who were misbehaving while working outside the classroom.

Terry: This group needs to come back into the classroom. There is too much fooling around, and you are too noisy.

Conner: It wasn’t all of us Ms. Kennedy. It was Sammie. She was acting silly and not cooperating.
Sammie: No. It wasn’t me.

Conner: Yes it was Sammie. You know it was. We were trying to work. We told you to stop a lot of times.

Terry: Sammie, we’ve been through this before. You need to tell me the truth. You need to tell me what your part in all of this was. You need to take responsibility if you were involved.

Sammie: I wasn’t doing anything.

Conner: Yes you were. And you know it. We all know it!

Terry: Okay. Thank you Connor. Please take the group and set-up somewhere in here.

The group left and settled nearby, around an unoccupied desk. Terry continued privately with Sammie. “Now Sammie, if what Connor is saying is true, and I think it is because the rest of the group is nodding in agreement with him, you are accountable to your group for your behaviour. You are preventing them from getting the job done. You are wasting their work time. You need to take responsibility for this and make it right. I am expecting you to do this now.” Sammie began to protest, but Terry simply said, “Make it right Sammie”, and then walked away to check on another group. Sammie re-joined her group. She did not say anything further by way of apology, but began to work with them on the project. (field notes, June 7, 2010)

In this case, Terry targeted a particular student and held her responsible for her behaviour and accountable to her group. Remaining focused on Sammie’s behaviour as the
problem, and not her personality, Terry preserved Sammie’s dignity and assumed the best possible motives. Terry also noted the harmful consequences of this behaviour, related to hindering the group’s ability to accomplish the assigned task. Instead of punishing Sammie, Terry encouraged her to find a solution and make restitution. Moral values of honesty, responsibility, and consideration for others were reinforced with Sammie. In addition, Terry modelled fairness and trust for the other students.

It should be noted, specifically in regard to desist controls, that Terry is not required to manage extremes of poor behaviour. As a private, independent school, Middlevale is under no obligation to accept students with behavioural problems, and has a general policy not to. In addition, Terry has direct and immediate access to support from Jonathan, the administrator in charge of discipline and the Character Development Program, and Tom, the school’s psychologist. Further, the school-level approach to discipline is similarly educative, focused on developing self-discipline among students. This was described in Chapter Five, as the stimulus for the Character Development Program. As Terry illustrates with Zeth, who had just transferred from a public school, students become acculturated with consistent behavioural expectations from all their teachers.

Ms. Brick, the drama teacher had come back from teaching them drama and she said, “Did Zeth come from a public school?” I said, “yes”. She said that his skits all had to do with putting a gun to the head of others. She said to him, “That’s not what we do here”. Then she went on with the lesson and he still did it again in another skit. “That’s not what we do here”. But he’s new. He hasn’t been with the group and he doesn’t know what we’re like. I think usually they do change along with us. (interview 2)
Community service or service-learning, as an approach to moral education, is justified by different theoretical positions. In accordance with Dewey’s pedagogical discourse, some proponents assert that participating with community members to solve problems of a cultural, environmental, political or historical nature affords students the opportunity to gain understandings, perspectives, dispositions and skills related to solving civic, moral and social problems (Hart, Matsuba & Atkins, 2008; Morgan & Streb, 2001; Schuitema, ten Dam & Veugelers, 2008). Other proponents claim that service exposes students to a network of people who may espouse diverse beliefs and values. This expands students’ ideological and social-moral frameworks, and provides them with role models and mentors (Hart, Matsuba & Atkins, 2008). Finally, others hold that service imparts pro-social and moral values, particularly empathy, courage, and compassion, and instils a general concern for human welfare. This is purported to motivate students to continue serving others, and to reduce negative behaviours among youth (Hart, Matsuba & Atkins, 2008; Howard, 2005; Howard, Berkowitz & Schaeffer, 2004; Lickona, 1991; Ryan & Bohlin, 1999). As a result of these claims, service activities have been broadly recommended in moral education literature. Howard (2005) observes:

As is the case with classroom discussions of ethical issues, all three moral education approaches [character education, cognitive development, and care ethics] embrace service-learning as a strategy and it can be used across disciplines. (p. 54)

Terry’s interest in providing service opportunities for her students began long before delving into this literature to create the school’s Character Development Program. She reflects:
The one thing that I’m thankful for with my background is that I got to be in so many different countries. And when we were in North Africa we travelled everywhere. And that instilled in me a global mindedness. It made me who I am. So I’m not interested in just here, what’s happening close by. (interview 1)

Terry brings the values of global mindedness to the school, in her role as community outreach liaison, and cherishes the opportunities this role provides to convey moral values of helpfulness, responsibility and justice:

I love taking myself and children’s minds out beyond what they are comfortable with. And to be just really aware of what’s happening in the world. And relate it back to their lives. To be helpful in a global way…. I want to contribute to making the world a better place by going through the younger generation and I’m hoping that I’ll be able to plant some seeds to help them create a better world at some point in the future. (interview 1)

Initially, the structure for integrating service into the school and classroom was inspired by the non-governmental organization (NGO) Free the Children (FTC), which began in Canada as a network of children helping children through education and engagement with social justice issues. It maintains two goals, freeing children from poverty and exploitation, primarily in Africa, and freeing young people in the developed world from the notion that they are powerless to effect positive changes in the world (freethechildren.com). Both goals resonate with Terry. Accordingly, she displays five Me to We books, published by FTC, in the professional library behind her desk:

*Take action! A guide to active citizenship* by Marc Kielburger and Craig Kielburger (2002, Toronto, Canada: Gage Learning Corporation).


*Me to We: turning self-help on its head* by Craig Kielburger and Marc Kielburger (2004, Toronto, Canada: John Wiley and Sons Ltd.).

Take Action: A guide to active citizenship by Marc Kielburger and Craig Kielburger (2007, Toronto, Canada: Me to We Books).

Terry also organized activities through FTC. She describes one from a previous class:

Two or three years ago there was a time when my class and I talked about community service and we were doing a Free the Children Project. We wanted to make sure that throughout the year we tried to raise money to buy the community a goat and to buy the community the sewing machine that they needed.

(interview 1)

Terry continues to expresses an interest in the types of experiences FTC provides for students, such as trips to build schools in developing countries, although, she no longer depends on FTC, recognizing that other NGOs provide similar experiences:

I thought it might be a great idea for our senior students to go on a trip if they were interested in leadership. There are some organizations that take older students to a less fortunate country or area, and they help to build schools. I always thought that I’d like to do that with older kids. But they’re too young here. It starts at age 14. So I thought that I’d actually take that on myself.

(interview 1)

Although Terry has yet to organize a trip of this nature, she did help to develop an infrastructure for service at Middlevale, known as the Community Outreach Program, and currently acts as its liaison. This program was outlined in Chapter Five, as an expression of the Character Development Program, and a means of conveying the school values of respect, responsibility, integrity, compassion and courage. Several examples of activities that Terry’s class participated in throughout the school year are described below. I have categorized them as adult-initiated and student-initiated, and action-oriented and learning-oriented. The distinction between adult- and student-initiated activities is based on who initiates the activity and who maintains leadership of it. The
The distinction between action- and learning-oriented activities is based on who is the primary beneficiary. Action-oriented activities obligate students and their families to take action in regard to particular charities or needs that have been identified. Accordingly, they emphasize benefits to recipients. Learning-oriented activities primarily benefit students. They are not associated with particular charities, and students have no active role to play in serving others. Rather, they provide an opportunity to increase awareness of social-moral issues, both locally and globally; to reinforce moral values, such as empathy, courage, compassion, justice, sensitivity, tolerance, responsibility and helpfulness; and to stimulate students’ moral reasoning, problem-solving and decision-making skills. It is acknowledged that in acting one has the opportunity to cultivate generosity, compassion courage, and empathy, among other moral values, and that in learning one may be motivated to act. Yet, the data do not indicate that Terry’s practices intentionally support such integration between learning and acting. Consequently, the examples below are presented in discrete categories, as summarized in Table 8 entitled Service Activities.

Table 8

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Adult-initiated Service

Adult-initiated service activities are generally school-wide, and entail a low level of student leadership. There were five such activities during my year of fieldwork. The first relates to the three special activity days introduced in Chapter Five, the themes of which were Remembrance Day, cultural diversity, and environmental sustainability. These events are not linked to particular charities, and the students have no active role related to serving others. Instead, they are of primary benefit to the students’ growth and development. The programs are organized by Jonathan, and set apart from classroom life. For Remembrance Day and cultural diversity day, however, Terry used her discretion to raise related themes in the classroom. These sessions are recounted anecdotally.

November 11 did not begin like the other school days. The students arrived in top uniform, polished and pressed from head to toe. The teachers were dressed in business attire, full suits for the men, with many of the women in dresses and skirts, the colours of which were generally dark and solid. Terry wore a black sweater, black skirt, and black dress boots. A small silk teal scarf around her neck and a red poppy over her left breast provided the only colour. She typically did not wear makeup, and today was no exception.

The students were hushed in the hallways and hurriedly shuffled off to class. The usual lingering, chattiness and commotion were not tolerated. In the classroom, the mood was also palpably different, sombre and serious as the students quietly read. At 8:45, Terry asked the students in hushed tones to put their books away. “In a few minutes we will be going to the assembly. How is today’s assembly different from our other assemblies?”

Conner answered, “It’s Remembrance Day”.

“Yes, what does that mean?”
“It is about remembering the soldiers who fought in the war to keep Canada safe”, replied Kay.

“Yes, so what does that mean about the mood of today’s assembly? Do you think we will be cheering and laughing like we do at other assemblies?”

The students replied in unison, “No”. For the next few minutes, Terry more specifically briefed the students on behavioural expectations. “You will need to sit still for a long time. Also it’s polite to look at the speakers while they are speaking, and listen carefully.

The class joined others in the hallway on the way to the assembly, each class walking in single-file with only the sound of echoed footsteps. The gymnasium was also arranged differently. Rows of chairs signalled a longer than usual assembly, and were arranged lengthwise in front of a stage. Terry led the class to a row near the middle and counted 16 chairs from the aisle, sitting in the 16th near centre stage. I sat in the aisle seat. The students sat between us, and engaged in the hour-long program that included a student’s grandmother who discussed her wartime experiences as a young girl, and a slideshow of Canadian soldiers who more recently lost their lives in Afghanistan.

After the assembly, the students returned to the classroom. Terry announced, “There is something that you can do, a contribution that you can make. It is important for us to learn, to remember, but also to contribute”. The students were handed large sized postcards with the school’s emblem. They were asked to write a message and draw a picture for a war veteran, acknowledging his or her contribution to the country. This was eagerly undertaken, with some students producing more than one. Noah told the class that he has a great uncle who is a veteran. Terry asked, “What can you tell us about his experiences?” When Noah couldn’t recall anything, she encouraged him to find out what he could and report back. Meanwhile, he made an extra card especially for him.

Just before lunch, Terry gathered the postcards and the students’ attention. “The soldiers had the courage to help. They took responsibility to protect our rights and freedoms. This is about us having courage to help too, not in quite the same way. It is about us taking responsibility. What can we do as a class to help others?” This
was Terry’s introduction to the end-of-year service project. Several fundraising ideas were suggested, particularly by the girls. “These are some very good ideas. It can be other things too, not just raising money. Let’s think about it a bit more and we’ll talk again. We still have time.”

The rest of the day was spent rotating through a variety of activities spread across the campus, including learning how to march according to particular commands, viewing grade-eight projects on various aspects of World War I, and story reading. Terry and I wandered together, but independently of the class, catching-up with different groups of students at several points, and sharing in the activities with them, when we did. (field notes, November 11, 2009)

Terry utilized this opportunity to model respectful conduct, and to communicate, more directly, values of respect, courage, responsibility, and helpfulness.

In preparation for the cultural diversity day, on February 11, 2010, Terry read to the students a book called *Selavi: A Haitian Story of Hope* (Landowne, 2004). The jacket cover summarizes this true story of compassion, justice and courage, as follows:

The story of Selavi celebrates the triumphs of children who face some of life’s most difficult challenges. In these pages, you’ll meet Selavi, a homeless child who is befriended by other children living on the streets in Haiti. They look out for one another, sharing food and companionship. Together they find the voice to express the needs of Timoun Lari, the children who live in the streets. With a caring community, they are able to build a shelter, and from there to create Radyo Timoun, children’s radio, a station run by and for children, which is still in operation today. At Radyo Timoun, the questions and suggestions of children are broadcast for all to hear.

The story takes place in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, a country which has a long history of resistance and struggle. Haiti is the birthplace of Toussaint L’ouverture and many others whose dedication to justice led to Haitian independence from slaveowners. Haiti is perhaps best known as the island which orchestrated the first successful revolt by enslaved peoples in the western hemisphere in 1804.
After reading the story aloud, Terry initiated a brief discussion with the students, referencing their classroom community, and drawing on their personal experiences more broadly, to relay moral values of taking responsibility for and helping others.

For both of these special activity days, Terry provided a forum in her classroom for discussions on themes and values related to service. This allowed her to identify for students the moral underpinnings of service, including courage, respect, responsibility, and helpfulness. While there was an action component associated with the Remembrance Day event, none was organized for cultural diversity day. In addition, the students were not made aware of how their postcards were distributed to veterans and received by them. The intent of these service events, both at the school-level and in the classroom, was primarily for the benefit of students, in support of their learning, growth and development.

Four adult-initiated activities did obligate students and their families to take action, in benefit of recipients. These activities are coordinated by Terry for the school, and linked to particular charities or needs. The first is known as loonie days. On eleven designated days in the school year, the students wear street clothes to school, rather than uniforms. They pay one dollar for this privilege, which is donated by the school to a variety of charities. Terry recalls:

I talked about where the money is going, the different initiatives and organizations that help people. And they all brought in their money except for three students who forgot. So that was really nice. (interview 3)

At the end of the year, a note was placed in the parent newsletter, indicating that donations had been made to three particular charities. I did not observe any direct follow-up with the students, however. It is unclear if they were made aware of how much
money was raised overall, what charities benefitted, how the charities were selected, and who was involved in making these selections.

The second example is Christmas hampers. Each class was assigned a local family in need. The students filled a large container with items that the family had requested, such as non-perishable foods, clothes, toys, games, school supplies, and store gift cards. On December 1, 2009, Terry announced this project to the class, and posted a note on the whiteboard with the names of their assigned family members, the ages of the children, and their item requests. The class was aware that they were helping a single mother, and her teenage daughter and eleven year-old son. Terry asked the students to discuss possible contributions with their parents. By the end of the second week in December the fully stocked hamper was sealed and labelled. Terry arranged for hampers to be collected from the classrooms around the school and delivered to the corresponding addresses. This project was timed for Christmas, and aimed at Christian families in need. To my understanding, no other religious group was targeted for a service project. Neither Terry nor the students questioned the moral implications of this activity, as exclusive, likely accepting it as a societal convention of charity.

A third example is the school’s Global Village, a spontaneous fundraiser in response to the earthquake that destroyed Haiti in January of 2010. Each class set up a booth in the school’s main building, to either sell items that were purchased or made, or to host an event where admission was charged. The latter included, for example, a disco dance and story reading. At Terry and Wendy’s suggestion, the two grade-four classes decided to sell custom-made notecards. Supplies were donated by the students and their families, and also purchased by Terry and Wendy with their art budget. Class and recess
time were allotted to prepare the cards. On the afternoon of March 26, 2010, from 2:00 to 3:30 pm, the students, teachers and staff visited the booths, participating in activities and purchasing items. Students had been requested to bring 25 dollars for spending. The grade-four notecards sold-out quickly, for two dollars each. The entire event raised approximately five thousand dollars, an achievement that was celebrated at a subsequent school-wide assembly. Terry congratulated her class for their contributions.

The end-of-year project is the fourth and final example of an adult-initiated and action-oriented activity in which Terry’s class participated. Although each grade works independently on this, participation is a school-wide expectation, articulated as follows:

From grades 3-6, students will decide on a class activity that will allow students to engage personally with the local or global community (parent handbook 2009/2010)

Wendy and Terry determined that the grade fours would make craft kits for children undergoing therapy for neurological disorders and injuries. Terry introduced the project, and described paraplegia and quadriplegia. She asked the students to search their homes for unused art supplies, or to purchase supplies for donation. A few weeks later, Kathy, Bonnie, Sammie and Pia assembled the kits, on behalf of the class. To my knowledge, there was no follow-up discussion on how these kits were received.

It can be assumed that recipients did benefit from the students’ generosity and participation in these four action-oriented activities. The potential learning benefits for students, however, are less clear in the absence of discussions and collective reflection. To stimulate students’ moral reasoning, problem-solving and decision-making skills, Terry might have used these initiatives to probe topics such as how one makes decisions to provide service, how one determines who is in need of help, what one’s obligation is to
help others in need, and what forms such help might assume. Additionally, the issues that each charity addresses might have been given broader context, as a means of imparting moral values of fairness, justice, compassion, empathy, sensitivity, tolerance, responsibility and helpfulness. In relation to Haiti, for example, Terry might have discussed natural disasters, and how the living conditions of some people make them more vulnerable. In relation to the Christmas hampers, issues of homelessness, poverty and human dignity may have been explored. In relation to the craft kits, Terry might have noted the difficulties of living with disability, and how children with paralysis may create art. Some of these themes were addressed in current events discussions, as noted below, but without reference to these particular activities.

*Student-initiated Activities*

Terry encourages her students to also initiate service activities, within the context of their class. This provides them with a leadership opportunity. Three examples were observed. Two are action-oriented and linked to charities, and a third is learning-oriented. The first action-oriented activity was initiated by Pia. With Terry’s permission, Pia addressed the class regarding a Tim Horton’s contest to raise money for cancer research. Family and friends were participating in memory of her uncle, who had passed away. She explained that pledges could be made on the Tim Horton’s website. The students asked many questions that Pia was unable answer. Terry went online at her desk to help, but there remained a lack of clarity. The next day, Terry made the following announcement to the class:

I just want to explain that whenever people at school talk to you about something that they would like you to support or donate to, I would like you to do all the research and ask lots of questions and find out about the charity so you can make a decision if this charity is one you would like to support. This isn’t a
competition with your friends. It’s about what you think is worthwhile to support. It can be a very private thing. And it is something that you can decide. We won’t be judging you. (field notes, September 16, 2009)

It is uncertain if any of the students contributed to the charity. Terry reflected on this experience in a subsequent interview with me:

With Pia, it was very last minute and we barely got any information before she presented it. What I learned from that experience is that I needed to teach them how to decide on supporting a cause, and that it is their decision whether or not they want to support it. Everybody doesn’t have to support the same cause. But we didn’t have that talk. We needed to have more discussion about what community service initiatives can be taken in as a whole class or as a community, or something of your personal choice. But I want them to come in with suggestions and I’m open to their suggestion. We can always discuss it as a group, whether or not it’s appropriate for them. I don’t want them feeling that they all have to do everything that comes up. And I think the problem with that one also is that I ended up writing it on the board and some kids transferred that to their homework agenda. And then I had one parent say, “I don’t get it. What is this?” I have to make sure that they present it as a choice, and that everyone understands it is a choice. If they want to, then by all means. (interview 3)

These values were expressed quite genuinely. However, they were not upheld in relation to the adult-initiated activities recounted above. The students did not have a choice, and did not often have an opportunity to ask questions or do research. Although Terry told Kay that it was okay not to contribute on loonie days, she reflected with me as follows:

But Kay said, “My mother never gives me money for these days because she already does a lot of charity outside of the school and she doesn’t want to do anymore.” I said to her, “That’s okay because that’s a family thing. You do the best you can. If you come with a dollar, you come with a dollar. If not, okay”. But she came with a dollar, and that was nice. I think the main discussion that it has to be around is it’s a choice. It would be nice but it’s still a choice. (interview 3)

Terry’s explanation implies that should Kay or her mother have made the choice to not contribute, it would not have been nice. This supports Hart, Matsuba and Atkins’ (2008)
claim that community service or service-learning activities in schools cannot be properly classified as volunteerism.

Shortly after Pia’s pitch, Kathy addressed the class selling Girl Guide cookies. Terry reminded the students, “It’s your job to ask questions if you want to know things about this” (field notes, October 2, 2009). Several questions followed related to the Girl Guides organization. Most of the student bought a box of cookies, as did Terry. It is uncertain, though, if they recognized this as a worthwhile charitable contribution, or a desirable purchase.

The third example of student-initiated service is learning-orientated. It emerged primarily from the current events unit, discussed above, which provided an opportunity to engage students in discussions on a variety of local and global issues that the students brought forward. On one occasion, four of the five articles presented raised issues relevant to service. Kathy’s article was about the distribution of supply kits to those living on the streets. Terry asked, “Who is organizing this?” and “Is it just referring to our city?” This sparked a discussion on homelessness, and whose responsibility it is to help those who are homeless. Pia’s article was about specially trained dogs that find buried survivors following a natural disaster. Terry asked, “What other situations might these dogs be helpful in?” This led to discussions of other natural disasters, including the earthquake in Haiti. Bonnie’s article was about a garbage patch in the Pacific Ocean that was polluting the waters and endangering the wildlife. Terry asked, “What is our obligation to our environment?” Various responses related to the theme of stewardship and clean-up. Finally, Kay’s article was about a new human rights museum. Terry posed a series of questions: “Can you explain human rights a little more?” “Are there other
examples?” “Do you think this happens in Canada?” “Where do we still have some problems?” In answer to the last question and referring to her own article, Kathy suggested homeless people. Terry responded by asking, “In what sense?”

Kathy replied, “Once I saw a homeless person get kicked out of a grocery store because it said customers only and he wasn’t buying anything”. Other students offered stories on their encounters with people who are homeless. In the midst of this discussion, Terry had the opportunity to convey the moral value of respect. Kay kept referring to homeless people as *hobos*. Terry explained that this was a derogatory term, and suggested that *homeless* was more respectful. But Kay continued to use the term hobo. Each time she did, Terry patiently reminded her. Eventually, the other students joined in, calling out less patiently, “Don’t use that term!”

Terry ended this unprecedented 20-minute discussion by saying, “You never know about people’s backgrounds. Try not to pass judgement on them” (field notes, February 5, 2010). She later reflected on this session with satisfaction, speculating on her potential influence over the articles chosen for discussion:

I was pleased because it was really nice to see those kinds of issues being brought up. That it’s not just all about sports or buildings. It’s nice to see those kinds of issues being talked about in the classroom and among children. I thought that was a really good day of really good articles that reflects who I am. Is that my influence? I questioned that. Or is it a combination of things, of what they’re open to, of what their families are open to, because the family obviously helped them out with it. Kathy and Kay are open to talking about those issues. Kathy is a Girl Guide and she’s used to doing charitable activities for other people. And then Kay is just very in-tuned with justice. And not in the same way that is typical of a child in grade four, where it’s just black and white and it’s not fair, period. She thinks things through. (interview 7)

These discussions provided Terry with an opportunity for probing and conveying moral values of justice, empathy, courage, compassion, sensitivity, tolerance, responsibility,
and helpfulness; and for stimulating students’ moral reasoning skills, by asking them to consider more deeply the moral nature of issues, specifically related to human rights and the environment. Action that the students might take regarding these themes of poverty, environment, and human rights was not discussed, however, and no connection was made to the service projects in which students were actively participating. This reinforces the point that learning and action are generally not integrated. Terry identifies the limitations for using such discussions to generate the end-of-year project:

The ideal thing to do would be to talk about what kinds of initiatives they would like to do. But having said that, at this age it’s really difficult when they’re presented with something, or when they’re presented with the open, “What do you want to do?” for them to come up with initiatives that are feasible. So usually what Wendy and I would do is either give them a choice or tell them what we’re doing. And that’s what we end up doing. But it’s only a one day thing. Whereas when they go to grade five next year, they do their project for a longer period of time, collecting things for the homeless, that sort of thing. (interview 3)

In service-learning theory, service activities are morally educative when they entail two qualities. Regarding the first, action and learning are integrated such that learning leads to action, action emerges from learning, and action provides opportunities to learn (Billig, 2000; Hart, Matsuba & Atkins, 2008; Morgan & Streb, 2001; Schuitema, ten Dam & Veugelers, 2008). In Terry’s practice, the service activities appear to focus on either action or learning, but rarely both, despite Terry’s claim that “the service part ties in nicely, because if you’re thinking about it then you should act upon it. You can’t fully believe in something and not take the action part, or not be involved somehow” (interview 6). Regarding the second quality, Morgan and Streb (2001) assert, “service-learning programs must have the students involved in leadership positions, directing the project themselves rather than having the teacher administering the project” (p. 158).
Yet, student-initiated, action-oriented activities do not seem to be validated to the same
extent as adult-initiated, action-oriented activities, or to the same extent as student-
initiated, learning-oriented activities. Opportunities for student leadership do increase by
grades seven and eight, but are limited in grade four.

Middlevale’s Community Outreach Program was created in the context of its
Character Development Program, to promote the school values, which are moral in
nature, and to support the students’ moral growth and development. Terry was directly
involved in the creation of both programs, and remains the community outreach liaison
for the school. Accordingly, outreach is intended as moral education at the school-level
and in Terry’s classroom. Unlike the rest of Terry’s moral agency, however, several of
the service activities seem to fall short of the two key recommendations in the literature
that qualify service as moral education. Without student leadership, and a learning and
action component in each activity, the activities that Terry organizes might not further
students’ moral education, but simply serve as a fun activity in which they participate.
As such, they may represent a missed opportunity for moral agency. The literature does
not, however, evaluate the morally educative potential of an entire service program that
collectively meets these requirements. Taken together, the adult-initiated, student-
initiated, action-oriented, and learning-oriented activities exposed Terry’s students to
moral and social issues involving the environment, poverty, disability, and human rights;
and to different ways of expressing generosity, compassion, care, and courage, among
other moral values, such as giving time, items and money, and promoting or advocating
for a particular cause.
Noteworthy, as a point of caution, Terry expresses assumptions about the students’ families and privileged lifestyle that might be unfair, and considered inappropriate for a classroom teacher.

I asked them who does community service? They all raised their hands saying that they have done community service. And I said why do you do it? They had different reasons. I told them, “It’s by chance that you were born to the families that you were born to. By chance they happen to be in Canada or come to Canada. You could have been born anywhere. You could have been born into a country that didn’t have peace. You could have been born into a country that didn’t allow girls to go to school. But you’re here. And not only are you in a country that is a fortunate country, you’re also here able to go to this school. You are fortunate even among people who live in Toronto.” I told them also that if they have been given so much fortune and have so much in their lives, being able to negotiate with parents when they can have a PS3 for example, “I think you owe it to others who don’t have as much to give in some way. Because you have been given so much. Having so much has nothing to do with you. You were born into so much. So then you owe it to others who don’t have as much.” And that’s the service part of it. (interview 4)

This viewpoint is known as philanthropic outreach, and defined by Battistoni (in Donahue, 1999), as follows:

An exercise in altruism: the nurturing of giving either in terms of ‘paying back’ or ‘gratitude’. This approach emphasises character building and a kind of compensatory justice where the well-off feel obligated to help the less advantaged. (p. 686)

Campbell (2008a, 2008b) raises the flag that should these and related attitudes be expressed in the classroom, there is a potential to change the role of the teacher from moral agent to social activist; to change the content of the lesson from justice as a virtue related to fairness and equality, to social justice; to use the children as activists; and to politicize the classroom by crossing the line from ideals of virtuous behaviour to political ideology or doctrine. There is no evidence, however, that Terry expresses these views
with the students, as she has with me in private. Further, such beliefs have contributed to Terry’s desire to serve others, which she honourably models for students.

Assessment

In Chapter Three, I anticipated data that demonstrate Terry’s assessment of both her students’ moral development and her own efficacy as a moral agent. While there is some suggestion that Terry uses the former to inform the latter, the data primarily relate to how Terry assesses her students social-moral development, as an end. The discussion below, therefore, centres on this theme. Teachers’ self-assessment of moral agency is, nonetheless, an interesting follow-up study to this one.

Since the Hartshorne and May (1930) Character Education Inquiry, many instruments have been created to assess students’ moral learning. These are often quantitative in nature, and positioned within the character education or cognitive development orientations. Some were identified in Chapter Three. Terry is aware of such assessments from her research on character and moral education, but generally rejects them as irrelevant to her own practice:

I saw different ways of doing this kind of assessment when I did the character education research, but sometimes it’s too specific, and I can’t see a teacher actually doing it or being able to work with it. (interview 11)

The assessment piece has always been the one that’s missing. How do you do that properly? And I never had a clear idea anyway, even when I did the character education research. (interview 11)

Uncharacteristically, our interview discussions on assessment were more reflective than descriptive, more philosophical than practical, and entailed more questions than answers. This is revealed in Terry’s words:
Before you can observe values with kids, you yourself have to have a good idea of what it’s going to look like, what they would have to do to make you go “a-ha”. There has to be development. Until you know what that is, then it’s hard to take notes because you don’t know what you’re looking for. So I suppose, before people can take notes there’s always some guidelines as to the kinds of behaviours that you’re trying to progress. (interview 9)

It’s almost like you have to do a checklist. Is this person becoming more helpful? But then it’s so generalized. You can get so general about those words that they lose meaning. You’d have to be really anecdotal about things. Is this person showing more remorse? So for example, when things are going badly and he did something wrong, is he going to lie about it or is he going to admit it more quickly than in the past. It has to be based on what they do. But I don’t know if I can make a checklist, a general checklist that will catch all of that. I think it would be helpful because then you’d know what to look for. But for every year you’d have to start with the baseline of behaviours. So and so does this kind of thing, so and so does this, this, this and this, for each child. So through September to December you have a baseline of what’s happening. Here’s what I see. And then once a term, or several times a term you go back to the base and say, what’s he doing now? (interview 9)

One year our report cards did include all of that. And we levelled them with needs improvement, satisfactory or very good. But then it gets tricky, because all the times that you don’t see something how can you say that they don’t have integrity, that you cannot see evidence of integrity, when there are things that you can’t know about throughout the day? Or things at home that you don’t know about? Now we mention things in the report card related to our character program. We can say, “So and so demonstrates responsibility… respect… compassion… integrity because he was able to…” We can mention that, but not give a grade. (interview 9)

Quantitative really scares me because morality is so subjective, and it’s hard for me to give a number or level to something that is not straightforward or objective… Values are something that people have from home too. If you are talking about values and then trying to assess kids on that, then are you impinging on what should be home stuff? Then will parents really agree to how you’re doing the assessment and what you’re doing with the results? (interview 11)

Despite the conceptual and practical challenges Terry identifies in these passages, she is, nonetheless, supportive of a process for assessing moral growth and development.
Assessment is a huge part of teacher training. But it’s not just assessment of math, for example. It’s assessment of what else is happening in the classroom, and knowing how to be more aware of that. (interview 8)

I think more than anything else it’s really important to learn to see where they’re at socially and emotionally and morally, rather than academically. (interview 4)

Consequently, and in the absence of formal tools and procedures for measuring, recording and grading students’ moral growth and development, observation data revealed that Terry does take a constant read on her students, by contemplating the question, “how are things going with them?” In doing so, she relies, in part, on instinct, gut feeling and experience. The following specific example from last year illustrates the role instinct and gut feeling, particularly, may play in informing her of a problem:

Last year, most days didn’t feel right. It tied me up. I just felt like I was tied up in knots at the end of every single day because of the behaviour of those five boys. I knew things weren’t right. (interview 9)

Three more visible means of assessment emerged from the data: (a) identifying displays of morality, (b) noting benchmarks and developmental milestones, and (c) conducting tests and trials. Each is discussed below.

Displays of Morality

Terry identifies displays of morality in the students’ behaviours and thinking processes, and in how they echo her moral messages when speaking with each other. Behaviour is generally associated with virtue ethics. As such, behaviours that are morally positive and morally negative are informative of one’s developing character (Lickona, 2004; Wynne & Ryan, 1997). The classroom system of volunteering for duties and tasks provides Terry with one means of tracking students’ helpfulness and responsibility toward others, or lack of. She indicates this, as follows:
I don’t keep track in any formal way, whatsoever. But I do notice the ones who consistently, for example, volunteer to hand out stuff. There are regular volunteers. They like to do that. And there are some who don’t. And once in a while I notice that so and so hasn’t done anything in a while. (interview 2)

Classroom life, more generally, provides many similar opportunities for Terry. Because the students are afforded a generous degree of autonomy, they must make choices regarding their behaviours. Terry notes these choices as morally good or bad. Four examples of morally good behaviours are recounted. In the first, Connor found a spool on the floor. Requiring one to build his project and knowing none were left in the bin of supplies, he took it for himself without realizing it had fallen from Paige’s desk. I told Connor privately that it belonged to Paige. I did not tell Paige, however, that Connor had found a spool, even when she began to look for it. A few moments later, Connor returned the spool to Paige and re-designed his own structure without it. When I briefed Terry on what had happened, she noted Connor’s courage to do what is right, in saying, “That’s exactly what I’m hoping for. That they understand what is the right thing to do, and they have the courage to do it” (field notes, January 11, 2010). In a second example, when Pia was sharing photos of her trip to India several students called out that they could not see. Heather, however, told Pia, “Don’t forget to show Gillian” (field notes, January 14, 2010). Terry notes this as an example of thoughtfulness, and congratulated her for thinking outside of herself. Noah was upset about a rip in his soccer ball that occurred during recess. On their own initiative, two of the girls made him a card that said, “We’re so sorry you’re feeling bad about your ball” (field notes, September 24, 2009). Similarly, when Connor and Pia had been absent for several days, the students spontaneously made welcome back cards. Terry commented in regard to both incidents, “They do show concern for each other. Perhaps more so than other classes” (interview 6).
Morally positive behaviours are weighed against morally negative behaviours, such as complaining, fighting and throwing tantrums. Terry makes note of these behaviours as well, for their lack of care, kindness, thoughtfulness, and respect.

I don’t measure formally, but if I don’t hear anyone complaining and fighting about things… We had more trouble at the end of the term, last term, with problems at recess. They were really, really tired of each other. And a lot of tantrums happened. Now there seem to be fewer. (interview 6)

Terry illustrates this in regard to Zeth:

They were complaining about him and they were getting fed up. They would come back from French, and they would come back from drama, and they would be complaining about Zeth. And not just one student, more than one. To the point where I felt uncomfortable because they seemed to be piling up on him. And a whole bunch of them kept coming up after different classes in the rotary saying things against him, complaining about him. They’re not doing that anymore. So I’m thinking, is that because, one, he’s not annoying them as much, or two, they’ve learned to not gang up against him so much. January has been beautiful. It gives me some hope that things are improving. (interview 6)

Terry recalls another example from a former class, where potentially negative behaviours did not materialize. She interpreted this as social-moral development among the students:

In the boys’ health class several years ago, we ended up talking about one particular boy who was making the others feel bullied and uncomfortable. It didn’t start out that way, and I didn’t know at the beginning of the discussion that they were all talking about the same person. But they all knew who it was, and he knew that it was him as well. He was there. But it was actually a very good discussion. They were not talking about it in any sort of venomous way or trying to gang up on him. And that’s how I knew they were not just thinking about themselves anymore. They were saying things that were very reasonable, and in a nice, matter-of-fact way, and they weren’t mentioning names. (interview 10)

Increasing incidents of morally positive behaviours and decreasing incidents of negative behaviours indicate to Terry that collective and/or individual progress is being made. It
is difficult, however, to attribute that directly to the moral education she is providing; yet, it can be assumed that her consistently communicated moral messages and lessons do contribute.

Terry’s desire and commitment to monitor students’ behaviours is reinforced by the frustration she expresses in not having access to such information from the rotary teachers. She explains:

I think it’s hard for us to communicate with each other sometimes because we are in different buildings. We don’t even see each other a lot. On this floor we see each other and become one community. Downstairs another community. And then the other building is a community… That’s what makes it hard to communicate with each other, to actually stay in touch… I try to talk with the rotary teachers regarding their comments or marks for the children on report cards. I’d like to know what kinds of things are happening in phys ed. And if I don’t see it in the comments, it’s really hard to catch up with the gym teacher on it. It’s easier for the rotary teachers, when they see approximately 80 kids, to have similar comments for each. And so for me to get a sense of how each individual child is doing it’s really hard unless I have those conversations beforehand. And that’s frustrating because there’s no central way to sort of catch up with them and say, “Okay, are they kicking the soccer ball properly? Are they cooperating when they play games?” (interview 5)

Terry considers this to be a result of the physical structure of the school, which limits contact, and of the many students that each rotary teacher is responsible for assessing. Yet, this may also reflect the absence of assessment methods linked to the school’s Character Development Program. A school-wide process for assessing student’s social and moral development might provide Terry with more consistent and helpful report card comments.

Monitoring students’ thinking processes is associated with cognitive development theory, and entails how students understand, reason and judge issues of a moral nature (Howard, 2005). Progress is noted in students’ willingness and ability to engage in
conflict resolution and peer-mediation, and their ability to anticipate the consequences of their decisions and actions. Regarding conflict resolution and peer-mediation, Terry observes:

They needed me last term when they had an issue to maybe sit in once in a while on their discussions, and they’re not asking me to sit in anymore. So that’s progress. (interview 6)

This was apparent when a conflict arose between Pia and Sammie. Just prior to recess, both girls approached me independently to complain about each other. Anticipating how Terry might handle this, I said to each, “You can either try and talk it out at recess, or let recess be a cool down time and come back afterward to talk it out. If that doesn’t work then you should get Ms. Kennedy’s help”. The girls returned fifteen minutes later from recess, arm-in-arm and happy to report that they had worked out their differences. When I recounted this to Terry, she replied, “That’s what we hope for” (field notes, November 4, 2009). Similarly, during a session with the grade-two learning buddies Alexander and Zeth were fighting over the cushions on which they were seated. Noah, also in that group, went to get Terry. By the time Terry approached, the two boys had quieted. She said, “Does it look like everyone’s settled now?”

Alexander replied, “Yes”. Terry reinforced their ability to solve the problem independently of her, saying, “Okay then, maybe it’s sorted out. You all sorted it out” (field notes, November 4, 2009). Finally, in regard to anticipating consequences Terry recounts this incident with Kay:

I’ll give you an example. The end of year talent show is in June. The problems start with picking the people that you want to do your performance with. What happens to the people who you don’t choose? How are you going to avoid insulting them? Are you going to be in a fight? So Kay came up to me privately and she said, “If I wanted to just invite four girls, to ask them to perform
something with me and to be part of the group, how do I go about that without causing bad feelings?” And I thought that’s really good, because at least she’s thought about it. She’s thought about the consequences of asking in front of everybody…. I like that because it tells me she understood the possibility of what could happen if she had just said it in the hallway, in the bathroom, when other people were around. (interview 6)

Hearing students echo her words and teachings is the third display of morality that indicates for Terry moral growth and development.

I would like to eventually hear my students say things that I have been saying to them for months. So if I hear it back from them, then I know that they’ve been listening…. If I hear them say things to each other that come from me, with respect to how to be with each other and what they should do for each other, then that is progress. (interview 5)

By way of illustration, Terry recalls Kathy saying to her group, “I’m giving you all kinds of suggestions and you aren’t telling me anything. So, I’m going to do my own thing” (field notes, October 20, 2009). Terry identifies this as progress, because it coincides with messages she imparts on cooperation and responsibility, including the following statements, previously made during a group activity: “Offer up different ideas”; “You have to talk about all the ideas and listen”; “What I see here is not a sharing of ideas” (field notes, September 11, 2009). Kathy is reproaching her group for not assuming the responsibility to discuss and share ideas, and for not respecting her suggestions enough to comment on them.

Benchmarks and Milestones

Terry makes note of the students’ displays of morality in relation to the ebb and flow of the school year, age-related developmental stages, and individual student maturity. These become benchmarks and milestones against which Terry informally
judges what she can reasonably expect of students’ moral development. For example, at certain points in the school year, Terry has learned to expect progress or decline:

There’s a huge difference socially and emotionally between where they left me in December before the break, and when they came back. And it happens every year. The ability to handle more is there as soon as they come back from the break. And then coming back from March break there’s more ability again… By November, we usually see a little bit of a dip in how they handle themselves. And then February usually is a big dip. They kind of relapse and have issues with each other. (interview 8)

They always seem to grow up a little bit more in second term. It always starts out really well, and they seem able to do more difficult things in general. Even the girls solving their own problems. So with the current events, I was able to go there and get into those types of issues. (interview 6)

As has been previously established, Terry’s statements—“an ability to handle more”, “handle themselves”, “solving their own problems”, and “getting into those types of issues”—have a moral core related to responsibility, integrity, courage, making morally good and right decisions, and rationalizing issues of a moral nature. Terry takes typical periods of decline in stride, but does attempt to pre-empt problems she might anticipate:

They were having problems at recess at the very beginning of February. And I warned them. We talked about it. And I just said, “Listen, there are usually a significant amount of difficulties that arise in February”. I told them that straight out. “Let’s just catch it when it’s early. February is a tough month, so beware”. I tried to give them a heads up. Although, sometimes they just can’t help it developmentally. (interview 8)

In addition, Terry’s teaching experience has provided her with insight into the moral developmental stage that is typical for her students’ age. She outlines this below, in relation to moral education objectives:

At nine years old, turning 10, they are less patient with kids who don’t have the same interests. And then they need to learn that they have to still be polite and respectful about that. At nine years old, they’re also ready to really think about
the world outside of themselves, and extend their compassion that way. (interview 5)

At this age 10-11, 12, they’re very much into justice and what is fair. And sometimes it’s too black and white. So there are conversations that you can have with them, social and moral, that you couldn’t before. It could be discussions that just pop up. (interview 6)

These observations coincide with Nucci’s (2009) developmental descriptions for middle elementary age children: “There is evaluation of actions in terms of their effects on others… There is the beginning of paying attention to context in evaluating moral situations” (p. 44); and “Fairness is regulated by reciprocity defined in terms of strict equality” (p. 44). Terry, nevertheless, recognizes that despite these typical stages, each child is unique.

And it may reach some individuals more than others, but that’s okay if some kids get it more than others. That’s the way it’s always going to be. (interview 6)

The following statements illustrate how Terry accommodates for the development of individual students:

Paige has always been thoughtful so there’s not much change for her. Paige just has to stand up more for what she is really feeling, and to be more open about what she really feels, instead of saying, “I’m okay and everything’s good”… Noah always seems to be just outside of the main circle of radar. And he still does silly things because he’s a little bit less mature than the others. Bonnie is still maturing and Kathy is still maturing. They’re still kind of young. Alexander has grown a lot, I think. (interview 9)

I just get the feeling that Zeth is more comfortable where he is now, and with who he is now. Whereas in the fall term, he was fighting it and wasn’t happy to be here… this second term just seems that it’s a more smooth term for him. He isn’t as aggressive as he was. (interview 8)
Tests and Trials

Periodically, Terry conducts tests and trials to gauge the students’ progress. This is illustrated in four examples. Regarding the sixth seating arrangement, Terry explains:

With Wednesday’s decision to change desks, I wanted to have them decide. I just thought, let me just see if they can handle this. Just to see whether or not they were ready to consider the needs of others as well as themselves. If I set it up correctly, let’s see if it happens. And I set it up, and I gave them the criteria, and they were able to do it. (interview 8)

In this situation, Terry is assessing students’ sensitivity and consideration for others. A second example relates to the first cooperative group exercise. Terry told the class, “This is a way for me to see how we are working together” (field notes, September 11, 2009). At the end of the exercise, she commented to me, “It was a good introduction for me, to see how they are working together, to get a baseline that I can grow them from” (field notes, September 11, 2009). For Terry, “working together” entails moral values of cooperation, respect, consideration, helpfulness and responsibility. In the third term of school, Terry allowed the class to walk themselves to the French Cabane for the first time. She announced, “I’d like to see you go to French without me today. I’ll watch you from the window” (field notes, April 13, 2010). Values of dependability and responsibility were being assessed. These three examples represent group tests and trials.

Terry also tests individual students. In this final example, she describes a means of assessing one’s moral reasoning:

Sometimes when they ask me a question maybe about a problem they are having with another child, and I put it back on them. I see what I get from them. And it may not take one answer. I may have to ask them again and again in different ways. And I just sort of see what answers I get. And if the thinking process is more logical, more mature, then it shows progress. (interview 8)
As with displays of morality, and benchmarks and milestones, tests and trials are informal. Terry does not record notes or keep records, other than the dynamic impressions and perceptions she continually acquires and adjusts.

Despite these efforts to track students’ moral progress, Terry realistically acknowledges that moral development is not always visible or fully realized during the student’s time with her. She provides two examples, one in the context of social relationships and another in the context of community service:

If they had difficulties with maintaining healthy relationships with their peers in grade four, and I cared enough to pay attention to them, and give them strategies to keep working on it no matter how frustrating. If that is still valuable two years later when the same issues come up again, and they can reflect back to what I’ve taught them, or to some of the strategies that we’ve talked about, then that’s good. (interview 4)

If they can remember that it was Ms. Kennedy’s class where we did this and this and this in order to raise money for whatever. Or we had a guest speaker who talked about other cultures and other people, and how to think about other people. That is really rewarding for me. So to have those two students from grade seven, for example, come back and still be involved in the community service stuff is really great. And that’s what I’m hoping for. (interview 6)

In regard to service, Terry recalls with pride the following specific indication of progress that was initiated in her class:

Four kids took it upon themselves on the weekends to have a little lemonade stand. They went out in their community, and actually handed out pamphlets and information. They went online and looked for the Free the Children website and copied samples of that and handed those out too. So a talk that we would have in class, affected them beyond class. And actually continued to affect them in grade five, where they wanted to have a cooking club and give the food that they made to a youth shelter. (interview 1)

Assessment of students’ moral growth and development, therefore, is tempered by the humbling acknowledgement that Terry may only be planting seeds, and will not witness
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how well these seeds grow and flourish. This is, in part, why Terry maintains an interest in each of her students for several years, at least until they graduate from the school.

To What End

Terry’s observations and reflections on the students’ behaviours and thinking processes, in relation to recognized benchmarks and milestones, and in response to tests and trials, are used primarily to inform her moral agency practices. Behaviours that are negative, thinking that is unfounded, benchmarks and milestones that are not met, and tests and trials that are unsuccessfully accomplished are mostly understood as opportunities requiring further teaching and learning.

The underlying thing is I always want to better the stage they are at. I want them to try and go a little bit beyond it each time…. When I get a sense of their capabilities, I think let’s try and up it a little bit. (interview 1)

For example, Terry noted that some students, particularly boys, were not assuming responsibilities in the classroom as readily as she expected them to. She began to target them with direct messages of helpfulness, such as, “I need three more volunteers. Let me pick some people who never volunteer to help” (field notes, September 30, 2009), and “I want two boys to hand out journals please, because the boys never raise their hand to help” (field notes, October 19, 2009). Additionally, when students did not line-up for a classroom transfer efficiently or quietly, Terry requested a do-over, saying, “No, no, no. That will not do at all. Please take your seats and we will try again. I guess you have all forgotten how to line-up. I will remind you, because that was not good” (field notes, September 11, 2009). On another occasion, Terry brought the students back to the class and had them begin their walk again, more quietly, calmly and slowly (field notes,
September 16, 2009). Finally, by reinterpreting an observed behaviour, which she initially perceived as negative, Terry changed her response to it:

I realized that they feel a little out of sorts when people are missing. I used to think it was because they just wanted to know. They were being busybodies. And I used to shut it down by saying, “It’s none of your business”, or “Some things are private and maybe you don’t have to know where they are”. But I think there’s more to it than that. I think they just need to know where their people are. It’s almost like an appendage that’s missing. So now I just tell them ahead of time, before they ask me “Where’s Sammie?” “Sammie is sick today”; “Kathy has gone on a dental appointment”. Just so they know… I think that means they feel like a community. (interview 7)

In feeling like a community, Terry clarifies, “They’re sort of feeling for each other. And they feel that something’s not quite the same without everybody” (interview 8). Terry’s altered approach to this particular situation allowed her to further nurture the relationship values of community, including care, compassion and concern for each other.

Terry does not always act on negative assessment results. This should not necessarily be understood as inadvertently missed opportunities for moral education. In fact, this is rarely the case, and represents only one of three possible explanations. The other two explanations are explored first, and include letting the moment pass, and selecting a non-moral, but related, course of action.

Interviews revealed that sometimes Terry recognizes an opportunity for moral teaching and learning, but intentionally lets that moment pass. For example, at the beginning of December each student was asked to provide a statement for the yearbook, in response to the question how did I grow. Some of the answers were as follows (field notes, December 1, 2009):

This year I joined the basketball team.

I improved on my goalie skills in road hockey.
I joined cross-country.

I became a peacemaker.

I improved on my soccer skills.

I joined the choir.

I became a better runner because I joined the cross-country team.

I joined the cross-country and ran 2.5 km in 9 minutes.

I joined cross-country team.

I improved on my hugging this year.

Indirectly, these statements may reflect the school’s values of courage, responsibility and integrity. They do not, however, reflect Terry’s vision for community, or the associated moral values of care, compassion, respect and helpfulness that Terry works to convey. I asked Terry how she felt about what the students submitted.

I was a little disappointed. But on the other hand, they know what those yearbooks are about. It’s about being clever. It’s about being cute and witty even. So when you have something in the yearbook that people can go, “Oh, that’s so cool. Oh that’s so funny”, it’s much more pleasurable than having to say, “She’s always kind to her friend”, and “She always takes care of people who are hurt”. That they can read and say, “Whatever”. But when you say something really cool or really funny then it makes more of an impact with your peers and whoever happens to see those. It’s public. The yearbook is incredibly public. So I wonder if they don’t care to do any of that. I was a little disappointed, but this really isn’t the place for it. I understand that. (Interview 7)

Terry simply recorded the students’ statements, without comment. Her reason for doing so reveals sensitivity and understanding toward their social situations.

On two other occasions, Terry did not press her students to explore moral issues that were surfacing. Regarding the first, Terry showed part of the documentary on the Japanese teacher to a previous grade-four class. This documentary was described in
Chapter Five, as inspiring Terry’s vision for happiness and care in the classroom. Terry recounts the students’ response:

I thought maybe they needed to see how a classroom can care for each other, and can take care of each other in a way that that class learned to do. They needed to see that it can come together. I didn’t get what I wanted out of it. I don’t think they were ready for it. Not all of them anyway. What I remember some of them saying is, “There’s a lot of crying. In Japan they cry a lot”. To which I thought, not the kind of reaction I wanted them to have to it. (interview 10)

Regardless, Terry did not press the moral messages that are conveyed in that documentary, relating to care and compassion. The second occasion occurred while reading the holocaust novel Number the Stars, by Lois Lowry (1989). Despite the following openings, Terry did not pursue the obvious morals-based discussion.

Conner: I went to the museum.

Terry: Which museum was that, Conner?

Conner: I think it was in Washington.

Terry: Oh, do you mean the holocaust museum?

Conner: Yah, that’s the one.

Terry: Tell us about it. What was it like?

Connor did not remember much, and Terry did not prompt him further.

Kathy: I know about Anne Frank.

Terry: Tell me about her.

Kathy: She wrote a diary.

Terry: That’s true. Have any of you written a diary?
Pia:  My sister does.

Terry:  Is hers famous?

Pia:  No.

Terry:  Kathy, can you tell the class why Anne Frank’s diary is famous.

Kathy:  Because she died?

Terry:  I think that has a lot to do with it, yes.

Conner:  And also she was hiding from the Nazis.

Terry:  Right.

Kay:  Oh yah.  I know about her.  She had to hide in the wall with other people, in a very small place.

Terry:  Can you imagine what that would be like?

The class went silent.  Terry waited, but no one had anything further to add (field notes, September 21, 2009).

Terry later explained why she did not pursue a discussion on moral issues related to the holocaust:

In some years it feels like it’s a class that you can really get into the moral discussions related to the holocaust.  But other years, I feel that I have to wait until it comes from them before I go any further.  If it’s a matter of clarifying some information, like who were the resistance fighters, then I will do that because it’s a fact.  But I haven’t felt like I wanted to push these guys.  They just seem too young.  They don’t ask why; they don’t ask how.  They don’t seem aware of the grey areas.  I am through the bulk of the book and I haven’t had any of the discussions that I have had in previous years about who was responsible for this and why this all happened.  But they still love the book.  I’m wondering if it’s because they’re relating to the characters and not the historical aspect.  (interview 4)
This decision to let the students take the lead was validated the following week at curriculum night, when Terry met Zeth’s parents for the first time. Zeth’s parents were aware that Terry had been reading a holocaust story to the students, and indicated that they had not connected for their children the Jewish experience during the holocaust with their own Jewish heritage. Their children had simply been told that the Nazi’s targeted those who were different. They reflected that perhaps they should now be making that connection for Zeth. Yet, Terry was disturbed and unsettled. She questioned her judgment in selecting that book and essentially forcing this issue on Zeth’s family, although, the book is on the Ministry of Education’s grade-four reading list. She also worried about the story’s effect on two other Jewish children in the class. She had not considered the effect this story might have on Paige, who is of German ancestry (field notes, September 30, 2009).

Finally, there were several opportunities where Terry did not articulate the word for a particular moral value she was working to convey. Terry explains:

Gillian: The literature says that teachers should use the language of morality. And I’ve sat here many times thinking you didn’t say the word. You didn’t use the term.

Terry: I think my feeling is if I keep pointing it out to them they’ll just tune out when I do. It doesn’t become meaningful anymore.

Gillian: They’ll become desensitized to it?

Terry: Yah. I think the students are okay with the terms, and I think they get the terms. If I had to ask them for an example, I’m pretty sure they’d be able to give me examples. I don’t think I have to point it out to them anymore because it’s been taught every single year that they’ve been here. But when it becomes useful in the context of this class, then I’ll do it. But I don’t want to just throw it out uselessly and then they just think that they’re words, and roll their eyes at me. (interview 4)
Terry and I discussed this idea of over-saturating the classroom with morality, creating a morally oppressive atmosphere, becoming dogmatic and absolute, and ultimately desensitizing the students so they are no longer receptive. Nucci (2008, 2009) notes a similar possibility related to domain congruence. He asserts that when teachers ascribe all classroom management issues to morality, rather than to convention where most actually belong, they run the risk of diminishing moral argumentation. Yet, in Terry’s practice, most conventions do have a moral core. If this is typical of moral agent teachers, the notion of a threshold beyond which moral messages and lessons are weakened might be a significant insight related to moral education.

Terry also appeared to miss opportunities for conveying moral messages and lessons, when she selected alternative courses of action. On one occasion, she addressed negative social behaviours among the girls in a lesson on emotions, using the video *Dealing with Feelings and Emotions* from the Health for Children Series. “Why emotions?” I asked Terry. “Why not a lesson on respect and care, for example, like Lickona would recommend?”

Terry replied, “We tried that in the past. Didn’t work for us. We’re trying this for the first time” (field notes, November 2, 2009). This lesson is recounted anecdotally.

The boys went off to gym class and the girls settled into their seats for a health session. Terry began the video without much of an introduction. The girls watched quietly for 20 minutes. When the video ended Terry said, “Let’s name some of the emotions from the video”. They called out, and Terry recorded the following list on the whiteboard:
- Anger
- Sadness
- Happiness
- Anxious
- Depression
- Stress
- Guilt
- Relief

Terry: Any comments or thoughts? Can you connect any of these to your own experiences?

Kathy: Both of my dogs died.

Terry: How did that make you feel?

Kathy: Really sad.

Terry: Yes. I can imagine. What about anger? What has made you angry?

Bonnie: Sometimes I’m angry at a friend and I want to say something mean. So I just walk away.

Heather: Sometimes my parents fight and I have to leave the room. My sister yells at them to stop.

Sammie: I get stressed about math sometimes.

Wendy’s student: Ever since grade one some people have been bullying me. I exploded. I got really angry and broke my door.
Terry: The DVD showed some strategies for these things. It said that if you don’t talk about it, it may explode on you, come out all at once. Does that scare you, the kinds of things that you can do or want to do when you explode with emotion?

No one replied.

Terry: Okay, let’s talk about some strategies to deal with emotions because you don’t want to make a bad decision in how you act on your emotions.

Frances: When you are anxious you can try to think of attitudes and actions that can help you.

Terry: Can you give us an example?

Frances: When you want to jump into the deep end of the pool but are afraid. Think of three bad things, like I’m going to drown, I’m going to bump on the bottom, and something gross is down there. Then you think of three good things.

Terry: Let’s write some strategies on the board. You are all peacemakers for the school so you can take ideas from there too.

The girls called out several ideas that Terry recorded, as follows:
- Talk and share your version of what happened
- Write it down, journaling
- If talking doesn’t work, walk away

Terry: We have to end here. We are never finished talking about this though. We’re always talking about these things and trying to understand ourselves. (field notes, November 2, 2009)
While the premise of this lesson lies in the connection between emotions and moral behavior, Terry does not call attention to the moral values of self-respect and respect for others in relation to students’ comments on anger, bullying and yelling. This occasional focus on emotions over morality is not gender-specific, and is similarly utilized as a strategy with boys:

I learned from last year to go backwards with boys, to understand why something happened. You say, “Okay, your emotions are what? You’re angry because pretty much you’re hurt”.... With the boys it comes out as physical actions that may have some emotional attachment. (interview 4)

In another health class, and in response to exclusionary behaviours among the girls, Terry delivered a lesson on social power. The girls took turns reading sections aloud from a chapter called Bullies & Rule Setters, in the book *A Smart Girl’s Guide to Friendship Troubles: Dealing with Fights, Being Left Out & the Whole Popularity Thing* (American Girl Library Series, 2003). Terry asked them to highlight particular passages, on which she commented, as follows:

Your power lies in the part of you that’s in charge—the strong, smart part of you. If someone is trying to take your power, you’re being bullied. And if you’re being bullied, you have to fight back. (p. 59)

Terry: This reminds you that you are strong enough and you can take charge of the situation. Otherwise you leave the power with the other person, and you are not taking the power for yourself.

One girl seems to have it all together. She knows how to make others feel good about themselves. (p. 60)

Terry: She sounds like a good role model, don’t you think?
The Rule Setter: She sets “the rules” and decides who’s in and who’s out of her group. (p. 61)

Terry: That sounds a bit like what is happening with you girls. Could the other girls do something when one of the girls sits with you, instead of just following the girl who gets up and leaves, for example? Who decides that this one girl should tell the others what to do, when to do it and who to do it with?

At the end of this session, Terry did note some of the underlying moral values: “You need to trust your own strength and you need to trust your friends and the friendships. Most of all, you need to have empathy and respect” (field notes, October 22, 2009). She did not, however, link this discussion to the school’s moral value of courage, which also applies.

Lastly, two activities focused on non-moral values, although, moral values were implied. Regarding the first, Terry read aloud to the class the book *Manners Can Be Fun* by Munro Leaf (2004). After the section on playing together, Terry asked, “How was recess? How did you play?”

Kathy said that she had talked with some girls who were mean to her last year.

Terry replied, “A new year means a new beginning. Every year is a new beginning and everyone needs a new chance. Today you can give people a chance because people change and they may surprise you. Try to play with children who maybe are not your closest friends. Be open to new friends and give people a chance (field notes, September 10, 2009). Non-moral values of friendship and second chances were explicitly expressed in this statement. Moral values of forgiveness, tolerance and inclusiveness, which would later pervade Terry’s discourse, were left implicit on this first day of school.
Terry also read to the students a book called *The Best Part of Me: Children Talk About Their Bodies in Pictures and Words* (Ewald, 2002). The students wrote poems on a part of their own bodies. They chose hair, feet, hands, eyes, nose and ears, predominantly. Terry took a photo of that body part, and the students attached the photo to their poem. Both were displayed in the hallway above each child’s locker (field notes, September 14-16, 2009). Non-moral values related to positive body image, self-confidence and difference were made explicit. Moral values of respect for self and others, inclusiveness and tolerance were again left implicit.

The third and final explanation for missed opportunities to communicate a moral lesson or message is simply that Terry did not recognize the opportunity as such. These are rare occasions, when Terry might say to me versions of, “Maybe I should have brought that up. Didn’t think of it.” When students’ personal items were disappearing, for example, Terry reflected:

I couldn’t figure it out. What’s happening? I don’t know if anything was mentioned about just respecting personal property. If it was, it was only in passing and I did not focus on it. Probably I should have. (interview 7)

In another interview, Terry expressed a similar sentiment regarding conferencing with students:

There have been years when I focus more, at certain times of the year, about their own development and being more responsible, being more respectful, and what their goals are. Doesn’t happen every year, but maybe I should go back to it. They all had to write something about it. But we never had a time where we actually sat down one on one, and just said, “What do you think?” But maybe I should have done more with it. (interview 9)
Interviews were essential in distinguishing true missed opportunities for moral teaching from opportunities that Terry chose not to pursue at all, or not to pursue within the moral domain.

While Terry relies closely on instinct, gut feeling and experience to assess her students’ moral development, she is aware that this is likely not a defensible practice in the context of reporting progress to administrators, students and parents. Yet, she rejects the approaches presented in the literature as not meaningful and overly quantitative. More so than any other moral agency theme discussed in this dissertation, assessment of moral education represents a large disconnect between Terry’s practice and theory, and requires further investigation.

Conclusion

With these four direct pedagogical strategies—virtues instruction, discussions, discipline and service activities—Terry attempts to support the development of both moral character and moral reasoning. By encouraging morally positive behaviours and discouraging morally negative behaviours, the strategies work to cultivate habits that are good and right (Lickona, 1991, 2004, Ryan & Bohlin, 1999; Wynne & Ryan, 1997). By encouraging reflection on issues of a moral nature, the strategies work to improve students’ abilities to make morally right and good decisions and choices (Howard, 2005; Nucci, 2008, 2009; Watson, 2003, 2008). Further, Terry assesses moral character by monitoring student behaviours, and moral reasoning by monitoring student choices and decisions. While character education and cognitive development may be philosophically irreconcilable (Nucci, 1997), their goals and objectives appear to be compatible in Terry’s practice.
It is questionable, nonetheless, whether any of these moral education practices are effective in achieving their goals, when the conditions of teaching morally, as discussed in the previous chapter, are not met. Most of the moral education literature promotes the ideas that teachers should model morality, foster personal relationships with students, and nurture classroom communities, although, the language used may vary. In creating this portrait around the larger question, *How does a teacher, who prioritizes the moral education of students, envision, enact and reflect on that moral education*, I have delineated Terry’s practices as teaching morally and teaching morality. This construct has been used for the purpose of representing the results of this study. Yet, the empirical distinction between the two has been difficult to maintain, and is at times overly reductionist. Hence, Chapters Six and Seven each portray features of teaching morally and teaching morality, as they are truly enacted by a moral agent teacher who is, by definition, both a moral person and a moral educator.

With the completion of this chapter, the portrait of Terry’s moral agency is also complete. The final chapter reviews key insights related to the four research subquestions, and identifies the potential for further academic inquiry. I also comment on potential opportunities for teacher education and teaching practice, although less so, as each may advance the moral education of children in the secular classroom.
Chapter 8: Conclusion

The portrait of moral agency presented in the preceding two chapters makes several broad contributions to education literature, some of which were anticipated in Chapter One. While previous scholarly work enabled a composite image of moral agency, this study demonstrates that such a moral agent teacher does, in fact, exist, and that this image is real and can be reasonably aspired to by other classroom teachers. 

Previous work suggested mechanisms, methods, strategies, practices, approaches, programs, orientations, and frameworks that teachers make use of to impart moral messages and lessons. This study offers an opportunity to understand how combinations of these may operate within a single classroom, and be dynamically managed by a single teacher. Previous work focused on teachers’ strategies and the moral values they prioritize. This study substantiates those, and adds insights related to how teachers might also envision and assess moral education. Previous work demonstrated teachers’ existing ethical knowledge. This study also demonstrates that such knowledge can be enhanced, through discussion and reflection. Previous work, for the most part, has been analytic in nature, informing education theory and further academic work, but having a less direct effect on practice. This study attempts to represent results so practitioners find them accessible, heeding Leming’s (2008) warning that “unless research addresses practice in a way that is perceived by teachers as clear, salient, and utilitarian, it will likely remain irrelevant to classroom practice” (p. 135). Finally, previous work produced philosophical, conceptual, and theoretical silos, prompting Sanger and Osguthorpe (2005) to lament that “the conceptual geography of moral education scholarship and research makes it difficult to synthesize current understanding in a way that allows us to
effectively represent, critically analyze, refine and further that understanding” (p. 58).

This study suggests that such a synthesis can be achieved through the lens of practice.

These broad claims are supported in this last chapter, by reviewing particular insights related to the research questions. Potential implications for teaching practice, teacher education, and further academic research are also suggested. Regarding teaching practice and teacher education, the implications are speculative. The single-case methodology does not enable me, as researcher, to generalize beyond this one teacher and her teaching context (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003), despite Terry’s claim that “there are certain things which are general enough to be able to transfer” (interview 11). Rather, the goals of this study correspond with Burkhardt and Schoenfeld’s (in Leming, 2008) assertion that research should be less concerned with developing generalizable views about teaching practices, and more concerned with generating high quality discussions. Further, this study was not intended to address teacher education. Still, Terry and I did discuss how one becomes a moral agent, and what the opportunities may be for developing moral agent teachers. I share some of our thoughts on this. My recommendations for further academic research, however, are more definitive, as this empirical work reveals several areas of moral agency and moral education that remain unclear, unsubstantiated and unappreciated.

**Insights and Implications**

The main research question, *How does a teacher, who prioritizes the moral education of students, envision, enact and reflect on that moral education*, was explored through four subquestions. The first subquestion asks, *What is the teacher’s vision for the moral education of students? How is this vision conceived?* Results indicate that as a
new teacher Terry focused on the techniques and mechanics of the job, including general pedagogy, curricula, assessment, discipline, time and class management, and school policies and procedures. Despite being attracted to the profession by the opportunities it affords to help children holistically grow and develop, Terry’s early vision was, instead, defined by images of herself as a competent deliverer of curricula and a functioning member of the faculty, and by images of her class as well managed and well behaved. Although laden with morality, Terry recalls in Chapter Five that the predominant perspective was necessarily one of efficiency, safety and effectiveness. As Terry matured into the profession, she focused less on herself as a teacher and the act of teaching, and more on the students and their learning. Accordingly, her vision became defined by images related to the conditions within which learning takes place, including her relationships with students and their relationships with each other, and a broader conception of students’ growth and development beyond academic subjects.

This evolving vision—from procedures to relationships, from teaching to learning, and from teacher to student—returns Terry to the ideals with which she entered the profession, yet, demonstrates that these ideals might have remained dormant for the early years. Should this represent the experiences of other teachers, it may imply that teacher education does not do enough to nurture the ideals of teacher candidates, and allows these ideals to become overshadowed or displaced by the techniques and mechanics of the job. It cannot be assumed that all teachers will return to these ideals, on their own, as Terry has. Accepting, or even enabling them to be inactive is risky in a context where teachers are asked to provide moral education for students, where
comprehensive moral education might be understood as moral agency, and where moral agency is motivated by a morally-infused vision.

The second subquestion asks, *What is the content of the teacher’s moral messages and lessons?* The results demonstrate that Terry simultaneously nurtures, in her students, knowledge, as practical moral wisdom, and abilities, as moral reasoning. Often this takes place within a single incident. For example, during discussions on moral issues, whether initiated by current events or a social problem that the students are experiencing, Terry reinforces behaviours of respect and responsibility, such as listening and sharing. For Terry, neither knowledge nor ability is fully imparted or reinforced without the other. If the students do not understand the moral value of respect and are not respectful in how they participate in such discussions, their peers may be reluctant to assume responsibility for sharing their own ideas. If ideas are not shared, then reasoning skills are not practiced or checked. Further, moral reasoning often led to decisions or solutions that required actions characterized by moral values of courage, kindness and compassion. Together, knowledge and abilities comprise a complete moral education. This suggests that imparting moral knowledge and nurturing moral abilities, generally representative of two orientations for moral education that Nucci (1997) deems to be philosophically irreconcilable, are, in fact, compatible in practice, and perhaps necessarily so.

In regard to knowledge content, particularly, Terry communicates different moral values through different moral agency strategies. She prioritizes fairness, respect, kindness and honesty in her personal conduct and professional practices, and models them for her students with the intention of being instructive. She reinforces helpfulness and responsibility in forming and sustaining a classroom community. The virtues lessons
she delivers were focused on compassion, courage, cooperation, respect, responsibility, and inclusiveness. In fostering caring relationships with students, care and love are necessarily and predominantly conveyed. Finally, with service activities she communicates respect, compassion, courage, empathy, sensitivity, tolerance, responsibility and helpfulness. Taken together, Terry knowingly and consciously imparted to students 15 moral values: fairness, respect, kindness, honesty, helpfulness, responsibility, compassion, courage, cooperation, inclusiveness, care, love, empathy, sensitivity, and tolerance.

This array of morals exceeds the advice of character educators Wynne and Ryan (1997), who recommend a list no larger than six to eight virtues to avoid overlaps. Yet, in Terry’s moral agency, overlaps that may exist between moral values, such as helpfulness and cooperation, compassion and empathy, and inclusiveness and tolerance, for example, are not interpreted as redundant, but rather reflect the nuances of expression in classroom and school life. Further, there is no indication of moral confusion or moral saturation, and Terry often commented on how the students were coming along with their social-moral development. This suggests that capping the number of moral values intentionally conveyed to students may not be warranted, when teachers use multiple strategies for doing so. The reverse also seems evident, such that multiple strategies allow teachers to impart a fuller array of moral values.

The third subquestion addresses this objective for using multiple strategies, in asking, *What strategies does the teacher purposefully or coincidentally, directly or indirectly, and formally or informally use to impart moral messages and lessons?* Chapters Six and Seven recount an assortment of strategies that are operational in Terry’s
practice. Because Terry prioritizes the moral education of her students, and is ethically knowledgeable, morally sensitive and highly reflective, most, if not all of the strategies are enacted purposefully, knowingly and intentionally. They can, nevertheless, be understood as conveying morality indirectly or directly, and formally or informally. Indirect strategies refer to moral education that is mediated through other means, such as the environment, teachers’ behaviours and conduct, classroom relationships, and teaching pedagogies. Examples from Terry’s practice include creating classroom community, modelling, teamwork, and group work. Direct strategies are overt and explicit. They include Terry’s discipline practices, her system of volunteering for tasks, and the virtues lessons she delivers. Students might not be aware when moral messages are conveyed through indirect strategies, but are most likely aware when conveyed directly. Formal strategies are generally pre-planned or established features of Terry’s practice, curriculum, or classroom life. These include the virtues lessons, line-up and transitioning routines, and adult-initiated service activities. Informal strategies generally arise spontaneously and in-the-moment, and include virtues messages, showcasing, and discussions with groups of students or the whole class.

These two dichotomous categories—indirect/direct and formal/informal—are not mutually exclusive. Indirect strategies might be enacted formally, as with group work, or informally, as with modelling. Direct strategies might be enacted formally, as with virtues lessons, or informally, as with showcasing. It may not be necessary to identify every strategy used in practice as such. It seems significant, nevertheless, that moral educators should not only have a repertoire of strategies for conveying morality to students, but also that the strategies collectively comprise these different qualities. In
addition, teachers might benefit from understanding how the qualities of the strategies they employ convey moral messages and lessons, and whether they convey knowledge content, abilities content, or both.

Finally, the fourth subquestion asks, *How does the teacher assess the effectiveness of the moral education he or she imparts? How does this relate to the teacher’s vision for the moral education of students?* Terry maintains a complex and comprehensive system of tracking students’ moral development, described in Chapter Seven as being implicit and highly subjective, and relying on instinct, gut feeling and experience. As such, this system does not conform to the assessment instruments Terry has been exposed to in the moral education literature and intentionally avoids. Many such tools are derived from character education, which, like academic subjects is driven by curriculum. As the results of this study suggest, moral agency is, instead, driven by vision. This signifies a conceptual disconnect between the objective tools recommended for assessing students’ moral progress and the subjective visions against which moral agent teachers actually measure progress, something Terry instinctively recognized.

As a result, and despite the breadth and depth of Terry’s moral agency and ethical knowledge, she feels insecure with her assessment practices related to the students’ moral growth and development. Although she is personally satisfied that her approach to assessment provides meaningful insights regarding the students’ individual development and the social dynamics of the classroom, she worries that it might not be perceived by others as legitimate, and thus, might not be reportable should this become a priority for the school. Assuming that assessment of moral education is as desirable as assessment of academic teaching and learning, the implications of this relate most directly to the need
for academic research, regarding how objective and subjective, and quantitative and qualitative approaches might be mutually supportive in providing comprehensive, meaningful and reportable results, and to what ends these results might serve.

The main insight regarding the primary research question, *How does a teacher, who prioritizes the moral education of students, envision, enact and reflect on that moral education*, was not, however, derived from considering the four subquestions separately, but from considering how Terry’s vision, moral content, strategies, and assessment methods align to paint a portrait of moral agency that is independent of any particular theory of moral education, and yet, reflects the applied aspects of several. Virtues instruction typifies character education and serves to cultivate and habituate dispositions and traits that are good and right. Discussions typify cognitive development and serve to improve students’ abilities to reason, make decisions, solve problems, and assess consequences related to moral issues. Attention to the quality of relationships with students typifies care ethics and serves to increase teachers’ influence on their students and the classroom community. These practices are harmoniously and compatibly integrated in Terry’s moral agency, to achieve a range of moral education goals.

The possibility that aspects of different philosophical orientations might be integrated in a single classroom has been hinted at by Noddings (2008), who argues, “There are today several influential approaches to moral education... Except at the extremes, they are not in irresolvable conflict” (p. 168). Accordingly, there have been conceptual attempts to find common ground among some orientations. For example, Noddings (2002) attempted to reconcile care ethics and character education. More inadvertently, character educators have made recommendations that coincide with care
ethics, such as creating caring communities and fostering caring relationships. Although, he does not cite her work, Lickona (2004) sounds much like Noddings in asserting, “Schools must foster that same spirit of inclusiveness and the actual experience of caring community through day-to-day relationships” (p. 20); and “Good teachers build the relationship in both directions; they and their students learn about each other” (p. 115). Ryan and Bohlin (1999), also promoters of character education, posed the following series of practical questions for consideration, which imply strategies that Noddings may endorse for care ethics: “Does the teacher respect the students? Do the students respect one another? Are classroom rules and teacher expectations fair? Are they justly enforced? Does the teacher play favourites? Are ethical questions such as ‘What is the right thing to do?’ part of the classroom dialogue?” (p. 144-145). The last question may also be endorsed by Nucci (2009), for cognitive development.

Cognitive development and care ethics have similar roots in psychology, both responding to innate developmental and social human processes. Cognitive development does so through autonomous reasoning, and care ethics through affective relationships (Howard, 2005; Schuitema, ten Dam & Veugelers, 2008). They are understood as complementary (Colnerud, 2006), or as “two moral predispositions that inhere in the structure of the human life cycle. Predispositions toward justice and toward care” (Gilligan, 1988, p. 4). Thus, many of the recommendations made in a context of care ethics, including constructivist pedagogy, an emphasis on relationships, and collaborative problem-solving, are similarly found in Just Communities, designed by Kohlberg as opportunities for cognitive development (Howard, Berkowitz & Shaeffer, 2004;
Noddings, 2002). As a result, there have also been attempts to reconcile these two orientations (Johnston, 2006; Noddings, 2008).

Regarding character education and cognitive development, Lockwood (2009) proposed adding a developmental attribute to the theory and practice of character education, which considers age-appropriateness, sound moral reasoning, perspective-taking, and empathy. He calls this blended approach *developmental character education*. Coincidentally, Sean expressed the desire to create a similarly blended vision for Middlevale’s character program, by adding a developmental progression for each of the school’s values, as in “what it looks like to be courageous, for example, at 8 years, at 11 years, at 14 years...” (personal communication, fall 2009). This would consolidate the school’s character program with its developmental approach to discipline and its peer mediation approach of the Peacemaker Program.

These attempts to find common ground among philosophically distinct orientations to moral education have not been empirically confirmed by their proponents. The empirical evidence from this study, however, demonstrates that while there are elements of care ethics, cognitive development and character education in Terry’s beliefs and practices, she does not approach the moral education of her students from any particular set of assumptions by which each is defined. Rather, Terry seems to have developed her own orientation toward moral education, which, although informed by the literature, is ground in practice not theory, and has roots in teaching pedagogies, folk wisdom, and ethical knowledge. She describes this orientation in the following way:

> I think it’s really hard to separate character education and cognitive development in the classroom because when you’re looking at morals it encompasses everything. How you do things *and* how you think about things. I wouldn’t know how to compartmentalize and say, “I’m this kind of moral educator; therefore, I
can’t do that activity because that’s not who I am.” The character education stuff should support care ethics and being in relationship with each other. And service as well—caring more outside of you and the community. The developmental approach is how you develop as a person. Also your moral reasoning so you can problem-solve and make decisions that support being in relationships, and development of your character. Everybody’s at different stages there too. So that’s why with Conner and Kay they understand more deeply. It means something more to them. But for others, it may not mean the same. So if you are not a service-oriented kind of moral educator then how are you going to work with somebody who is showing more affinity towards that end? You have to be all of that, and maybe some other things that haven’t been identified, to make sure you can support the full range of development. (interview 11)

The complexity of being “all of that” and more is staggering. While particular themes have been extracted for discussion, they are moving parts. How they integrate to form the whole is still elusive. In trying to understand this, I envision webs and spirals. Webs evoke a static image of multiple interactions. Spirals evoke a dynamic image of both circular and forward motion. Both are explored, not by way of suggesting a model of moral agency, but rather to highlight its complexity and interactive nature for further exploration.

Webs are particularly evident among the strategies used and the moral values expressed. Many of the strategies are espoused by more than one orientation. For example, fostering relationships with students, attending to classroom environments, providing opportunities for practicing desired moral behaviours, and encouraging dialogue and discussion are recommended for character education (Lickona, 1991, 2004; Lickona & Davidson, 2005; Ryan & Bohlin, 1999; Wynne & Ryan, 1997), care ethics (Noddings, 2002, 2008), and cognitive development (Nucci, 2009; Watson, 2003). Modelling moral behaviour is recommended for character education (Lickona, 1991; Ryan & Bohlin, 1999; Wynne & Ryan, 1997) and care ethics (Noddings, 2002). Mining
academic curricula for moral messages is recommended for character education (Lickona, 1991, 2004; Lickona & Davidson, 2005; Ryan & Bohlin, 1999; Wynne & Ryan, 1997), care ethics (Noddings, 2002) and cognitive development (Nucci, 2009).

Terry provides the following example of the latter:

> If you could look at a whole bunch of stories and focus on the moral lessons and values in them, then they become more aware of morals and values in whatever they’re reading and writing. It comes out in their work later on. I can ask them to discuss a certain value or why a character did something that was right or something that was wrong. I would be able to see, through explicit examples, how their moral thinking was progressing. (interview 9)

This demonstrates that individual strategies may serve the educative goals of more than one philosophical orientation.

Combinations of strategies operating in support of each other may also be visualized as webs. For example, modelling moral values of care, consideration, kindness, respect and helpfulness supports the teacher’s efforts to foster community, and community provides opportunities for students to practice moral behaviour toward others; using a moral vocabulary supports discussions of a moral nature, and moral discussions enable developmental discipline. Such webs call to question the practices of teachers who attempt to provide a moral education with only one or a few strategies, and do not have the ethical knowledge to understand their mutually supportive connections. The moral messages mined from academic curricula, for example, seem less likely to be internalized by students through discussions, if teachers do not model expressions of them in their behaviour and conduct, do not provide opportunities for students to practice expressing moral values, and do not create an environment of community where students can do so without fear of making mistakes or looking foolish.
Webs are also evident among the many moral values that are expressed in this classroom. In Chapters Six and Seven it is shown that rarely is a moral value expressed in isolation of others, and that often, associations between moral values give them meaning and authenticity. Particular associations noted in Chapter Six include honesty and humility, respect and trust, and fairness and consideration in Terry’s conduct and behaviour; helpfulness and taking responsibility for others in forming and sustaining community; and care and sensitivity in relationships. In Chapter Seven, examples include courage and self-respect in a lesson on courage; empathy and sensitivity in discussions; and compassion and understanding in service activities. This web seems to indicate that in a comprehensive approach to moral education, as is moral agency, painstakingly identifying a set of particular moral values for instruction may not be necessary or productive, and may, in fact, be misleading regarding how moral values are expressed and enacted. In addition, teachers should be aware that while delivering a message or lesson on a particular moral value, they are likely also reinforcing other moral values.

Spirals are apparent in the interactions among the four dimensions of teaching—vision, content, strategies and assessment—as their cyclical relationship serves to advance the students’ moral growth and development. Terry’s vision determines the content of her moral messages and lessons; the content is conveyed through various strategies; assessment of the success of these strategies is measured against the vision; and assessment results further inform content and strategies, and advance the vision. This feedback loop implies that teachers should consider all four dimensions in providing a moral education, as they would in delivering academic curricula. For example,
employing strategies to impart morality, without a vision of the desired end, may limit one’s ability to assess the success of these strategies, and to adjust one’s practices accordingly. Envisioning a desired end, without strategies for working toward this vision, may limit one’s ability to do so, and create confusion and frustration. Utilizing particular strategies without understanding the moral content being conveyed, may limit one’s ability to assess their success.

While all four dimensions seem necessary, the spiral continually loops back onto Terry’s vision, as both a grounding point and locus of motivation. Yet, like a moving target, the vision is not fully realized. There was never a time where Terry indicated she was merely maintaining the status quo, particularly in relation to the students’ growth and development. This is a function of understanding humans to be in a constant state of social-moral development, with no possibility of moral perfection. No matter how many times the loop repeats and how far the students progress, the vision remains just out of reach, because Terry modifies, increases or intensifies its content and expectations, pushing the students to be kinder and more considerate; to think more deeply, be more observant, and incorporate more contextual information; and to take on more responsibility for themselves, each other, and larger communities in which they interact.

Terry’s changing goals are revealed in the following passages:

First term felt more like a term that was really training them in being aware of others, being more cooperative, being more respectful and listening to others. Because at the beginning of the year I’m trying to develop this sense of community. (interview 8)

This was reinforced by character lessons on compassion and cooperation, which occurred during the first term.
With second term, the expectation is slowly putting more and more responsibility on them, so that they need to think about where they’re at and what they need to begin to be more self-aware. And I’ve talked about being more aware of others and making sure that others are happy or not unhappy; “You do something about it.” Also working towards becoming more self-aware so that they can think things through and reflect more and more, rather than me always telling them what to do and how to do things. Giving them more independence in that decision-making would give them more confidence in the end. I don’t want to have to make all the decisions myself. (interview 8)

Accordingly, during the second term students were expected to participate more actively in problem-solving and decision-making, both individually and collectively. The current events unit was also intentionally located in second term, when the students were deemed more capable of sensitive and respectful dialogue and debate on a range of issues, having been exposed to related moral messages and lessons in the first term.

Third term they have to do it by themselves now. I’m out of it. “Show me you can do it.” I never thought that that’s what I did till you mentioned it. But that’s definitely what I do. (interview 11)

This expectation was supported by a direct lesson on responsibility, the appearance of a related poster, and numerous opportunities for students to practice assuming a range of responsibilities. Entailed in each new or increased expectation is the accumulation of moral knowledge and moral reasoning skills, acquired from the start of the school year. This endows the spiral with a forward direction.

The notion of moral agency as webs and spirals destabilizes the analytic structure by which Terry’s practices are abstracted and discussed in the previous two chapters. Despite the deep descriptions found there, the nuances and subtleties that characterize moral agency as an essentially human endeavour occur in the spaces between what has
been defined, where dynamics are fluid, the forces intangible, and the intricacies circumstantial. In this, moral agency appears to be as much art as science.

**The “Science” and Art of Moral Agency**

During my year of fieldwork and the two years of writing that followed, I often asked myself, “What is holding all of this together?” By “this” I meant Terry’s goals for her students’ growth and development, and for a class community; the moral values infused into daily activities and events; the morality intentionally nurtured in students; the array of methods, strategies and approaches utilized in doing so; and the mostly hidden means by which Terry continually assesses students’ social-moral progress. There were no files in the cabinet, no books on the shelves, and no resource materials in the cupboard that covered the range or complexity of this course. There was no computer program or bookmarked website; there was no workshop package; there was no dedicated space in the classroom, and there was no time allotted in the timetable. The usual structures associated with school programs did not exist for the moral education Terry was providing. The answer to my question, therefore, always pointed to Terry, the person, the professional and the teacher that she is. Terry holds in her head, hands and heart, as Sergiovanni (1992) and Ryan and Bohlin (1999) might say, the entire moral landscape of this classroom and her students’ experiences in it.

To capture the immensity of this role and responsibility, and to focus it squarely on the teacher, rather than on a particular curriculum, program, strategy, orientation, policy, or mandate, I adopted the terms moral agent and moral agency, and suggest that moral education might be more comprehensively understood and promoted as such. This entails repositioning the definition of moral agency to endow it more predominantly with
a moral education objective, so that the moral agent is knowingly and intentionally a moral educator, and moral agency represents the all-inclusive means by which moral messages and lessons are imparted. This extended definition was proposed in Chapter One, based on a review of the literature and in anticipation of the current study. It remains relevant, as a way of encapsulating the details and complexities of the moral education Terry provides, and is further enhanced by the results of this study.

In particular, the dual nature of moral agency, which Campbell (2003a) identifies as relating to the moral person and the moral educator, assumes increased importance, not only regarding each attribute, individually, but also regarding the dynamic between them. Fenstermacher, Osguthorpe and Sanger’s (2009) notion of teaching morally is a function of the moral person, and teaching morality is a function of the moral educator. In representing Terry’s moral agency, it was a challenge to separate one from the other, even for illustration purposes. This portrait confirms what is commonly believed, that to teach morality, as a moral educator, one must also teach morally, as a moral person; and that in teaching morally, as a moral person, one is teaching morality, as a moral educator, although at times, perhaps inadvertently so. It is unreasonable and inauthentic to consider one attribute without the other, or to promote one over the other. The dual nature of moral agency is its essential quality. In providing a moral education for students, more so perhaps than with any other type of education, the messenger is the message.

Yet, moral education literature is generally contextualized as the moral dimensions of teaching (Sanger, 2003). This seems to prioritize teaching morally, as a moral person, but does not quite capture the full essence of teaching morality, as a moral
educator. The latter might be better understood in the inverse, as the *teaching dimensions of morality*. This phrase acknowledges that there are distinct qualities and approaches entailed in providing a moral education. Several were identified in this study, including the significance of the teacher’s vision, the classroom environment, and relationships with and among students; and the teacher’s reliance on personal experience, instinct, intuition, and gut feelings. Building on the definition, therefore, a moral agent is both a moral person and a moral educator. Moral agency is the act of attending to both the moral dimensions of teaching, by teaching morally, and the teaching dimensions of morality, in teaching morality. Delineating moral agency in this way may help to clarify and consolidate the literature, and signify opportunities for further research. These considerations relate to the more tangible aspects of moral agency, what I loosely refer to as its *science*.

It has been established that the two attributes of moral agency are inextricably entwined and mutually dependent. How they interrelate, though, is not nearly as tangible as how each functions individually. Terry seamlessly navigates the spaces and synergy between the moral dimensions of teaching and the teaching dimensions of morality, and in this, moral agency is art. In his book, entitled Leadership is an Art, Max DePree (1989) presents leadership as fundamentally about the ideas, beliefs, principles and relationships that define a set of practices. He suggests, “Leadership is much more an art, a belief, a condition of the heart, than a set of things to do” (p. 148). Moral agency can be similarly understood, as teachers’ ideals and visions of themselves, their classrooms and their students shape the moral education they provide. Moving from ideals and vision toward practice, and back again to ideals and vision entails oscillating between the
two attributes of moral agency. As with the artist, this process is likely unique for each moral agent. The anecdotes presented in the preceding chapters only begin to explore this dynamic, which seems as fundamental to moral agency as are its two attributes, although much less appreciated and understood.

*Future Directions*

Throughout this dissertation, I have made reference to several studies that would augment and supplement this one. It is not my aim to directly recount those studies here. Rather, this discussion is more broadly drawn to identify larger themes, within which such studies may be relevant. The research results, while portraying a fairly detailed portrait of moral agency, nonetheless, also highlight what is not well known or understood, and where opportunities lie for advancing both the discussion and delivery of moral education in secular classrooms. Three particular themes include the development and nurturance of moral agent teachers, the nature of continuing academic research in this area, and the need for student voice.

Developing teachers as moral educators is not a new topic. Ryan and Bohlin (1999) state, “The majority of teachers enter the profession with the goal of devoting their life to the betterment of the young... the more general goal of helping children become better human beings, better people” (p. 152). Terry agrees:

Teachers in general are that kind. They do see something rewarding in what they do because of good reasons. It’s there. They want to do the service and they want to help in some way. (interview 4)

More personally, she reflects:

To pick and choose the kinds of activities and the way that I approach things has to come from something inside. Or it’s not going to be true. I reflect on myself first, because that’s what makes the teacher a moral agent… It all comes from
your morals and therefore everything that you do should match what comes from deep inside you in the first place. (interview 11)

Schwartz (2008) believes this inclination toward moral agency should be nurtured.

“Ultimately, tomorrow’s teachers need to do two things: they need to develop their own moral and ethical character so they can lead by example and they need to learn the pedagogy [italics in original] of moral and character education” (Schwartz, 2008, p. 597).

This recommendation is consistent with the dual nature of moral agency. Agreeing with Schwartz, O’Sullivan (2005) obligates teacher education programs to nurture the visions that drive moral agency:

Teacher education programs must nurture the deeper dreams future teachers bring to their course work. These dreams involve helping children become better people, not just smarter people. Yet these dreams can only be carried out by teachers who are themselves becoming better as well as smarter. There is an old saying in teaching that if you don't feed the teachers, they will eat the children. (p. 8)

Several other scholars also advocate for pre-service programs to assume this responsibility (Beyer, 1997; Joseph, 2003; Narváez & Lapsley, 2008; Ryan, 1988; Strike, 1995). While Terry agrees that “teachers could be brought along as moral educators, or moral agents, or character educators” (interview 4), she recalls her own early experiences and wonders if this is a reasonable goal for pre-service:

I don’t know if that can be developed in teacher education programs because it’s so much of an experience that one individual has to go through, to reflect upon, that with the teacher training program they give you all the curriculum stuff, how to handle that. That’s it, pretty much. But who you are as a person and all of that, and your morals as a person, that’s really hard for them and I don’t blame them for not going there. (interview 8)

This should not suggest that pre-service education has no role in enhancing the moral sensibilities of teacher candidates, increasing awareness of the applications of moral
principles and values in practice, and helping new teachers to formulate moral visions from their ideals. Rather, it proposes that pre-service education might not be able to fully nurture teachers as moral agents.

Terry and I discussed, instead, a long-term scaffolded approach that includes in-service education, such that pre-service education nurtures the moral ideals that teacher candidates arrive with, as O’Sullivan (2005) suggests, and in-service education builds on teaching and classroom experiences to enhance teachers’ ethical knowledge and increase their repertoire of moral agency strategies. By way of example, Terry recalls a particularly invaluable non-elective course from her own pre-service education, which asked teacher candidates to contemplate the following:

What do you care most about? Why do you do this? What would be the driving force in you as a teacher? Why do you want to teach children? What does it mean for you to be here? What’s the purpose of you being here? What’s the purpose of what you want to do? That is the first thing maybe. Because if you don’t know why you do it, then there’s no driving organizational framework from which everything stems. That’s how I approach everything myself. (interview 11)

Sanger and Osguthorpe (2011) confirm that this type of reflection does help to shape early visions in accordance with ideals of teaching and learning. It may also encourage teachers to consider their teaching and classroom experiences through a moral lens. Ideals and visions that underpin moral agency may not manifest in teachers’ early practices, but it is assumed that they are more likely to emerge later on, if nurtured during pre-service.

Once teachers have become competent with the mechanical and technical aspects of their practice and have gained classroom experience, they are likely better positioned to fully explore their own moral agency. This might take place in-service, with the
support of a teacher mentor. In proposing this, Terry reflected on her experiences with me, as her mentor:

With respect to the moral education, I don’t think about it as much anymore, since the character education research. And I had to really think about it this year, just to make sure that I was still on top of it. So I think that was also helpful. You made me bring it back into focus, I guess. It’s always something that I do, but I never really think about it as much as I did again this year because you asked me to, which is good. I’m more conscious of it with you. (interview 11)

A similar sentiment was articulated in her end of year card:

Dear Gillian,
Thank you so much for being part of our class this year, and for all your help with organizing and working with the kids. We were lucky to have you, and you made me a better educator. (June, 2010)

Accordingly, I was aware of having potentially influenced Terry’s ethical knowledge and moral agency practices in relation to two themes, assessment of moral education and the strategic use of moral language in the classroom. Following a discussion of each, Terry correspondingly appeared to be more explicit and purposeful in giving feedback to the students on their conduct, behaviour and expressed attitudes, and in labelling behaviours with a particular moral value. While such researcher effect is often noted as a limitation of ethnographic methods (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003), this observation identifies a positive curricular function that supports the idea of mentoring as a means of enhancing teachers’ moral understandings, improving teachers’ ability to relate moral principles and values to their work, and increasing teachers’ repertoire of moral agency strategies. These outcomes may not be realized, however, if teachers are not primed in pre-service education.

The two-stage approach for developing teachers as moral agents can be expressed in relation to the dual nature of moral agency. It proposes that pre-service education
might focus on the moral dimensions of teaching, by nurturing the teacher as a moral professional, and by encouraging him or her to consider what it means to teach morally. In-service mentoring, while continuing to advance this attribute, might focus on the teaching dimensions of morality, by examining the various means by which moral messages and lessons are conveyed. This is, nonetheless, conceptual, and the outcomes speculative. Data from the current study simply suggest the need and possibilities. Substantiation through further research is required to assess, among other issues, the overall feasibility; the ability to achieve prospective goals; how achievement of these goals might manifest; particular goals that are reasonable for pre-service and in-service education; strategies for achieving these goals; and how suitable mentors can be identified and enlisted. Such research may also yield insightful parallels between nurturing teachers’ as moral agents and nurturing the moral development of children, a correlation that both Schwartz (2008) and O’Sullivan (2005) allude to.

Secondly, there is not a large body of empirical work in the area of moral education, particularly that which is qualitative in nature. This has contributed to what Leming (2010) notes as a significant gap between practice and research, where teachers have not found research to be relevant, and research has rarely affected what they do in the classroom. The current study provides a methodology that can bridge this gap, particularly given its unique combination of elements, including a lens of practice, long-term engagement, and openness for collaboration. This methodology is replicable, and if pursued in a variety of different contexts would deepen and broaden these results, and identify additional themes relevant to teaching and classroom life. For example, conducting a similar study with a male teacher might reveal gender differences related to
vision and assessment. Different school contexts, such as residential or public schools, and different classroom contexts, such as special education or single-gender, might reveal new strategies, challenges, and limitations. New opportunities and challenges might also be revealed in schools that do not maintain a moral education infrastructure or encourage moral education in classrooms. Finally, a researcher with a critical or social justice perspective might interpret the teacher’s service activities differently. The human, subjective and social nature of moral agency, and the ethnographic methods of investigation make these possibilities seem endless and the results they may each generate always insightful and relevant to classroom practice. Equally significant are the additional opportunities these studies afford to reveal the more hidden dynamics of moral agency, the art in how teachers navigate its two dimensions.

Further, this methodology may be extended with increased collaboration between the researcher and the participant. The current study was originally designed to be unilateral, with Terry as the generator of data and me as its recipient. Yet, in exploring less well-defined issues, such as vision, teacher education, and assessment, Terry and I had discussions in which we shared and pursued ideas and possibilities, more reciprocally. While the ideas are speculative, they are, nevertheless, situated in practice and likely of interest to other teachers. Additionally, ideas that are generated from collaborative discussions, in the context of a long-term study, might be made operational and then further assessed in action. By illustration, Terry was inspired to meet with Sean, following our discussion on assessment, to determine the feasibility of adding an assessment component to the school’s character development program. Should this have
been pursued while I was still in the field, it would have provided a unique opportunity to collect data on this theme that were more concrete and less speculative.

Lastly, the studies to date, including the current study, are teacher-centred and teaching-centred. There remains a lack of data on students’ perspectives and actual learning. It is unclear what students understand about their teachers’ ethical or unethical conduct and behaviours; what they recognize as efforts to provide them with a moral education; and what they learn about morality while at school. The literature is saturated with recommendations for educators on how to deliver a moral education, but relevant short-term and long-term outcomes related to students’ behaviours, conduct, actions, attitudes, motivation, understandings, and cognitive processing abilities, remain, for the most part, hypothetical. Qualitative studies that explore student learning and add student voice would provide valuable insights for academics and practitioners. Research questions might include: *How do children understand and relate to the moral messages and lessons conveyed by teachers and administrators? What methods of imparting morality do children respond to? Do children of different genders, ages, learning abilities, socio-economic status, and ethnicities, for example, relate differently to moral messages, lessons and approaches? What connection do students make between classroom morality and their out-of-classroom and out-of-school lives?* Methods of data collection might involve observing students’ behaviours, conduct and actions, in a variety of school and classroom situations; and interviewing students to determine their understandings, rationales, motivations, desires, and attitudes. Adding student voice to the literature, in this way, can begin a process of inviting students to meaningfully participate in a discourse on moral education that is ultimately intended for their benefit,
but which may currently be missing the mark. This is the area of research that is of personal interest to me, and that I would like to pursue.

Entailed in these three future directions is the expectation that teachers, scholars and students will assume an active role in advancing knowledge and teaching practices. Teachers’ collaborative participation in research activities can help to ensure that theory both reflects practice and is applicable to practice, so that the gap between theory and practice is lessened. The participation of scholars can help to ensure that research insights are deeply delineated and widely disseminated, such that teacher educators and mentors can nurture moral agency among novice teachers. The participation of students can help to ensure that the efforts put forth by educators are meaningful for students, and resonate with what they deem to be important and necessary for their moral growth and development. In combination, this may temper the aggressive promotion of character education and community service programs in North America, and both enable and encourage the more comprehensive approach of moral agency.

*A Final Word*

This portrait represents only a single teacher. Nevertheless, it may serve to reposition, widen and deepen the perception of moral agency, and the role and responsibilities of a moral agent teacher. In doing so, the portrait may also serve to unify a large body of literature that Sanger (2003) has described as competitive, exclusionary, monotheoretic, and a liability to comprehension. This is a lofty claim, and I present it humbly as a thought for moving forward. Yet, Terry, to whom I give the last word, expresses her moral agency in this very broad way when she says, “My role as a teacher
is like a builder. They’ve got the foundations and I want to build upon those foundations in many different directions” (interview 1).
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Rosenberg, G. (2008). *Teachers’ as moral agents to their students.* Unpublished manuscript, University of Toronto, Canada.


Appendix A

Observation Schedule

2009-2010

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Formal Interview Schedule

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Interview 10

Interview 11

Last day
Appendix C

Observation Protocol

Enter the research setting with an open mind, ready to utilize all senses and prepared to be surprised. Unanticipated and unexpected insights that are consistent will bring fresh perspectives and meanings to the results. Record with words, dialogue, pictures, diagrams, maps and charts, and in as much detail as possible, everything that has a moral mark or relates to the moral dimensions of the classroom. Sanger (2003) suggests the following three morally salient features of teaching, which can be used to guide one’s judgment on this:

1. It has normative moral characteristics, such as affecting the well-being of students, that make it good/bad, right/wrong;
2. It affects the moral development of students;
3. It manifests formal characteristics of our moral discourse and practice.

These may be applied to expressions of respect, honesty, fairness, inclusiveness, justice, kindness, care, trustworthiness, compassion and courage in the teacher’s manner, conduct, behaviours, practices, and discourse with students, and in the class environment, relationships, documents, routines, rules and activities. Use the research questions and the conceptual framework as a guide for what is relevant, but do not over-think or over-process. If relevance is questionable, record and assess admissibility later.

When possible, supplement observations by spontaneously and informally questioning the participant. This will provide immediate reactions, interpretations or motivations. Be sensitive to the classroom dynamics so as not to disrupt the flow of activities or frustrate the participant. If this is not possible, see if the teacher is willing to respond to emails. Otherwise, note questions for a subsequent, formal interview.
Record the following three types of data: objective-descriptive, subjective-descriptive and reflective.

**Objective-descriptive data**

Objective-descriptive data relate to the details of classroom life and the teacher’s practices. This may include:

- classroom layout, décor, visual displays, seating arrangements, cultural artefacts;
- behaviours, interactions, people present, partners, groups;
- dialogue, scripts, language used;
- events, incidents, episodes, situations, conflicts, dilemmas, announcements;
- lessons, teaching materials, equipment, evaluations, activities;
- symbolic acts, rituals, ceremonies, routines, slogans, stories, legends, myths, acronyms, greetings, philosophies, sayings;
- rules, regulations, policies, procedures, codes for dress and behaviour, justifications given;
- school-level structures, physical environment, culture;
- school-level and classroom-level primary and secondary documents.

Guiding questions to ask oneself begin with the words *what, who and where*. For example:

What does it look like? What is done and said, and by whom? What time does this happen? Where does this take place? What are the surroundings like? Who is there?

What started and ended this? What follow-up occurred? This may apply, for example, to what the teacher tells the students prior to attending an assembly, regarding appropriate behaviour and other expectations.

**Subjective-descriptive data**

Subjective-descriptive data are judgmental, evaluative and interpretive. This may include:
• teacher’s physical appearance, grooming, manner of dress;
• teacher’s style, mannerisms, gestures, posture, body language, mood, expressions;
• classroom culture, symbols of status, relationships, socio-dynamics;
• missed opportunities, challenges or barriers to imparting moral messages.

An example of subjective-descriptive data related to the situation above may include the apparent manner with which the teacher discusses behavioural expectations. For example, is she stern or relaxed? Is he hurried or leisurely? Are the students engaged or distracted? Due to the interpretive nature of this data, also attempt to answer questions such as: How do I know this? Why do I feel this way? What evidence is there to support this?

Reflective data

Reflective data are of a personal nature, derived from the researcher’s thoughts and intuitions. This may include:

• effect of researcher’s presence, activities and positions within the classroom;
• researcher’s frames of mind, moods and thoughts;
• meanings, hunches, interpretations;
• success of the research methods for generating data.

Regarding the latter, if planned activities are not providing worthwhile or relevant data, interfere with the classroom dynamic, or make the participant uncomfortable, discontinue or re-think them. Examples of reflective data may include that the researcher is tired and distracted on a particular day, indicating that the data collected may not be as reliable as data from other days. It may include that the researcher was particularly engaged in helping with the classroom activity and unable to record in-the-moment data. It may include a hunch related to the participant’s Wednesday evening activities, based on an observation that the participant tends to relay more
straightforward safety and control messages related to behaviour rather than more complex moral messages, on Thursdays compared with the other days of the week.

Record all data by hand or digitally, unless permission is given for photocopying or photographing. Do not photograph people. Do not share these notes with anyone except the thesis supervisor. Keep them secure and off site, and destroy them after a maximum of five years, or upon request should the participant withdraw from the study.

This protocol is informed by the following sources: Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997; Merriam, 1998; Wolcott, 1997.

Observations have the potential to inform all four subquestions, but are most helpful in addressing subquestions two and three.
Appendix D

Formal Interview Protocol

Approach each interview focused on particular topics and themes. Create and maintain the illusion of a conversation or dialogue, while in fact encouraging a monologue. Let the participant talk as much as possible, but limit your own talking to questions and prompts. Maintain eye contact, nod, smile, and use other facial expressions to demonstrate that you are engaged. Do not be afraid of silences; this encourages more thoughtful responses from the participant. Audiotape-record the interviews to limit note taking. To ensure a quality recording conduct the interviews in a quiet location. Jot down subjective-descriptive and reflective data that will not be captured on the tape. This will provide depth, detail and context, stimulate memory several months later, and indicate further interview questions.

Where possible and appropriate, prepare two clusters of open-ended questions. The first is based on themes from the research subquestions and conceptual framework. The second is based on previously collected data from observations and document analysis. This will maintain focus on the research topic, while embracing unanticipated and unexpected themes as they emerge. Consider prepared questions as openers, and be ready to probe, prod, and prompt for deep, meaningful explanations, examples and stories. This is done with sensitivity and a gentle touch to avoid antagonizing and exhausting the participant. Do not rush or try to cover all questions if the conversation is relevant. Roll over unaddressed questions to subsequent interviews.
Probes may include the following:

- Why do you say/do that?
- How could things have been different?
- What happened next?
- Can you help me visualize how this might unfold?
- What were you thinking when…?
- Why do you think/feel that way?
- What do other teachers in the school think/feel? How do you know?
- What would the students say if I could ask them?
- How do you know when…?
- What effect do you think this has on the students?
- Can you explain/describe this further?
- Can you give me an example or story that illustrates this?

Questions may include the following:

**Vision** (subquestion 1)

- How would you describe your ideal classroom environment? What metaphor would you use?
- What would you like to see in terms of how the students relate to each other and to you?
- What are your goals for the growth and development of your students?
- Where does this vision come from? What influences in your life contributed to it?
- Do your students know this? How?
- Have our conversations altered this vision? How?

**Content** (subquestion 2)

- What do you teach your students about right and wrong, good and bad? How did you decide on this?
- What do you think the students would say if I asked them what they were learning about right and wrong, good and bad?
• How does this relate to your academic teaching and learning goals?
• Are these moral lessons part of a program that you were asked to teach?
• Does anything ever come up related to morality that you are uncomfortable dealing with?
• Have our conversations altered your priorities? How?

Strategies (subquestion 3)
• How do you help your students learn about right and wrong, good and bad?
• Can you give me an example of a moral-based lesson that you delivered?
• How did you decide on this particular seating plan?
• How far would you go to help a child who was struggling socially? What would you do?
• How has my presence in the classroom affected your practices?

Assessment (subquestion 4)
• How do you know when the students have learned the moral lessons that you are teaching? How does this affect you or your teaching?
• What classroom dimensions might be affected by moral lessons?
• When do you start to feel successful as a moral educator?
• Have our conversations changed how you think about the moral progress of your students?

Other
• Do you think I have changed the culture of social dynamics of the class?
• If you had the chance to do this again, spend another year with a researcher, would you? Why/why not?

Do not share written notes with anyone except the thesis supervisor. Share transcripts only with the participant and the supervisor. Keep all notes and transcripts secure and offsite,
and destroy them after a maximum of five years, or upon request should the participant withdraw from the study.

This protocol is informed by the following sources: Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Merriam, 1998; Sanger, 2001; Seidman, 1991.

Formal interviews have the potential to inform all four subquestions, but are essential to adequately address subquestions one and four.
Appendix E

Selected Questions

The following questions were asked during formal interviews.

Interview 1: personal background and teaching philosophy

- Does what you are saying come from anything in your background? Can you trace it?
- You’ve mentioned classroom community. What does that mean to you?

Interview 2: subquestions 2,3 and observations

- You had a pre-established seating plan for the start of school. How was that determined?
- How do you decide what becomes a teachable moment for values, and what values to teach?

Interview 3: subquestions 2,3 and observations

- Is that a typical thing for them to do, to initiate a discussion on their social problems and ask you to sit in?
- So the goal isn’t necessarily to embarrass the students or call them out?

Interview 4: subquestions 1,2,3 and observations

- What do you think the students understand about how you pick them to answer questions?
- So your vision of teaching this class isn’t necessarily about this math lesson, this language arts lesson, or their academic progression. There’s a broader perspective here?

Interview 5: subquestion 1 and observations

- In terms of making a difference in students’ lives, is there a particular focus or goal that you hope to achieve?
- Do you think this sets you apart from other teachers?
**Interview 6:** subquestion 1, theory and observations

- What is it about those ethical orientations that you identify with, that make them a better fit for you than the others?
- Pia and Sammie had a problem just before recess. They came to me separately and I said, “You can either try and talk it out at recess, or let recess be a cool down time and come back afterwards to talk with Ms. Kennedy”. When they came back they had worked it out and were fine. What do you think of this?

**Interview 7:** observations

- Do you ever worry that the kids are going to bring in a current events issue that is not appropriate? How do you handle that? How would you handle it?
- Why do you sometimes eat lunch at the kids tables with them?

**Interview 8:** observations

- At the beginning, the girls were in groups to make cubes and then circles with their houses. There were problems with those groups. How do you think they are doing since then?
- Do you see yourself giving up some control now? What does that mean for you?

**Interview 9:** subquestion 4 and observations

- When we got back from March break I thought that you were stricter with the kids in terms of their behaviour and following directions. Is that fair to say? Were you conscious of that?
- Is this one of the ways you gauge how you are doing as a moral educator?

**Interview 10:** subquestion 4 and observations

- Is there a limit to how far you would go to help a child? How do you gauge that?
- It was nice the way you asked with humour. You kept it light. You weren’t reprimanding them. Were you purposeful in that?
Interview 11  methods, application

• Did I change the culture of the classroom or the social dynamic?
• Is what you do in this classroom transferrable to other classrooms and other teachers?