Talk to Me:

An Educators Search for Conversations on Ethics in Education

By

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Abstract
The purpose of this Delphi study is to explore the role of ethics and ethical decision-making in education in the Ontario context. There is legislation in Ontario that references ethics in relationship to teacher conduct and teacher training, however, there is little evidence that educators actually engage in conversations on ethics or ethical decision-making. Critical theory and the Multiple Ethical Paradigm frame this study and inform the discourse to explore, deconstruct, and analyze the data. The data gathered in this study reveal a complexity with multiple issues that prevent natural conversations on ethics from occurring in educational settings. Given the important role ethics and ethical decision-making play in keeping students safe, welcomed, and respected, and coupled with the current climate of accountability and transparency, educators need to pay greater attention to what this silence on ethics is telling us.

Key Words: ethics, educators, teacher identity, teacher misconduct, teacher education
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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the many educators who crossed my path for the past decade.

I heard you.
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Chapter One
Introduction

As a high school student, there were two teachers who greatly influenced my public education: my guidance counsellor and my art teacher. My guidance counsellor, who was the mayor of Timmins, Ontario at the time, was also a family friend. My art teacher, who taught me for four years in high school, was also my neighbor. I walked to school with him every morning and babysat his two children. None of this seemed unusual to me until I entered a faculty of education at the age of 40 and was told that teachers are expected to set and maintain professional boundaries. This includes being forbidden to: socialize with students outside of the classroom or general school setting, transport them in a personal vehicle, purchase gifts for them, or engage in private conversations with students behind closed doors. If these are the expectations of teachers today, how do I reconcile this with my experiences growing up in Timmins, where my teachers were an integral part of my academic and personal life?

When I began to study ethics in education, I reflected on my experience of being my art teacher’s student, neighbour, and babysitter. Did my teacher, who I respect so much, cross a professional boundary? Was his behavior towards me in any way unethical? These questions have troubled me since I became an educator. Eventually, I concluded that my art teacher was, and still is, a very ethical and morally upstanding professional. Yet, I was not completely free with nagging ethical questions in my mind. By today’s standards, my art teacher’s behaviour would be construed as unethical. However, according to prevailing literature on the topic, he may or may not have been unethical, depending on the political, theoretical, legal, or philosophical lens I look through.

This dissertation is grounded in my experiences in both my personal and professional life as a student, former psychotherapist, teacher, administrator, education law instructor, and adjudicator for the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT). These different roles intersected over a twenty-year period, placing me in pivotal positions that centered on ethics. My relentless need to talk about ethics became the focus of my doctoral studies and throughout this process one glaring issue stood out: educators seemed very reluctant to engage in conversations on ethics. Ethics may be
evident in education literature and policy documents, however what I wanted was not a formal study or scripted dialogue. I wanted a simple conversation on ethics between professionals; I wanted to ask them what their experiences were and if they ever had conflicting thoughts when faced with an ethical decision. However, no matter how hard I tried, this conversation was non-existent. The topic of ethics and ethical decision-making appeared invisible to me.

My professional and personal experiences are based in Ontario, where I have lived and worked my entire life; therefore, it is fitting that I ground this study in the province where I live and work. However, given that ethics is a universal concept, I reference and compare studies and policy documents from around the world - significant contributions from education scholars on ethics that cannot be ignored. Comparing and contrasting policy documents and literature on ethics in education globally grants the depth and breadth needed to appreciate fully the complexity of this topic.

**Ethical Decision-making**

This study addresses both the broad term ethics, and the specific term ethical decision-making in education. Under the broader term of ethics, teacher education, support, and legislation will be examined. The specific term ethical decision-making will focus on the processes and actions educators undertake when faced with an ethical dilemma. How ethics is taught to educators, how they incorporate ethics and ethical decision-making into their practice and how policy and legislation shape their profession is related to both terms. At times these two terms will appear separate in this paper and other times, they will both be addressed depending on the context.

By definition, ethical decision-making is a complex cognitive process that “requires the ability to make distinctions between competing choices” and “is based on core character values like trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and good citizenship” (Josephson Institute of Ethics, 2016, p. 4). According to Strike (1990), “Teachers, after all, are constantly dealing with other human beings and making decisions that affect their lives. Moreover, as noted, often these human beings are notably vulnerable to unethical treatment. It is crucial that teachers make these decisions ethically” (p. 52).
Several studies on ethics have revealed that educators make hundreds of ethical decisions every day, some that are conscious and others that are not (Manley-Casimir & Wasserman, 1989; O’Neill & Bourke, 2010). When legislation is clear, such as reporting suspected neglect or child abuse under the Child and Family Services Act (1990), educators do not ruminate over their decisions; it is simply a matter of obeying the law. Other issues are much more complex or elusive and educators often struggle with the “right” answer.

Velasquez, Moberg, Meyer, Shanks, McLean, DeCosse, Andre, & O’Hanson (2009) of the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics created a framework involving five steps a person should take when faced with making an ethical decision. The steps include:

1. recognizing an ethical issue;
2. getting the facts;
3. evaluating alternative actions;
4. making a decision and testing it; and
5. acting and reflecting on the outcome.

The Markkula Center for Applied Ethics is part of the Santa Clara University in California, and is not affiliated with a faculty of education. Instead, their website notes that the Center works with “business ethics, bioethics, campus ethics, journalism ethics, leadership ethics and social sector ethics” (About the Center, 2017, para. 5). The topic of ethical decision-making is explored in depth in this paper, and I examine where, when, and who is being taught ethical frameworks like the one mentioned above.

**The Difference between Ethical Decision-making and Professional Judgment.** The term *professional judgment* should not be confused with ethical decision-making. The Ontario Ministry of Education defines professional judgment in the document *Growing Success* (2010) as:

> Judgement that is informed by professional knowledge of curriculum expectations, context, evidence of learning, methods of instruction and assessment, and the criteria and standards that indicates success in student learning. In professional practice, judgement
involves a purposeful and systematic thinking process that evolves in terms of accuracy and insight with ongoing reflection and self-correction. (p. 152)

The Ontario Secondary School Teachers’ Federation (OSSTF) created a very specific list that outlines what professional judgment entails for teachers. Some examples include:

- choosing the order and emphasis of specific expectations when delivering the curriculum;
- identifying the instructional strategies to deliver the curriculum;
- determining the format and content of your lesson plans;
- selecting methods for differentiating instruction and assessments for students;
- deciding what resources are used to support the curriculum and outcomes and whether or not to use ministry approved textbooks;
- choosing the frequency, timing, methods and types of assessment and evaluation used to measure student learning;
- determining the method and frequency for providing feedback to students; and
- determining the format and content of lesson plans/information for occasional teachers. (OSSTF, 2016, p. 3)

A less policy-driven and more academic interpretation could be seeing “teachers’ judgement as professional when it takes into account the resources and constraints of their work setting and is informed by professional knowledge acquired through experience and through training” (Allal, 2012, p. 20). However, in all three examples, there is no mention of ethics or ethical decision-making. In both legislation and academic literature, professional judgement seems to refer to more technical decisions, instead of ethical ones.

Ethical decision-making can impact an educator’s career for life and a single misstep can result in a myriad of negative consequences. Given this fact and extensive legislation in Ontario that references ethics, it is surprising that educators do not engage in open dialogue about this issue, formally or informally, during daily interactions. These issues are not unique to Canada as studies done in Japan (Maruyama & Ueno, 2010) and India (Puhan, Malla, & Behera, 2014) reveal similar problems. Considering the potential repercussions of teachers acting unethically, it
is disconcerting that policy makers and education leaders have not made this issue implicit in an effort to protect teachers.

Ethical knowledge was crucial to my role as an adjudicator at the OCT, but what about my role as a secondary school teacher and administrator? During my 12 years of teaching, not once did I engage in professional development on ethics through my school board or teacher federation. I did not participate in conversations in staff or department meetings where ethics was openly discussed. I noticed a shift from silence to conversation when I took my principal qualifications and many of our conversations centered on ethics and ethical decision-making. As an administrator, I now engage in conversations regarding ethics with other administrators, often behind closed doors.

As a faculty of education law instructor, I always share my story about my teachers in Timmins at the beginning of the course. The teacher candidates’ comments often vary as they grapple with the ethical questions surrounding my high school experience, and whether or not my high school art teacher acted ethically. Like most ethical dilemmas, there rarely is a simple answer. I have made many ethical decisions in my role as an educator, and I ask my students to reflect on the process that I might have used to make them. Some of their responses include: referring to policy, examining my professional obligations, and contacting teacher federations. But then I present more challenging dilemmas or several dilemmas all at once. The scenario becomes apparent. At some point, an educator cannot be referencing, calling, or emailing every time he or she needs to make an ethical decision. It simply becomes part of one’s job (O’Neill & Bourke, 2010).

I often wonder when my teacher candidates will have another opportunity to think and engage in professional discourse about ethics in education once they graduate. I also wonder what will happen to them when they are faced with a plethora of ethical dilemmas as a classroom teacher and whether they will remain silent or decide to start a conversation.
The Research Question and Sub-questions

This dissertation involves years of studying legislation on teacher education and teacher behavior predominantly in the Ontario education system. At times, I reference research and policy in other countries to illustrate the universality of the topic. Throughout all my thinking and learning, my overall research question remained the same: If ethics is evident in legislation and research on teacher education and teacher conduct, where are the conversations on ethics among educators?

To clarify, if an educator participates in professional development or a discipline hearing, (such as those that exist at the Ontario College of Teachers); the conversation on ethics becomes very formal and scripted. An administrator, professor, or perhaps a lawyer may lead it. The questions may not flow organically, but are very direct and require well-thought out answers. By conversations, I am referring to the informal discussions that occur about whether we as educators are doing the “right thing.” They include the uncensored dialogue in which educators honestly share their feelings and thoughts about ethical dilemmas and their own ethical beliefs.

While researching this topic, I found that my instincts were not far from the truth. In a recent international study on ethics in education by Maxwell et al. (2016), found that there is a lack of opportunities for teachers “in teacher education [programs] to engage in professional and scholarly dialogue about issues such as the roles and goals of ethics” (p. 147).

The methodology that guided my research was a Delphi Study. It involved a process of asking a series of questions to a group of experts in a particular field or on a particular topic. Each question is created based on the comments of the participants and delves deeper into the topic as the study evolves. My first question lead to my subsequent questions as the study progressed. The following Sub-questions were posed in the study:

1. How do educators engage in conversations surrounding ethics?
2. When have you, and when do you engage in conversations on ethics?
3. What creative solutions (other than the case studies already mentioned) can you think of to help teachers get past the internal barriers that prevent them from being able to address or just talk about ethics?
4. There are two avenues that are prevalent in conversations: the formal or conventional route that is identified and documented as professional development, and the informal route that is not documented, and is teacher driven. The informal route does not focus on education but rather support. Question number four is based on this chart [See Chapter 6 – Data, p. 161]. Which avenue (formal or informal) do you prefer and why? Which avenue do you like the least and why?

5. Do you agree there is a disconnect between legislation/professional education, the profession, and the self? What would you label it and do you have any idea why it exists?
Purpose of Study

Situating Ethics and Ethical Decision-making in the Center of Education

Ethics is a fundamental issue in our education system because it impacts teachers, school boards, faculties of education, the government, students, federations, and the community. When ethics and ethical decision-making replaced at the center of education, several issues connect relating to policy, politics, and power. These issues are always important to explore, but more so right now in our current climate of accountability and transparency required in education (O’Neill & Burke, 2010).

Ethics and ethical decision-making intersects many areas of policy in education that affect students, teachers, administrators, and the community. Navigating these points of tension can be quite difficult if it is not being discussed in the first place. To understand the relationship between ethics, ethical decision-making, and all of the stakeholders in education, each of these groups must be identified and explained.
Ontario Ministry of Education. The Ontario Ministry of Education is responsible for creating and enacting legislation related to all issues in education. They also create the structure of schools and enforce a wide variety of processes and protocols educators must follow. The Ministry has embedded ethics in two critical areas of education legislation and policy: teacher training (including voluntary professional development such as Additional Qualification courses) and in professional misconduct. Historically, these two areas have been fraught with friction between the various stakeholders, as they often become battlegrounds of power and control over who has the right to teach ethics, and who has the right to discipline educators. The Historical Context section examines the actions of the Ministry of Education, beginning with the education reform movement in Ontario in the 1970s up to the present. These actions involve the development, removal, revision, or implementation of policies that reference ethics. Legislation created by the Ministry of Education will be examined in detail in subsequent chapters.

Teacher Federations. The four teacher federations in Ontario (Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario [ETFO], Ontario Secondary School Teachers’ Federation [OSSTF], the Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association [OECTA], and l’Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens [AEFO]) are primarily responsible for the well-being of teachers. They advocate on teachers’ behalf regarding working conditions, collective agreements, and - with regards to ethics - their professional reputation. Teacher federations are very active in conversations regarding ethics and this study explores aspects of their involvement.

Educators. In this paper, educators refer to teachers and administrators in our current elementary and secondary public education system. Educators are directly impacted by ethics and ethical decision-making in many aspects of their job; their decisions and conduct must demonstrate ethical values at all times. In Ontario, the community, teacher federations, historically set these values and most recently, by the OCT. Educators experience considerable tension surrounding the ethical standards established by the community and government and the impact it has had on their professionalism and personal lives (Campbell, 2000).

According to Maruyama and Ueno (2010), three specific criteria define a professional:

1) mandatory formal training by an education institution;
2) ongoing development of skills; and
3) an institution, association, or self-regulatory body that ensures ongoing competence in the profession.

Throughout most of North America, various forms of teacher professionalism are set by the government (either provincially in Canada, or by the National Education Association in United States) and involve the same criteria Maruyama and Ueno identified.

Ethics is enmeshed with the concept of professionalism, and as such, it is difficult to separate the two. *The Ethical Standards of the Teaching Profession* (2014), created by, is the official document for the teaching profession in Ontario. It states that to be ethical is to act professionally and in order to act professional, one must be ethical. In other words, it is impossible to have one action without the other.

**Faculties of Education.** Faculties of Education are primarily concerned with educating teacher candidates and preparing them to be competent professionals. There are 16 faculties in Ontario that are under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities. OCT accredits the faculties and conducts routine inspections to ensure that legislation and policies are being followed. Faculties of Education are responsible for teaching a wide variety of topics to teacher candidates, many of which are mandated by the Ministry of Education. Ethics and ethical decision-making is taught either in stand-alone courses related to education law, or is embedded into the curriculum. A recent study by Campbell (2014) questioned the efficacy of ethics education in teacher preparation programs. Campbell found that many teacher candidates had poor or little understanding and knowledge of ethics, even after it was addressed in bachelor of education programs. The use of case studies, OCT’s *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession* (2014), and conversations in class had some impact, but not enough according to Campbell.

A second Canadian study by Maxwell (2016) identified a lack of continuity amongst faculties of education when it came to teaching ethics. Maxwell found little agreement amongst education scholars on how, when, and why ethics should be taught in faculties of education. Maxwell calls
this lack of common ground “an embarrassment” (p. 469) to the profession and suggests that it can lead to wide-reaching problems.

During an educator’s career, it is very common for one to return to faculties of education to take Additional Qualification courses to advance both career options and salary. Ontario Regulation 347/02 Accreditation of Teacher Education Programs mandates that all Additional Qualification courses include reference to the Ethical Standards of the Teaching Profession (2014). In contrast, master’s and doctoral programs are less common for the classroom teacher to pursue. Also, depending on the focus of the graduate program, a teacher may or may not engage in conversations surrounding ethics.

**Students.** Bill 157: Keeping Our Kids Safe At School Act (2010) and the Bill 13: Accepting School Act (2012) specifically addresses student safety. These Acts are meant to guide educators in how to keep all students safe inside and outside of a school. Other forms of legislation and policy related to evaluation and assessment such as Growing Success: Assessment Evaluation and Reporting in Ontario Schools (2010) are meant to help students succeed in school. An educator is expected to follow Growing Success to ensure a student is supported intellectually.

There are serious repercussions for educators who ignore policy or legislation. Student safety and well-being was the focus of several high profile media cases such as Azmi Jubran in Vancouver (School District No. 44 North Vancouver v. Jubran, 2005 BCCA) and Jamie Hubley, a student in Ottawa who publicized his suicide note on social media (Kitchen & Bellini, 2012). Both students were victims of years of homophobic bullying. There was legislation in place to stop bullying, but teachers chose to ignore it (Kitchen & Bellini, 2012). A national study by Equality for Gays and Lesbians Everywhere (EGALE Canada) in 2011 revealed that a vast majority of gay and lesbian students cited teachers as doing nothing to stop homophobic bullying. High profile cases and national studies such as these reveal that ignoring legislation is not a criminal act, but certainly can be seen as an unethical one that directly impacts students’ safety and their well-being.
**The Community.** According to O’Neill and Burke (2010), “there remains the important ethical question whether society should be holding teachers accountable for student results, their standards of teaching behavior or the ethical judgments they make” (p. 166). Societies in general and parents in particular have a powerful voice in public education. They are the moral barometers of teacher conduct, both inside and outside of the classroom. The moral and ethical standard the community imposes on educators has always been considered contentious and intrusive. This tension is well documented in Ontario where community standards in the late 1800s dictated that female teachers who got married were fired and male teachers could not smoke, drink, visit pool halls, or get shaved in a barbershop (Richter, 2006). Community standards shift over time and from region to region, leaving educators’ moral and ethical behavior at the mercy of those who judge them.

**Summary.** Legislation and policy, the overarching laws that guide this study, are present in many of the areas related to ethics. There is well-documented historical research that examines various stakeholders’ relationship with ethics: the community, federations, self-regulatory body, teachers, and students (Begley, 2008; Campbell, 2000; Quick & Normore, 2004; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005; Rebore, 2014). However, what are missing from the historical stories are the day-to-day conversations between educators surrounding ethics and ethical decision-making. The voice of educators cannot be heard in surveys, studies, or in the media.

**Significance of Study**

This study is both timely and relevant in our current climate of accountability in education (O’Neill & Burke, 2010). Educators, like many public sector professionals, are increasingly being scrutinized and held accountable by the public (Steinecke, 2013). The combination of legislation relating to accountability and transparency, coupled with social media, has created glass walls for the teaching profession. Now, more than ever, educators need to examine ethics and ethical decision-making in education as a means of understanding and accepting the level of responsibility placed on them. This needs to be done, not only during their teacher training, but also throughout their entire career.
It is also important to note that teaching is a unique profession. Although other professionals such as social workers or early childhood educators work directly with children, educators spend considerably more time with children over several years. Educators are responsible for attending to students’ physical, mental, and emotional well-being on a daily basis. Educators are accountable to a greater number of stakeholders, compared to other professions. Doctors for example, are often self-employed and are accountable to their patients, a self-regulatory body, and the government (College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, 2014).

Besides the teaching profession, other self-regulating fields such as law and medicine have historically acknowledged the importance of ethics (Bowen, Bessette, & Chan, 2006; Warnick & Silverman, 2011). Doctors and lawyers are expected to remain grounded in ethical decision-making for their patients or clients throughout their entire career by both the professional body and the public (Law Society of Upper Canada, 2013; College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, 2014). Self-regulatory bodies such as the College of Physicians and Surgeons, the Law Society of Upper Canada, and the Ontario College of Social Workers (OCSW), all require their members to provide proof of ongoing professional development. The OCSW requires that each member submit a report based on the Continuing Competence Program. Rather than simply submit the number of hours they have engaged in professional development, OCSW (2015) requires that each member review the ethics of the profession and submits a reflection stating how the professional activities one has engaged in throughout the year have enhanced his or her practice. Members must also state areas of their practice that need to be improved. In a recent international study by Maxwell et al., (2016), ethics courses in medicine, dentistry, business, occupational therapy, engineering, and teaching were examined. Whereas 91% of medicine and dentistry programs had a stand-alone ethics course as part of their training, teacher education programs were second last on the list with 24%. Only 8% of graduate programs in education included a course in ethics.

When Maxwell et al., (2016) probed deeper into why bachelor of education programs lagged so far behind in teaching ethics, they discovered a list of impediments that included a) insufficient time spent in bachelor of education programs; b) lack of qualified instructors; c) no specific
The OCT is responsible for setting the requirements of teacher preparation training in Ontario. Under Ontario Regulation 347/02 Accreditation of Teacher Education Programs (2002), it is now mandatory that all faculties of education teach the *Ethical Standards of the Teaching Profession* (2014), and that education law and professionalism be included in their curriculum. However, the College does not monitor the ongoing professional development activities of its members and there is no requirement that a course in ethics be taken by educators who were certified prior to the Regulation coming into effect. As a result, many of them are not aware of the ethical standards of the profession, even though they are in the position of shaping the moral character of children and are responsible for their safety and well-being every day (Campbell, 2014). In other words, in Ontario teachers have minimal ethical accountability- that is, until they do something wrong.

During the 1990s a new area of interest emerged in the teaching profession: that of moral leadership. Moral leadership pertains to teachers who are in leadership positions and administrators, who have already made the transition from teacher to principal. This area is one of the fastest growing areas of leadership study (Furman, 2004). In the last two decades leadership training has included a strong focus on ethical decision-making and education as a moral enterprise. In Ontario, leadership training requires educators to take a Principal Qualifications course, which includes coursework, assignments, and reflective writing focused on ethics and ethical standards (Ontario College of Teachers Principal’s Qualification Program, 2009). Also, throughout an administrator’s career, there are further qualifications and professional development opportunities that address ethics (Ontario Principal’s Council [OPC], 2014). While there is a great deal of research that points to an ethical consciousness that is fostered among administrators both in their training and actual on-the-job work, the same cannot be said for teachers. Unless teachers seek out courses or conversations on ethics on their own, it may not be part of their professional development, staff meetings, or professional learning communities.
This study is significant in its relationship to social justice and teaching in diverse schools. North American schools have changed in the past 30 years, and the diversity of learners and cultures have increased greatly (Begley & Johansson, 2003). There have been significant studies that highlight the ill-treatment of minoritized students in North American schools, which suggest unethical and discriminatory behavior by educators (e.g. EGALE Canada, 2011; Valenzuela, 1999). Also, the longstanding history of abuse of Aboriginal students from the 1830s to the 1990s in federally-funded residential schools points to a broken system that violated every ethical standard possible (Miller & Marshall, 2015; Truth and Reconciliation: The Final Report, 2015). Recent data from the United States Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (2013-2014) revealed:

Racial disparities in suspensions are also apparent in K-12 schools. While 6% of all K-12 students received one or more out-of-school suspensions, the percentage is 18% for black boys; 10% for black girls; 5% for white boys; and 2% for white girls.

American Indian or Alaska Native, Latino, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and multiracial boys are also disproportionately suspended from school, representing 15% of K-12 students but 19% of K-12 students receiving one or more out-of-school suspensions. (p. 3)

Teaching educators the importance of social justice is essential to our education system, yet it is understood on a superficial level, at best (Hytten, 2015; Shapiro & Hassinger, 2007; Starratt, 2012). Educators may participate in social justice education and learn they must follow the Ontario Human Rights Code (1990), Bill 157: Keeping Our Kids Safe at School Act (2009), and Bill 13: Accepting Schools Act (2012), yet their deeper understanding of why they need to do this is not addressed in legislation. It is fairly simple and clear: there are too many examples of Aboriginal students, students of colour, and gay, lesbian and transgendered students who reached out for help, and our education system failed them (Truth and Reconciliation: The Final Report, 2015; EGALE Canada, 2011).

Marginalized students are often the most vulnerable in schools, and ethically, they should be protected and supported like everyone else. If there are examples throughout Canada of
marginalized students who are not being supported and protected, then conversations on ethics are necessary.

Definitions

Ethics. The word *ethics* originates from the Greek word *ethos* that originally meant a home or dwelling belonging to animals. When applied to people, it referred to their “habit” or character (Beckner, 2004). Foucault wrote: “*ethos* [sic] was a way of being. It was a mode of being for the subject, along with a certain way of acting, a way visible to others. A person’s *ethos* [sic] was evident and in the calm with which he [or she] responded to every event” (Foucault, 1997, p. 286).

At some point, the definition of ethics evolved to refer to the philosophical “study of ideas, ideas about right and wrong” (Beckner, 2004), or “the philosophical study of morality” (O’Neill & Bourke, 2010, p. 161). Ethics is about the “big questions” in life that center on humanity’s sense of what is right, wrong, fair, or just (Beckner, 2004). Often discussions on ethics and morality become confusing and the two concepts are poorly defined. Whereas moral reasoning is seen as the clear line between what is right and wrong, ethical reasoning is often situated in a dilemma, where the line is blurry or ambiguous.

Many scholars have tried to define ethics and the core values the term represents. Aristotle believed ethics included prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance. Kidder (1995) listed ethical core values as love, truth, fairness, freedom, unity, tolerance, responsibility, and respect. Beckner (2004) defined six categories of ethical principles in the business world as being beneficence; justice, honesty, and fairness; mercy or compassion; frugality; humility; and individual dignity.

The study of ethics involves struggling with one’s own sense of morality and conscience. In education, it requires educators to be able to question their own beliefs and standards, and reflect on their decisions and actions. Campbell (2006) stated:

> As a kind of virtue-in-action, *ethical knowledge* enables teachers to make conceptual and practical links between core moral and ethical values such as honesty, compassion, fairness, and respect for others and their own daily choices and actions. It moves teachers beyond viewing teaching solely in technical, pedagogical, curricular, disciplinary, and
evaluative terms to appreciating the potentially moral and ethical impact their practice has, both formally and informally, on students. (p. 33)

Infantino and Wilke (2009) stated that ethical behaviour in an educational setting has three distinct components: First, ethics is related to inter-personal relationships between the educator and all of the stakeholders, including parents, students, colleagues, administrators, and members of the community. Second, it involved an educator’s actions or behaviour towards all of the stakeholders. Third, ethics involved an educator’s thoughts and own belief system about what is right and wrong. In this dissertation, the word ethics takes into consideration all of the definitions mentioned above, giving it the widest application possible.

Ethical decision-making is a central theme in this study, however it does not take into account the acquisition of ethical knowledge, the teaching of ethics, legislating ethics, or communicating ethics. These are aspects of the topic that will be explored as well.

Educators. According to the Ontario College of Teachers Act (1996), all educators - including teachers, administrators, superintendents, and directors of education, must be certified by OCT in order to work in the public education system. Even though teachers, administrators, superintendents, and directors may belong to a specific organization such as a federation or association, they are bound by the same legislation, specifically the Education Act (1990) and the Ontario College of Teachers Act (1996) with regards to certification, conduct, and discipline.

When the term teacher is used in this study, it is intentional to signify a policy or practice that is only applicable to this particular group. When the term administrator is used in isolation, the same practice applies. This may appear confusing, especially with regards to the Delphi study where some of the participants began their careers as teachers and were then promoted to administration. Keeping this in mind, the words teacher and educator are strategically used throughout this paper with the intent of either referring to one group (teachers) or the larger group (educators) which includes administrators as well.
Professors of education are not included in this study even though teacher education programs are discussed at length. The programs are examined in terms of legislation, and any commentary on facilities of education, does not include professors’ conduct.

**Professional Boundaries.** Ethics and professional boundaries are intrinsically related terms. To have a strong sense of professional boundaries teachers must understand their role as ethical professionals. According to ETFO (2015), “The term ‘Professional Boundaries’ is not easily defined. When teachers were asked how they understood the term, ETFO learned that it can mean different things to different people” (p. 1). All three English teacher federations in Ontario (EFTO, OSSTF, and OECTA), and the Canadian Teachers’ Federation (2016) attempt to clarify what is meant by professional boundaries, but instead find that the parameters are inexhaustible. This is primarily because the term is, unfortunately, contextual; for example, professional boundaries in small towns are often not possible in terms of geographical distance. Social boundaries also seem indistinct, as seen in my personal story wherein my teachers often attended family events such as weddings, birthdays, or funerals.

**Professional Development.** According to the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), *TALIS Report* (2009):

> Professional development is defined as activities that develop an individual’s skills, knowledge, expertise and other characteristics as an educator. It can be made available through external expertise in the form of courses, workshops or formal qualification programs, through collaboration between schools or educators across schools (e.g. observational visits to other schools or educator networks) or within the schools in which educators work. (p. 3)

In the context of this study, professional development refers to a wide range of learning activities that educators take part in throughout their career. It can be formal or informal and include workshops, courses, certificate programs, additional qualifications (AQs), or university degrees. It can be mandated by ministries of education and school boards, or self-directed by educators.
There is an ongoing debate in education relating to the terms *lifelong learning* and *professional development* (Bascia, 1999; Bellini, 2014). Education scholar Tara Fenwick (2001) believed the term professional development referred to education that is directed towards the profession, such as Ministry-mandated information on assessment and evaluation. On the other hand, lifelong learning implied autonomy and individualistic education guided by the person, not the profession. Fenwick’s research on professional development for educators is extensive, however, in Canada, the terms lifelong learning and professional development are blurred and used by both the Ministry of Education and the teacher federations. This study is less concerned with the debate over autonomy versus self-directed learning and is more concerned with capturing all potential venues where professional development opportunities exist for educators.

**Misconduct.** In this paper, the term *misconduct* refers to the definition used in Ontario Regulation 437/97, Professional Misconduct of the Ontario College of Teachers Act (1996). The Regulation cites 28 examples of misconduct that can be grouped together into categories. The first category (1-4, 13) identifies various forms of lying. The second category (7, 11) refers to abusing or neglecting students. The third category (5, 10, 14, 15, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, and 27) lists various types of failures or inactions relating to teaching. The remaining categories refer to breach of privacy; insubordination; conduct unbecoming; incompetence; and disgraceful, dishonorable, and unprofessional behavior. Although the word ethics is never used in the Regulation, it is implied that lying, abusing, or neglecting students, would be considered unethical acts, in accordance with *The Ethical Standards of the Teaching Profession* (2014).

**The History of Ethics**
Rebore (2014) identified three periods in history when the concepts of justice, ethics, and morality dominated philosophical discourse: the classical era, beginning with Aristotle; the modern era, beginning with the writings of John Stuart Mill; and the post-modern era, beginning with the works of Michel Foucault and John Rawls. Further, philosophers have defined five different sources of ethical standards, namely: the utilitarian approach, the rights approach, the fairness or justice approach, the common good approach, and the virtue approach (Velasquez et al., 2009).
The Classical Era. The Greek philosophers, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle grappled with the philosophical meaning of ethics, justice, and morality and how they affected society (Beckner, 2004). Mahoney (2008) noted that Plato first addressed ethics in *The Republic* (380 B.C.) by stating that to understand ethics, people needed to understand the concept of justice. In *Nichomachean Ethics* (350 B.C.), Aristotle explored people’s thoughts and behaviors in terms of right versus wrong and good versus bad. He questioned the moral character of people and the concepts of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance (MacIntyre, 1998). These concepts are considered so powerful that examples of them are still present today in Ontario’s Education Act (1990) under Duties of a Teacher (section 264 (1) (c)):

> to inculcate by precept and example respect for religion and the principles of Judaeo-Christian morality and the highest regard for truth, justice, loyalty, love of country, humanity, benevolence, sobriety, industry, frugality, purity, temperance and all other virtues.

In addition, character education, which has been mandated in Ontario since 2006, uses virtues to instill a sense of moral behavior in both students and teachers. Teachers are expected to act virtuously as role models to students, and students are expected to develop character traits that embody respect, trust, and care. Aristotle believed that a person, who acts ethically, does so because he or she has a strong sense of character.

The Concept of Ethical Relativism. Greek historian Herodotus argued in favour of ethical relativism, which implies that ethics and morals are relative to any given society. In other words, what is right or ethical in one society may not be for another. Therefore, there is no universal or ultimate “right” or “ethical” answer but rather one that can simply be compared to others (Velasquez et al, 1992). Ethical relativism is an important concept to understand as it dominated philosophical discussions and arguments in the 1700s, and resurfaced in the 1970s with the postmodern movement.

Philosophers like Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) supported ethical relativism and believed that ethics could be interpreted in different ways for different people. There was no “one truth” or “one ethics” size that fit all. According to Rachels (2016):
Truths, including the truths of science as well as ethics, should be recognized as beliefs associated with particular traditions that serve particular purposes in particular times and places. The desire for absolutes [sic] is seen as a misguided quest for the impossible. (p. 2)

Other scholars (Campbell, 1997; Soltis, 1986; Strike & Soltis, 1985) argued against ethical relativism and instead believed that relativism does not belong in discussions regarding professionalism. When creating codes of ethics for professions, Campbell (2013) stated relativism can have “paralyzing effects on the pursuit of ethical professional conduct in education” (p. 207). Soltis (1986) also argued that “ethical relativism has no place in the ethics of professionals….It would make no sense to teach principles of professional conduct as if they were arbitrary or subjective” (p.3).

Tension surrounding ethical relativism does not only exist among scholars but is also prevalent in education. While it is important for educators to acknowledge their own personal ethical views on education issues, the profession requires educators to abandon them (Soltis, 1986), since they must develop the ethics of the profession through codes of conduct set by a regulatory body, the government, or their teachers’ federation.

**Modernism.** German philosopher Emmanuel Kant (1724-1804) believed that the ethic of duty had three components: an action has moral worth if it is done for the sake of duty; an action is morally correct if its rule can be commanded as universal law; and humanity should be treated as an end in itself, not a means to an end (Infantino & Wilke, 2009, p. 12). Kant’s approach to ethical decision-making is called non-consequentialist since it is not based on avoiding consequences; rather, ethical decisions are made regardless of the consequence. What is more important in Kant’s philosophy is that people act in an ethical manner because it is seen as the right thing to do.

In contrast, Scottish philosopher David Hume (1711-1776) argued that moral and ethical beliefs are related to people’s emotions rather than their sense of reasoning. He believed that ethical
relativism could be extended to individuals, so that what is right and ethical for one person may not be for another; and that was fine.

Utilitarianism (1863), as defined by John Stuart Mill, is a philosophical study of people’s struggle with morality and the “ethics of consequences” (Infantino & Wilke, 2009). Mills believed that moral and ethical choices should benefit the majority of people in any given society. Consequences are expected, but are weighted in terms of how many people they will affect. Infantino and Wilke (2009) stated that there are many examples of utilitarianism (also known as consequentialism) still being used in schools today. Rules are often made based on the greatest amount of good, they will bring to the greatest number of students, and teachers often make ethical decisions based on predicted consequences. For example, a teacher plans a class trip to see a national wonder such as Niagara Falls; the only way for the students to see the Falls is to cross a busy highway. Deciding not to take students on this trip knowing that they could get hurt if they had to cross a highway is an example of a utilitarian approach to balancing the good of many with the consequences related to the action. Both non-consequentialist and consequentialist (utilitarian) ethical positions have dominated philosophical discussions for hundreds of years and examples of both types of thinking can still be seen in schools today.

**Post Modernism.** The third period in the history of ethics occurred in the 1970s with the post-modern movement. This movement extended into the arts and philosophical circles, and questioned “the idea of objectivity in many areas, including ethics” (Rachels, 2016, p. 1). The two dominant philosophers who drove the discussion on ethics, social justice, and the self were John Rawls and Michel Foucault.

John Rawls rejected utilitarianism as it only defended the rights of the majority, and neglected the rights of the minority; he thought it was simply not fair. An American philosopher and professor from the 1970s, Rawls is known for his work in social justice. The 1970s in the United States was filled with civil unrest, and so Rawls public declaration of standing up for minoritized citizens filled avoid. His social justice theory extended to education, where Rawls envisioned inclusive schools that valued all students (Rawls, 1999).
The last philosopher and social theorist to deconstruct ethics was Michel Foucault, whose work touched upon many of the themes raised in this dissertation such as the relationship between philosophy and psychology. By combining these two disciplines, he was able to delve deeply into the concepts of the self, identity, and reflection.

**Feminist Perspectives on Ethics.** One issue that arises in philosophical debates on ethics is the absence of women. Greek philosophy and classical ethical theories were developed by men, and only addressed men. Women were seen as lacking moral character, and this belief permeated the education system for many centuries. For example, in the 1880s in Ontario, women were hired to teach the younger grades because of their natural “motherly” qualities. However, men were paid more to teach senior students since they were considered smarter, of higher moral character, and better able to manage a classroom (ETFO, 2006).

Even as late as the 1980s, Kohlberg’s research on moral development used only male subjects (Infantino & Wilke, 2009). This gap in ethics in education is addressed by Carol Gilligan (1993), a student of Kohlberg, and Nel Noddings (2012). Noddings’ ethic of care is one of the main tenants of the Multiple Ethical Paradigm, the conceptual framework that is used to inform this study. Noddings believed that character development programs used in schools were often based on Aristotle’s virtues. She maintained that telling students and teachers to be virtuous and morally upstanding citizens was not enough (Noddings, 2012). Instead, teachers needed to model care to all students, the way a mother would to her children.

Feminist scholars have criticized Noddings’ work for not being feminist but rather oppressive (Lucia, 1990; Taylor, 2005). Central to Noddings’ belief about care is placing teachers in the role of mothers. To some feminists, this simply reinforces traditional gender roles of women as caretakers, homemakers, and selfless beings (Hassan, 2008). In the past, these attitudes towards female teachers led to discrepancies with pay and status. Others critics of Noddings argue that if the ethic of care model is not authentic and simply perfunctory, then it can do more harm than good (Valenzuela, 1999).
The History of Ethics in the Ontario Education System

Although the Ontario Ministry of Education first mentioned ethics in a 1915 document, it did not gain momentum until the 1980s. Both legislation and conversations on the importance of ethics first appeared in the United States, followed by Ontario in the early 1990s. Murphy (1990) identified three paradigm shifts that occurred in education at this time: school improvement, democratic community, and social justice. Leaders were being asked to examine their ethical knowledge and beliefs about these three strands, as noted in the University Council for Educational Administration and the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium of 1996 (Furman, 2004). Part of the reform movement in teacher professional development attempted to “connect teacher education programs with the trend toward ethics education in other professional circles” (Warnick & Silverman, 2011, p. 273). Education scholars identified this gap in professional education for teachers and administrators while medicine, law, dentistry, and business had already included ethics in their training programs (Begley & Johansson, 2003).

Ontario Premier Bob Rae established the Royal Commission on Learning in 1993 to investigate perceived problems with the education system, “Major education reform is in the air, not just in Ontario, but across the country and around the world” (Report on the Royal Commission on Learning, 1994, p. 62). The Ontario education system was not just “shaky,” but its citizens were living “in an era of extreme anxiety about what the future holds for Ontario’s children” (Report on the Royal Commission on Learning, 1994, p. 24). The Royal Commission further stated that the education system had made a mistake in the past by ignoring and distorting previous reports such as the Hope Report (1950) and the Hall-Dennis Report (1968). This Commission was determined to make a difference and it borrowed philosophies and policies from the American National Board for Professional Teachers Standards (Report on the Royal Commission on Learning, 1994). At that time, conversations on education reform in the United States focused on educator compliance and increasing test scores (Hogan 2011, p. 28). Any mention of ethics was in relation to teacher conduct. Hogan identified this era as the “neo-liberal reform movement” in education. Its focus was certainly not on pondering the meaning of ethics in education but rather on creating and enforcing legislation (Hogan, 2011). Ontario, as stated by the Royal Commission
on Learning, turned to the United States for guidance; if one was to reform, then so was the other.

In a section dedicated entirely to teachers, the Commission philosophized over the meaning of education and what makes a “good teacher.” Although the word ethics was never explicitly mentioned, the Commission stated that one of the first tenets of good teaching was a caring teacher while the second was teachers engaging in self-reflection on their practice. The Commission noted that, “The research on good or effective teaching can provide no more than general guidelines for real teachers in real classrooms. On-going judgments are called for as teachers ‘read’ complex situations and improvise responses based on their knowledge and experience” (*Report on the Royal Commission on Learning*, 1994, p. 102).

The report explored four areas related to teachers: professionalism, teacher education, performance evaluation, and leadership. One of the major issues identified in the report was teacher isolation. It noted that “Teachers in difficulty frequently suffer in silence” (p. 102) and this had an incredible impact on educators and the profession. The report did not use the term ethical decision-making directly, but instead described “shared problem-solving” and ‘professional judgement” (p. 276). The report found that making decisions in isolation was a major issue in education and little was in place to support teachers (p. 276). This “sink or swim” culture was not healthy, and the Commission suggested that collaborative teaching and administrator support should be the foundation of good teaching. One of the ways to solve some of the issues this raised in the field was to create a college of teachers; however, it did not address teacher isolation, the importance of professional support, or the importance of self-reflection. Instead, the Commission described a self-regulatory body that would be responsible for education and training, certification, accreditation of faculties of education, and disciplining educators. The Commission cited the Scottish General Teaching Council and British Columbia College of Teachers as two examples of self-governing bodies that regulated, certified, and disciplined teachers. They also noted that Bette Stephenson, former Minister of Education, suggested the same initiative in the mid-1980s, and that the federations suppressed it (*Report on the Royal Commission on Learning*, 1994, p. 282).
Without stating it directly, it was clear that the Commission felt many of the problems that existed in education were related to the teacher federations and their power over the profession. The federations’ role was not to ensure a professional standard with a code of ethics, but rather fair working conditions. Somewhere between fair working conditions and professionalism was a large gap that the government perceived as part of the problem or education crisis that Ontario was facing in the 1990s. The isolation and difficulties teachers faced every day in terms of ethical decision-making was going to be resolved, in the government’s mind, by creating legislation that would tell teachers how to behave and how to think, and would determine the consequences if they did not. This marked the beginning of the accountability era in the Ontario education system (Nuland, Khandelwal, Biswal, Dewan, & Bajracharya, 2006).

Another incident began percolating in the early 1990s, but it would not become public knowledge until the Robins Report: Protecting our Students was published in 2000. Ken DeLuca, a teacher from Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, was charged with 41 offences and 21 complaints in 1994 (Robins, 2000). He admitted to sexually abusing 13 female students, ranging from the ages of 10 to 18, in five schools, over a 21-year period. Despite repeated attempts by female students and their families to stop the abuse, the Sault Ste. Marie Roman Catholic School Board chose to dismiss their complaints and just moved Mr. Deluca to another school (Robbins, 2000).

In 1996, the parents and community reached a breaking point and sent the Minister of Education a document containing 10,000 signatures demanding a public inquiry (Robbins, 2000). In addition, the parents of the victims launched a class action lawsuit against the Sault Ste. Marie Roman Catholic District School Board for negligence. Sydney L. Robins, a retired judge, was appointed to investigate the claims, and wrote one of the most illustrious reports on the repercussions of the sexual abuse of children. Even though the report focused on the psychological, legal, and physical damages that sexual abuse left behind, clearly there were ethical questions throughout his entire report. How could a school board, the church, federations, administrators, and teachers allow this to happen? The Deluca Affair, while not well-known to the general public, was recognized by the Ministry of Education as an indicator that something needed to change regarding the discipline of educators (OCT, 2001).
The political landscape in Ontario transformed dramatically with Progressive Conservative leader Premier Mike Harris in the 1990s. Harris instituted many education reform measures under the Common Sense Revolution from 1995 to 2002. Following the recommendations made by the Royal Commission on Learning and the lesser-known Deluca Affair, Harris enacted the Ontario College of Teachers Act 1997 and the College was established. Its role, to accredit faculties of education, certify and discipline educators, and establish for teachers, was met with great protest from the federations. The federations and school boards had been responsible for ensuring moral teacher conduct, but under Harris, this power was taken away from them and given to the OCT. Unfortunately, the federations and school boards had little to support their cries of protest and only had the stained image of Ken DeLuca to remind them of their most public ethical catastrophe.

Ethics became enshrined in Ontario legislation in two very distinct areas: professional training and development and teacher conduct. In 2001, the Ministry of Education modified the Ontario College of Teachers Act (1996) under Regulation 270/01: The Professional Learning Program (2001-2003) legislated teacher professional development standards and identified seven areas of professional development: curriculum, student assessment, teaching strategies, classroom management, leadership, use of technology, and communication with parents and students (Ontario Regulation 27/01, Article 8).

The OCT was given the task of implementing and tracking the professional learning program while the public was assured that educators would stay current throughout their careers and that the education crisis had been resolved.

In 2004, Minister of Education Gerard Kennedy introduced Bill 82, Professional Learning Program Cancellation Act. During parliamentary debates, Kennedy argued that the Professional Learning Program “has been an enormous failure in practice” (Legislative Assembly of Ontario Transcript of Debates, 2004). He further added that, “A study released two weeks ago cited the rate of depression among Ontario teachers as indicative of toxic workplaces.” It did not make sense that teachers suffered an increase in depression rates because they needed to participate in professional development. The College publicly stated that teachers had telephoned them and
reported being harassed by federation representatives about attending professional development events (OCT, Professional Affairs Department, 2004). Throughout this entire battle over ownership of professional development, there was no debate on its merits, necessity, or input from teachers. There was no mention of other professions such as medicine or law having legislated professional development. There was no discussion on ethics or professionalism; the debate was about power.

The second area where ethics was embedded was in Regulation 437/97, Professional Misconduct. In 1997, the OCT enacted the Regulation and introduced a comprehensive discipline process for all teachers. Since teacher misconduct was no longer under the jurisdiction of school boards or federations, the College directed school boards on procedures they had to follow in terms of reporting teacher misconduct. The Robins Report made many recommendations such as creating a unified process across the province on reporting, documenting, and disciplining teacher misconduct, and the College incorporated many of the report’s suggestions in their policies and by-laws (OCT, 2001). A second important distinction the Robins Report identified was the line between illegal and ethical misconduct. For example, Robins believed that grooming a child for sexual abuse or exploitation was not illegal under the Criminal Code of Canada (1985), but rather unethical and unprofessional.

Ethics legislation in Ontario is certainly not unique. Across Canada and in the United States, ethics is often found embedded in the same areas of education: teacher training, and teacher misconduct. Examples of this include the Alberta Teachers’ Association Code of Professional Conduct (2004), Nova Scotia Teachers’ Union Code of Ethics (n.d.), and the National Education Association Code of Ethics (1975) in the United States. What remains unique is that Ontario has the largest number of school boards, students, and teachers compared to all other provinces. Its level of transparency regarding teacher conduct is higher than many other provinces that do not publish cases of teacher misconduct on websites or in the media. Also, it is the only province that has a self-regulatory body that holds public hearings and publishes the names and disciplinary consequences of teacher misconduct. What effect does having ethics legislation ultimately have on teachers in Ontario? This study will shed light on the complex and controversial dynamics unique to Ontario’s education system.
Chapter Two
Ethics in Education Legislation and Policy

The word ethics appears in Ontario education legislation in two areas: educator training and educator conduct. In an international comparative study by Nuland, Khandelwal, Biswal, Dewan, and Bajracharya (2006), teacher codes of conduct were compared in Ontario, Australia, China, India, and Scotland. Their study revealed that most countries developed ethics legislation in order to curb educator misconduct and to set a unified professional standard in education. In India and Bangladesh, the Ministry of Education established a code of ethics for teachers, while in Ontario; the teachers’ federations were first to create a code of ethics. The Ontario College of Teacher’s Ethical Standards replaced the latter in the 1990s (Nuland et al., 2006). Another important aspect of Nuland et al.’s study was that in some countries such as India, ethics legislation is often difficult for teachers to access, too complicated to understand, and challenging to implement.

The historical development of the ethical standards of the teaching profession in Ontario is not well-known. Long before the existence of the OCT, the teacher federations, under the Ontario Teaching Profession Act (1990), created a code of ethics for their members. When the OCT was given the task to create the ethical standards for the profession in the 1990s, they did not just take the existing code from the federations, but rather approached focus groups and consulted with teachers across the province, asking them: “what is important in professional values and ethical responsibilities of the teaching profession?” (OCT, 1999, p. 3). Over 800 teachers and 15 representatives from various stakeholders, including the federations, administrators, parents, students, education scholars, and lawyers, were given the opportunity to help draft the standards (Nuland et al., 2006). Also, the OCT reached out to all teachers across the province, asking for further feedback by posting notices on its website and in their magazine Professionally Speaking.

When the standards were being drafted, many teachers were opposed to the OCT and rather than participate in the process of creating the standards, they simply refused to read the magazine or search the OCT’s website. The federations, indignant over their loss of power to regulate their members, encouraged teachers to “fight back” rather than participate in what became a career-
changing event for Ontario teachers (Nuland et al., 2006). In the end, the teachers’ ethical code of conduct was radically altered and was now embedded in the legislation and policy (Professional Affairs Department, OCT, 2001). The legislation and policies listed below illustrate the web created by the Ministry of Education and OCT that are now known as the ethical framework of the teaching profession in Ontario.

**The Teaching Profession Act.** The Ministry of Education enacted the first Teaching Profession Act in April 1944 after lobbying by the teacher federations (ETFO, 2006). The main focus of the Act was the statutory recognition of the federations as the official professional organization of teachers. The federations were given legislative power to raise the standards of the profession, create a code of ethics, and collectively bargain with school boards (ETFO, 2006). Under Regulation, section 12 (2) a, the Act states:

2. (1) Subject to the approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council, the Board of Governors may make regulations,

(6a) prescribing a code of ethics for teachers.

This meant that the teacher federations needed to create a code of ethics that all teachers would follow. The Teaching Profession Act has been updated several times, the most significant version being 1990, which is still used today. The original and more recent versions of the Act are essentially the same, with little change in wording or intent.

Prior to the enactment of the Ontario College of Teachers Act (1996), the teacher federations created regulations based on the Teaching Profession Act. Under Section 13, General Duties of a Member, the regulation states:

A member shall strive at all times to achieve and maintain the highest degree of professional competence and to uphold the honour, dignity, and ethical standards of the teaching profession. (Ontario Teacher’s Federation [OTF], 2014, p. 7)

The OTF’s professional ethics code focuses on four specific domains. The first two domains relate to working outside of regular teaching hours that potentially could be seen as a conflict of interest. It is common for teachers to tutor students, however, accepting money to tutor one’s
own students is considered a form of financial exploitation by the federation, making it unethical. Teachers can take other jobs outside of teaching but, again, the federation sets limits. For example, if a teacher operates his or her own business as a hairdresser, graphic designer, or chef, the policy stipulates that he or she needs to be part of a second union or professional association that will regulate him or her in that particular role. This is to ensure that teachers remain professionally ethical in both jobs (OTF, 2014, p. 11).

Also, some forms of employment could be seen as detrimental to the teaching profession or affect a teacher’s reputation to the extent that the public loses confidence in his or her ability to teach. Prominent legal cases such as the Ontario College of Teachers v. Paul Fromm (OCT, 2006, 2007) centered on this issue. Paul Fromm was a teacher with the Peel District School Board, but also the founder of several organizations perceived as racist and discriminatory towards immigrants and Jewish citizens (OCT, 2006, 2007). Fromm was also a writer and a prominent public speaker that used these means to denigrate immigrants, African Canadians and Jewish Canadians. According to the OCT discipline panel that adjudicated Fromm’s hearing, these roles, which were both voluntary and paid, were in conflict with his professional duties as a teacher (OCT, 2006, 2007). Teachers are expected to uphold the moral standards of society as outlined in the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and Fromm’s other forms of employment and extra-curricular activities were seen as a direct contravention of these standards. Fromm argued that his “right to free speech” was being violated and that what he did outside of teaching should not concern his students or their parents (OCT, 2006, 2007). Despite efforts to defend himself, Paul Fromm lost his case and his license to teach in Ontario.

The third domain refers exclusively to teachers’ relationships with each other, not between teacher and student. The policy simply states, “That member(s) refrain from personal depreciation of other member(s)” (p. 11). It does not refer to personal, sexual, or romantic relationships with each other. Nor does it address any form of sexual, physical, or emotional abuse or exploitation. Last, it does not mention maintaining an ethical or respectful relationship between colleagues.
The fourth domain focuses on issues surrounding negotiations that could compromise both the role and reputation of the federation. It states that teachers are not allowed to negotiate on their own behalf independent of the federation, and that it would be “unethical” to interfere with the bargaining process and policies and procedures surrounding it (OTF, 2014, p. 11).

Overall, the professional ethics regulation and policy endorsed by the federations appear scant compared to those developed by other professions. However, this is not necessarily true since the federations are responsible for only one half of the governance. Since 1996, the OCT has played a major role in creating and enacting ethical standards policy for the teaching profession. Together, the two policies create a comprehensive code of ethics for teachers to follow. It should also be noted that the Ontario College of Teacher’s *Ethical Standards of the Teaching Profession* (2014) apply to administrators as well, since they are members of the College; although administrators are members of the Ontario Principals’ Council (OPC), the OCT remains their governing body. The OPC has a Code of Ethics on their website that applies to administrators and it is very similar to the *Ethical Standards of the Teaching Profession* (2014).

**The Ontario College of Teachers Act.** When the College was created in 1997, the ethical standards for teachers did not appear in the Education Act. Instead, ethical behavior was implied under section 264 (c) Duties of a Teacher:

> (c) to inculcate by precept and example respect for religion and the principles of Judaeo-Christian morality and the highest regard for truth, justice, loyalty, love of country, humanity, benevolence, sobriety, industry, frugality, purity, temperance and all other virtues. (Education Act, 1990)

This section of the Education Act is considered problematic on many levels. First, the Act does not define the terms *truth, justice, or loyalty*, leaving them open to interpretation. Second, the Act appears quite outdated in a country with such diverse religious communities. Third, it does not tell a teacher explicitly how to act in a frugal, pure, and temperate way, for example. Legislation is often intentionally left open to interpretation and unfortunately; legislation that is too vague does not help educators.
In order to bridge this gap in legislation, the OCT created two policy documents that explicitly direct teachers in their professional behavior: the *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession* and the *Ethical Standards of the Teaching Profession* (OCT 2014). The *Ethical Standards of the Teaching Profession* outlines:

> At the heart of a strong and effective teaching profession is a commitment to students and their learning. Members of the Ontario College of Teachers, in their position of trust, demonstrate responsibility in their relationships with students, parents, guardians, colleagues, educational partners, other professionals, the environment and the public. (OCT, 2014)

The purpose of the *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession* is to inspire members to reflect and uphold the honour and dignity of the teaching profession, to identify the ethical responsibilities and commitments in the teaching profession, to guide ethical decisions and actions in the teaching profession, and to promote public trust and confidence in the teaching profession (OCT, 2014). More specifically, the ethical standards outlined in the *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession* document are Care, Trust, Respect, and Integrity (OCT, 2014). This document clearly delineates for educators the purpose of having an ethical standard and exactly what the four tenets are. The College uses the *Ethical Standards* to form the basis of several publications it produces for educators. *Cases for Teacher Development: Preparing for the Classroom* (Goldblatt & Smith, 2005) and *Exploring Leadership and Ethical Practice through Professional Inquiry* (2009) are books intended for teacher candidates and for administrators to be used in faculty of education classes or in the Principal Qualifications Program (PQP). Other publications include *Exploring Ethical Knowledge Through Inquiry* (2006), *Exploring Interprofessional Collaboration and Ethical Leadership* (2015), *Exploring Ethical Professional Relationships* (2015), *Inquiry into the Ethical Dimensions of Professional Practice* (n.d.), and *Exploring The Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession Through Anishnaabe Art* (2016). It is clear that the OCT has spent considerable time writing extensive documents regarding ethics. What is not clear or documented is if teachers ever use them.
Regulation 347/02 Accreditation of Teacher Education Programs. In December 2002, the Ministry of Education created Regulation 347/02 to ensure the teaching of the Ethical Standards in teacher education programs. In order for faculties of education to be accredited in Ontario, they must follow Regulation 347/02. They are also audited on a regular basis by OCT. In Part III of Accreditation of Professional Education, the legislation states that the College’s Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession and the Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession must be taught in all teacher education programs.

In 2013, Regulation 347/02 was amended under Regulation 283/13 to reflect the new extended teacher education program in Ontario. Under this new regulation, Schedule One outlined subject-specific topics that were to be taught. Once again, ethics was emphasized and that it must be taught using the Ethical Standards of the Teaching Profession. Also, faculties of education were now to include either a course on education law or embed this information into their curriculum (OCT, 2013).

As a testimony to its commitment to include ethics in teacher education, the OCT posts the ethical standards on their website, includes them in all of their publications and brochures, and discusses them in every issue of Professionally Speaking by presenting case studies for educators to consider.

Ontario Regulation 437/97 Professional Misconduct. Although the term ethical behavior does not appear in Ontario Regulation 437/97 Professional Misconduct, it is implied in the legislation under Items 5, 18 and 19, which are:

5. Failure to maintain the standards of the profession.
18. An act or omission that, having regard to all the circumstances, would reasonably be regarded by members as disgraceful, dishonourable or unprofessional.
19. Conduct unbecoming a member.
In Item 5, the “standards of the profession” refer to the *Ethical Standards of the Teaching Profession*. For example, if a teacher is accused of not caring for a student, he or she could be found guilty of professional misconduct under sections 5. The teacher could also be found guilty under section 18, which would be a direct judgment made by other members of the profession.

Section 19, which is often seen as the most controversial, references a teacher’s behavior outside of teaching hours. *Duhaime’s Legal Dictionary* (2009) defines conduct unbecoming as “conduct on the part of a certified professional that is contrary to the interests of the public served by that professional, or which harms the standing of the profession in the eyes of the public” (p.1). This includes behavior that is not illegal but considered unethical for a teacher to participate in, such as being intoxicated in public or using excessive profanity on social media.


The most significant change in 2012 included a “whole school approach.” This means that not only teachers and administrators were to follow the Code, but also all staff, students, parents, and members of the community in direct contact with a school. This change attempted to level the playing field between teachers, administrators, parents, and students and acknowledge that effective behavioral strategies needed to maintain a respectful and safe school must include all stakeholders. This is based on the premise that “Responsible citizenship involves appropriate participation in the civic life of the school community. Active and engaged citizens are aware of their rights, but more importantly, they accept responsibility for protecting their rights and the rights of others” (Policy Program Memorandum 128, 2012, p. 2).

The Code also applies to off-school conduct such as school trips, sports games, and club activities. The Code states that everyone in a school community, including teachers,
administrators, students and parents, must be respectful, moral, non-violent, and non-discriminatory at all times. This means a teacher cannot be a role model in the classroom, and then suddenly become verbally abusive at a baseball game, for example (Ministry of Education, 2012). The Code also reinforces Regulation 437/97 Professional Misconduct; in reference to section 19 conduct unbecoming a teacher.

The word ethics is never used in the Code of Conduct, but it is implied in many areas. For example, in order to be respectful and demonstrate honesty and integrity, one must be ethical in his or her decision-making; respectful behavior is ethical behavior. Furthermore, the Code requires all stakeholders “to comply with all applicable federal, provincial, and municipal laws, “which include education legislation, human rights policies, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and the Criminal Code of Canada.

School Board Policies. There is one other area, apart from the Code of Conduct, where school board policies address ethics: School Council By-Laws and the ethical responsibilities of school council members (Peel District School Board [PDSB], 2015). For example, according to the Peel District School Board Policy #61, School Councils must follow a Code of Ethics:

a) The School Council shall operate in a non-judgmental manner, respecting confidentiality, employing constructive discussions and reaching decisions through consensus.

b) Council members shall recognize and respect the rights and responsibilities of individual students and Board employees.

c) Council meetings are to remain free of discussion about individual parents, students, Board employees, trustees or other council members.

d) Council members will identify all agenda items and/or issues with which they have a possible conflict of interest.

e) Council members will focus on school-wide issues and what is best for the school and its students. (PDSB, 2015)
Regulation 612/00 School Councils and Parent Involvement Committees address the structure of School Councils and state that there must be an administrator and teacher representative at each council meeting. This is another area that has been carefully examined by the Ministry of Education as a potential “hot spot” for teacher conduct. School council meetings can be very difficult to chair as individuals get irate over school issues such as Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) results, the state of the school building, and exams. A teacher or principal must remain professional and ethical at all times when communicating with the community or parents.

**Ontario Principals’ Council and the Ontario Public Supervisory Association.** As stated earlier, principals in Ontario are required to have membership in two organizations: the Ontario Principals’ Council OPC and the OCT. The OPC includes ethics in its Constitution, Object (2), 8 “To promote the highest standard of professional ethics and competence” (OPC, 2015). Also, in the OPC’s Handbook for School Leaders (n.d.) available online under a protected site for members only, Chapter 18 focuses on the OCT and highlights the ethical standards for the teaching profession. The Ontario Public Supervisory Officers’ Association (OPSOA) also includes ethics in its Constitution and Bylaws (2013). Under Purposes and Objects of the Association, section 4.4, it states, “To promote ethical practices among the members of the Association” (OPSOA, 2013).

The word ethics appears in policy and legislation for administrators since they have a higher level of responsibility than teachers. They are responsible for the entire school including the building, budgets, staffing and professional development, the students, and the community. Administrators are held accountable by their school board, the Ministry of Education, OPC, and OCT.

**Summary.** It is evident from a review of Ontario education legislation that ethics appears most typically in two distinct areas: educator education and educator conduct. Educator education refers to bachelor of education programs for teachers, Additional Qualifications (AQs), and administrator courses and training. In some legislation this is explicitly mentioned, while in others it is only implied. Educator conduct refers to all of the policies that address a teacher’s or
administrator’s behavior both inside and outside of school. Considering the focus on ethics in these two areas, further exploration of professional development legislation regarding ethics needs to be taken into consideration in this dissertation.

**Professional Development Legislation in Education**

Not only is the teaching profession unique in general, its status in Ontario stands apart from the other provinces in Canada. The province of Ontario has the largest number of teachers and school boards and the most diverse group of students (Ministry of Education, 2015). It is the only province where teachers and principals have mandatory dual membership in two organizations. Teachers are members of a union and the OCT. Administrators are not unionized but members of the Ontario Principal Council (OPC) and the OCT. Perhaps this is why Ontario also has more education legislation than any other province, and the most extensive legislation and policy practices concerning educator education and professional development.

The education and professional development model for the teaching profession in Ontario can appear daunting. In order to apply for a Bachelor of Education in Ontario, an applicant must have an undergraduate degree in a specific subject. Once they complete their Bachelor of Education, a teacher candidate must be licensed by the Ontario College of Teachers. Throughout a teacher’s career, he or she can take Additional Qualifications (AQs) that are regulated by the OCT. A third party provider such as the teacher federations or OPC can take in a university setting, or these AQs. If a teacher wants to become an administrator, further AQs must be taken, known as the Principal Qualification Program (PQP Parts 1 and 2), as well as completion of a leadership practicum (OCT, 2017). Once the College approves the teacher’s credentials, teachers can apply for administrative positions. Teachers who are hired as administrators must formally leave the teacher federations and become a member of the OPC. Only an administrator is eligible to take further AQs to become a Superintendent or Director of Education. The flow chart below helps illustrate the progression from teacher to administrator.
Teacher Education. Currently, there are 15 faculties of education in Ontario. The format and structure of each education program must adhere to the Ministry of Education’s Regulation 347/02, Accreditation of Teacher Education Programs, and more recently, Regulation 283/13. Each of the faculties is given some allowance regarding how it wants to set up its programs, as long as it meets the standards and is subject to review and approval by the College.

Some faculties of education have a stand-alone course in education law that focuses on legislation, policies, and ethics; these include Brock University, Lakehead University, Trent University, Tyndale University, Windsor University, Nipissing University, Laurentian University, and Niagara University. The remaining six universities have chosen instead to embed ethics throughout their curriculum. This pedagogical decision, to either create a stand-alone course or embed ethics in the curriculum is often debated among scholars (Campbell, 2015) since a stand-alone course provides more concrete evidence that ethics has been taught and given adequate attention. Embedded curriculum may do the same, but it is more difficult to identify.

Professional Development. There are two types of professional development in Ontario: 1) mandatory professional development that occurs in a school during teaching hours; and 2) voluntary professional development that a teacher seeks outside of working hours. Mandatory professional development is legislated under the Education Act, Regulation 304/90, School Year Calendar, Professional Activity Days. The Act states that all public school boards must have two designated professional development days per year. A school board can include more if it chooses, but it must meet the minimum requirements. Mandated professional development days
are dictated by the administration and school board. However, there is no mention in the regulation of the types of topics that should be addressed, with the exception of curriculum development, implementation, and review. A teacher is expected to attend mandatory professional development, and if a teacher repeatedly telephones in sick on those days, the administrator can take disciplinary action.

A second area of legislation that references professional development is the Teacher Performance Appraisal Program, under Regulation 99/02. Every five years, teachers undergo an extensive performance review that includes an interview with their administrator, classroom observation, evidence of subject-specific artifacts, and a review of their Annual Learning Plan. Under Ontario Regulation 98/02, Teacher Learning Plan, all teachers are required to complete an Annual Learning Plan and submit the completed form to their administration. Teachers complete a template that asks what their professional growth objectives are, their proposed action plan, and a timeline to achieve this plan. Also, teachers must record and submit their professional development activities for the school year.

If a teacher fails to comply, several consequences may occur. An administrator can refer the teacher to the school board for insubordination or incompetence, as well as to the OCT for further investigation of professional misconduct. The administrator can also document a teacher’s refusal to complete the Annual Learning Plan and include this information as part of his or her Teacher Performance Appraisal. If a teacher fails his or her appraisal and refuses to follow through with suggestions on how to remediate his or her shortcomings, it could result in revocation of the teacher’s certificate to practice teaching in Ontario.

However, from my perspective, there is one notable disparity the legislation that needs to be addressed. Nowhere in the legislation does it mention that a teacher must study ethics once he or she enters the profession. If an employed teacher takes any AQ course in Ontario, it will address ethics under Regulation 347/02 Accreditation of Teacher Education Programs, section 24. If an employed teacher wants to become an administrator, it will address ethics in both PQP Parts 1 and 2. In other words, while some teachers and all administrators will study ethics in AQs and PQPs, other teachers, who choose not to take any AQs during their entire career, will not. This
discrepancy is not beneficial to the profession and it leaves some of its members at a disadvantage.

**Professional Development by Organizations.** There are many places educators can seek professional development. For the purpose of this dissertation, the service providers were limited to school boards, teacher federations, the OPC, Council of Directors of Education (CODE), OPSOA, and the OCT. Private organizations, such as the Khan Academy, Flipped Classroom, Solution Tree, and Teach Chemistry, were not evaluated since they are American-based for-profit companies that advertise to Canadian teachers, but do not follow Canadian education standards. The information below examines professional development offered from 2013 to 2016 in a variety of settings, and whether ethics was mentioned.

Some boards of education do not advertise professional development opportunities for educators on their public website. Peel, Toronto, Halton, Hamilton, North Bay, Windsor, and York Region use professional development software programs such as Mylearningplan, KeyToLean, pdplace, and Connect2Learn - all of which are password-protected. MyLearningPlan, used by Peel District School Board, listed 30 professional development opportunities for employees from April 2014 to June 2016 and none of the workshops had the word ethics in its title or course description.

Teacher federations in Ontario are involved extensively in professional development opportunities. The OTF oversees a comprehensive slate of learning opportunities for teachers. Survive and Thrive is an online repository for new and experienced teachers. The website contains six different categories of professional development including: Teaching and Learning, Positively Professional, Teacher Wellbeing, Occasional Teaching, Mentoring, and What’s Trending. Each section contains a variety of articles, policy, and legislation including one article on the Ethical Standards of the Teaching Profession (OCT, 2014).

The OTF website also offers a wide variety of professional development courses, workshops, and basic information. There are four categories of online sessions: Teaching and Learning in the 21st Century, Critical Thinking, Violence Prevention, and Financial Literacy. They list over
webinars that cover a range of topics including curriculum, Technology, At-risk Students, Literacy, and Critical Inquiry. None of the course descriptions or webinars listed mentions ethics.

OSSTF offers workshops that can be requested by individual districts that are then advertised to educators only. The workshops offered are: Beyond Bullying: Building Safe Schools; Beyond Bullying: Building Safe Workplaces; CALM: Crisis Awareness Learning Modules; Classroom Management; Cyber Bullying; The Early Learning Team; Equity in Practice; From Pain to Pride: Homophobia and Transphobia; STAR; Students at Risk; Still Not Laughing: Challenging Sexual Harassment in our Schools; Working Together: Effective Educational Teams; Boundary Issues; Managing Conflict; School Law; the 3 R’s of Workplace Violence: Rights, Responsibilities, and Resources; and Writing Resumes and Taking Interviews (OSSTF, 2017). Four of the workshops offered focus on ethics regarding different situations such as boundary issues between teachers and students, teachers and teachers, workplace violence, sexual harassment, and homophobia and transphobia. Also, the website lists external conferences and workshops, including the 19th Annual Values and Leadership Conference for the International Consortium for the Study of Leadership and Ethics in Education (CSLEE, 2015).

Unlike its public counterpart, the Catholic Educator’s Association website does not publicly list all of its workshops; many links direct a person to a members-only area. There were 21 workshops listed that can be categorized into the following areas: Leadership and Training; Collective Bargaining; Health and Safety; LGBTQ; and Conflict Management. However, since the website limits information to its members, it is unknown if any of the workshops listed address ethics.

The ETFO website which represents public elementary teachers, lists over 40 programs in its professional development catalogue. The programs cover a wide variety of topics with an emphasis on workshops designed for female teachers and focused on social justice issues. The site also lists current conferences offered that focus on Women’s Collective Bargaining, Technology, Teacher Mental Health, and Leadership Opportunities. There is also a course on professional boundaries and it directly mentions ethics (ETFO, 2017).
The OCT implements the Ministry of Education’s policies on ethics and professional development. Every AQ course approved and accredited by OCT must include the *Ethical Standards of the Teaching Profession*. In addition, every second year the College offers a two-day *Ethical Leadership Institute* that brings together 200 educators from across Ontario (OCT, 2015). Using an open circle approach that is based on Native Talking Circles, the educators raise issues they deem important, and then work through ethical solutions. There are no guest speakers or lectures, and there is no formal structure to the two-day workshop. As a former Council Member, I attended the institute in 2013 and participated in a variety of conversations on ethics. What was most interesting was the open circle concept that seemed quite confusing to the group of educators. Once the instructions were given, educators were expected to post questions and ideas on walls in different rooms. Other educators walked in and out of rooms, joining discussions at any point. Every room included a tape recorder; several weeks later, transcripts and summaries were available for the educators to review.

The open circle approach was the first and only time I experienced candid conversations on ethics and ethical decision-making in an education setting. The structure of the open circle concept is organic, both physically and socially. The fact teachers could set the day’s agenda and have no one censoring their dialogue is unique in education settings. Every alternate year, the College hosts a three-day conference that focuses on professionalism, ethics, and legal issues. In 2014, educators and scholars from around the world attended the conference *Inspiring Public Confidence* and participated in 28 workshops, including seven that focused on ethics (OCT, 2014). Also, the OCT is a member of the Council on Licensure, Enforcement, and Regulation (CLEAR) which hosts an international annual conference on ethics and professionalism for educators, lawyers, doctors, pharmacists, social workers, and any other licensed profession.

OPC provides many professional development opportunities on its Members-only site. Some of these include e-courses, AQs, professional learning opportunities, web-based learning, resource guides, workshops, and conferences. There are over 36 different types of learning opportunities listed, of which ethics is covered in many areas such as education law, special education, emotional intelligence, professional misconduct, and equity and inclusive education (OPC, 2017).
In order for a principal to be promoted to Supervisory Officer, he or she must complete the Supervisory Officer Qualification Program accredited by the College. Ethics is taught using the *Ethical Standards of the Teaching Profession*. OPSOA publishes a limited amount of professional development opportunities on its website. This includes annual workshops, symposiums, and conferences. The Members-only section (OSOnet) lists 21 courses, including Understanding Legal Process, Working Effectively in Remote Boards, and Governance of Public Education. None of the 26 courses listed include ethics in its description.

OPSOA shares its professional learning with the CODE. The same courses mentioned above are listed on the CODE website. However, the OCT does not provide an Additional Qualification for Directors course. Other professional development opportunities include annual conferences, research projects, advisories, and research opportunities. Ethics is not mentioned in any of the literature on CODE’s website. Instead, the literature focuses on special education, the environment, and technology.

The topic of ethics is covered in professional development for teachers and administrators and is regulated by the OCT. However, it is less evident in professional development for Supervisory Officers and Directors of Education. Since the OCT creates and accredits the curriculum for all AQs in the province, there is assurance that issues surrounding ethics are addressed at least once in each course.

Supplementary professional development opportunities by individual organizations often include ethics, alongside many other topics. The issue is not whether ethics is being taught, but rather how an educator prioritizes his or her educational needs. From examining the plethora of professional development offered, it is unlikely that an educator would see ethics as central to her or his continued development as a professional. Instead, he or she would see technology, math, French as a second language, or special education - topics that dominate a great deal of professional learning – as the issues the profession values (OCT, 2017). Ethics may not be a priority on most teachers’ list, that is, until faced with an ethical dilemma. Administrators, specifically principals and vice principals, have the most professional development on ethics. The nature of their job requires a higher level of ethical decision-making compared to teachers.
For example, balancing a school budget is not just a financial task but also an exercise in ethical decision-making, since it involves deciding which departments will get more funds or support.

**Summary.** The structure of education legislation in Ontario is unique in that part of it is created by the Ministry of Education and implemented in a top-down fashion. The other half, which is lesser known or understood, is the role of the OCT. Many educators consider the OCT an extension of the government in implementing and enforcing top-down legislation and policies. However, as Nuland et al. (2006) state, *the Ethical Standards of the Teaching Profession* (2014) were created by large focus groups of teachers, not the OCT.

For many teachers in Ontario, all legislation and policies seem to be the same: a set of rules to follow, resulting in harsh consequences, if not followed. The two areas of legislation where ethics is mentioned, in teacher conduct and teacher education, are extensive and have far-reaching implications for the profession. What the study of legislation and policy cannot explain however, is the discrepancy in education between the large volumes of legislation on ethics, contrasted with little to no conversation in schools among teachers on the topic. This study, which is based on research and my experiences as a teacher, administrator, adjudicator, and education law instructor, examines the ambiguities I continue to struggle with regarding ethics in education.
Chapter Three
Literature Review

Ethics and ethical decision-making in education is a broad topic that covers a variety of issues and related areas. This literature review focuses on general themes about ethics and ethical decision making that appear in academic literature. The themes are all interconnected and focus on why it is important that ethics be taught in teacher education programs. The literature review also supports the idea that ongoing support and space must be given to teachers to talk about ethical dilemmas that they may face in their teaching practice. Teaching ethics is described by Campbell (2001) as an “internal process,” as a “gut instinct” by Rebore (2014), and as a “consciousness-raising exercise” by other scholars (Manley-Casimir & Wasserman, 1989; Strike & Soltis, 1992).

Addressing ethics and ethical decision-making is different than teaching it. It involves thinking about it and engaging in conversations about it, whether in staff meetings, with colleagues, by developing curriculum for teacher education programs, creating policy, or discussing teacher conduct. It can also refer to an educator’s need to garner support or help in dealing with ethical dilemmas related to the profession. In this case, a group of educators participate in conversations either formally or informally. Ethics and ethical decision-making involves educators thinking critically about several aspects of the profession, including their own behavior and the behavior of others. It makes them question their belief systems and what it means to be a professional. They may also question the belief system of the profession or the community. These types of conversations are not always clear or easy to navigate and the literature addresses silence more often than engagement in the profession (Campbell 2014; Manley-Casimir & Wasserman, 1989).

There are common themes that appear in the literature. The first is the issue of time, and for some scholars, a sense of urgency that educators must understand how important ethics in education is for them right now. The second and third themes justify the issue of timeliness by further delving into the role of educator as decision-maker and educator as role model. The fourth theme of education as a moral enterprise brings together all of the above issues. The last
theme acknowledges the importance of addressing ethics with educators, but questions exactly how it should be done, and if it is being addressed effectively.

**It Is Time.** Ethics scholars overwhelmingly believe it is time we begin teaching ethics and ethical decision-making in teacher education programs (Maxwell et al., 2016). While some scholars pointed to a decline in ethical and moral behavior in society in general (Johns, McGrath, & Mathur, 2008), others focused on the issue of increased transparency in public sector professions (O’Neill & Bourke, 2010; Rebore, 2014). Starratt (2012) referred to this contradiction - moral decline versus higher ethical standards - as a deceptive space where educators face a double standard. On one hand, there seems to be a loosening of moral behavior in society, but on the other hand, there seems to be an increase in the moral scrutiny of educators (Starratt, 2012).

It is “time” for educators to examine the role of ethics given that the former societal and educational landscape has changed, and the new one seems much less forgiving (Starratt, 2012). It is also time for educators to speak out publicly about this discrepancy in the field and question how to conduct themselves in a society that demands transparency and public judgment yet at the same time is perceived as more liberal in other aspects of daily life.

A second issue of urgency relates to the composition of our diverse country as reflected in our schools. Our public schools are comprised of a very diverse population of students that ought to be treated with respect and care (Ezzani, 2014). Although historically Canadian schools have always had children from many different ethnic backgrounds, the education landscape has recently undergone another transformation. There is a wide diversity of cultures, religions, gender, sexual orientation, and abilities in every school. According to Ezzani (2014), “there has never been a more salient time to see the parallels between ethical practice in education leadership and cultural proficiency” (p. 2). Ethical decision-making revolves around issues related to diversity and acceptance and whether or not educators are asking themselves if they are treating everyone in a fair manner, free from discriminatory thoughts and actions.
In a recent study by Ezzani (2014) on cultural proficiency in American schools, she described an administrator who challenged teachers to examine the lack of diversity in academic and advanced courses. The teachers “insisted their classes were diverse” (p. 5) where the data clearly illustrated they were not. An ethical conversation between the administration and staff revealed incredible bias against Black and Latino students whom teachers felt were “lazy.” This same sentiment was revealed by Valenzuela (1999) in her study on Latino students and white Anglo-Saxon teachers. What is troubling is that Ezzani’s study occurred 15 years later and replicated almost the same discriminatory comments by educators. It seems that virtually nothing has changed in 15 years, despite equity and inclusion policies and civil rights codes.

This same type of discrimination towards gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered (LGBT) students was exposed in EGALE Canada’s report In Every Class in Every School: The First National Climate Survey on Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia in Canadian Schools (2011). The report revealed that, despite comprehensive legislation on human rights, anti-discrimination, and anti-bullying, teachers often ignored homophobic and transphobic bullying in schools. The study questioned why teachers would behave this way, openly defying legislation meant to protect all children in school. These examples of discrimination in both Canada and the United States stress the idea that “it is time” even more so. If not now, then what has to happen in order for educators to begin talking about ethics?

The last concept relates to systemic discrimination in the education system and its role in oppressing minoritized students and educators. In 2000, physicist Jeff Schmidt wrote Disciplined Minds: A Critical Look at Salaried Professionals and the Soul-Battering System That Shapes Their Lives. What was shocking to the public was not the information in the book, but rather that Schmidt had put his thoughts in print and consequently destroyed his career. Schmidt talked about institutionalized oppression of professionals that took place in universities, colleges, and apprenticeship programs. Professionals were not being trained to think critically, they were being trained to obey (Schmidt, 2000). Schmidt saw the education system as being a participant in keeping systemic oppression alive and those who thought outside the box were marginalized, punished, or rejected. Schmidt included educators as being victims of this factory approach to education; teacher training and administrator training was not about producing intelligent and
skilled professionals, it was about producing workers who would do what they were told (Schmidt, 2000). Through this lens, Schmidt presented a very unethical education system, and according to him, it was time for professionals to speak out against it.

Shortly after Schmidt’s book was published and received media attention, he was fired as the editor of the academic journal *Physics Today*. A lengthy battle between Schmidt and the American Institute of Physics (AIP) followed whereby Schmidt maintained he was fired because of his negative commentary on the education system. The AIP defended his dismissal by stating he had used company time to research and write his book which was unethical. The Human Rights Committee of the Plasma Science and Applications Committee of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers settled the case by finding Schmidt’s claims of wrongful dismissal to be correct (Manheimer & Granatstein, 2002). The AIP was forced to reinstate Schmidt as an employee and also pay his salary during the period he had been fired.

What was most telling about Schmidt’s book and subsequent dismissal, were the drastic attempts made by the IAP to silence him and spin the story by calling him unethical. Clearly, it is time that conversations on ethics in education are allowed publically without fear of retribution or intimidation by the profession itself. The story of Schmidt is enough.

**Educators as Decision Makers.** According to Smith and Goldblatt (2009):

Effective educational leaders are ethical decision makers. These leaders have developed a high level of ethical awareness and knowledge. They understand the ethical dimensions inherent in dilemmas, issues and practices encountered in education. Their highly developed ethical insight enables them to approach ethical dilemmas with an unwavering commitment to compassion, justice, fairness, and due process. The actions of these ethical decision makers embody and integrate, trust, respect, inclusion, collaboration, and communication (p. 15).

Educators are in the unique position of working in isolation (Manley-Casimir & Wasserman, 1989) and simultaneously, in the public. There may be walls and doors in schools, but they are made of glass, and everything that an educator does is essentially public domain. It has been my
experience as a teacher, administrator, and adjudicator that many educators still have the mindset that what they do in their classroom behind closed doors is nobody’s business. It is understandable that teachers think this way since, “Not only do teachers feel [sic] isolated, they act [sic] in isolation…Many felt alone, left alone in their classrooms to ‘sink or swim’” (Manley-Casimir & Wasserman, 1989, p. 292).

Although this isolation is real, at the same time it is not real. Teaching is a public profession, and teachers in the public education system are public service employees. Comments and decisions that are made behind closed doors are not necessarily private, but rather public property. An example of how transparent the teaching profession is can be found on the OCT’s website. Once discipline hearings are completed, lengthy decisions are written and posted on the OCT’s website. Anyone can locate the decisions and read detailed stories about a teacher’s comments or behavior in class or in the school, emails to students, colleagues, administrators or parents, comments made on report cards and exams, or comments and photos posted on social media. The decision is also placed on the Canadian Legal Information Institute (CANLII) where it is permanently stored as a legal document that anyone can access internationally.

Ehrich, Kimber, Millwater, and Cranston (2011) identified five ethical dilemmas educators routinely encounter: confidentiality, student behavior, rights of marginalized students, policy not being put into practice by administrators, and student assessment. Meyers (2002) added sexuality (of both students and educators) as being one of the most silenced ethical dilemmas educators face. Ehrich et al.’s study revealed a lack of support for educators in terms of making ethical decisions relating to serious issues that are sexual in nature. Educators do not have the luxury of time to ponder the psychological or moral repercussions of their decisions (Meyers, 2002). The aforementioned ethical dilemmas are certainly serious issues and it is disconcerting that conversations on ethics amongst educators seems to be invisible; it is difficult to know what educators are really doing when faced with serious dilemmas.

Infantino and Wilke (2009) concluded that most teachers are ill-prepared to make complex ethical decisions and that the worst of these decisions end up in the media. Campbell’s (2010) work on ethical knowledge supports this view and she added that even if the teacher candidate is
“essentially [a] good person with an intuitive, general sense of right and wrong, that does not, in itself, equip the professional teacher to appreciate the layered nuances of classroom and school life in terms of their moral and ethical significance” (p. 32). In the Moral Dimension of Teaching: Language, Power, and Culture in the Classroom, Buzzelli and Johnston (2002) argued that teaching is a moral act, and that teachers are moral agents of change. However, if teacher education does not address the moral and ethical dimensions of teaching, including ethical decision-making, teacher candidates can fall prey to what they term “ethical blind spots” (p. 125). Manley-Casimir and Wasserman (1989) agreed that there are few spaces for educators to discuss or reflect upon ethical decision-making and yet they are expected to make decisions all the time.

Combined, all of these scholars state in one way or another that ethical decision-making is a complex act that is sometimes thought-out and at other times instantaneous. Baumann (1993) stated there is no science or formula to ethical decision-making, that it is haphazard at best and often full of “contradictory impulses” (p. 11). All of these academics stress the importance of discussing ethical decision-making in teacher education programs to give teacher candidates time to digest what their job is going to be like, and to give them a chance to develop “ethical knowledge” as Campbell states (2010, p. 32). In two studies by Campbell (1997, 2014), teachers who returned to graduate programs at faculties of education often stated this was the first time in their teaching career they had been given a space to talk about ethics. They described learning about the topic in teacher education programs, but not having ethics addressed since.

In 1989, when Manley-Casimir and Wasserman studied teacher education programs, they referred to the professional preparation of teachers as a “wasteland” (p. 293). Approximately 23 years later, Campbell (2013, 2014) returned to the topic of teacher education programs, and in one study found that very few teacher candidates demonstrated substantial knowledge or an understanding of the ethics of the profession and the impact unethical decisions or behavior could have on their career. One candidate stated:

I didn’t feel we were specifically taught ethics in my pre-service teacher education program. I didn’t feel that we were taught how to handle ethical situations. The Ethical Standards document? I guess I could say it means nothing to me because I don’t really
remember anything specific about them…We got a big pamphlet thing about the ethics of teaching. (Campbell, 2014, p. 81, p.88)

It is challenging to discern which of these comments is most troubling: the fact teachers are ill-prepared in teacher education programs, that they are not supported or given space throughout their career to talk about ethics or ethical dilemmas, or that they work in isolation and feel silenced. The role of “decision maker” is simply too important to leave to chance, and all the scholars mentioned in this section seem painfully aware of the deficits in the profession regarding teaching and supporting teachers as ethical decision makers (Warnick & Silverman, 2011).

**Educators as Role Models.** As long ago as the mid-1800s in Canada, moral expectations were placed on teachers. Male teachers could not drink, smoke, or play pool in public, and women teachers were routinely fired for getting pregnant, even if they were married (Richter, 2006). Before World War I, teachers were not allowed to go to the theatre, but by the 1930s, the ban was lifted and replaced with card playing, gambling, swearing, and dancing (Piddocke, Magsino, & Manley-Casimir, 1997). Some school boards regulated when a teacher had to be home at night, and friendships between the opposite sexes was frowned upon (Piddocke et al., 1997).

O’Neill and Burke (2010) asked “what are the limits of teacher’s ethical responsibilities and, consequently, the limits of formal codes of ethics?” (p. 165). Codes of Conduct are common practice to have in many professions, and education is no different. As far back as 1915, the Ontario Ministry of Education began discussing the need for a teachers’ code of conduct (Campbell, 2000). O’Neill and Bourke (2010) reviewed codes of conduct from the United States, Britain, and New Zealand. The purpose of establishing a code is often the same: to set the standards for the teaching profession that will ensure educator accountability and public confidence in the profession (p. 160). O’Neill and Burke (2010) maintained that “This is because teachers are moral examples: they are expected to model socially acceptable and desirable behavior on behalf of the children and families they serve in their local community; they must be ‘good’ and be seen to do ‘right’” (p. 162).
Many educators do not have a problem with being a role model in the classroom, but they consider what they do after-hours as their own business. They perceive a limit to their job description. Several famous Supreme Court cases: *Caldwell v. Stuart* (1984), *Abbotsford School District 34 v. Shewan* (1986), *Ross v. New Brunswick School District No. 15* (1996), and the *Ontario College of Teachers v. Frederick Paul Fromm* (2007) argued this exact point. In each of these cases, the Supreme Court of Canada and the OCT in Ontario ruled that what a teacher does outside of school hours can affect public trust and confidence. If a breach of trust occurs due to conduct, then a teacher can be dismissed or have his or her licence revoked. There really is no limit.

Educators have been warned not to approach the topic of role model strictly through a legal and defensive lens of “my rights” (Fulmer, 2002; Mawdsley & Osborne, 2013; O’Neill & Bourke, 2010). Education is a public profession, and educators are held to a higher standard than other citizens. Quick and Normore (2004) stated, “In the 21st century, more than at any time in our collective past, educational leaders must be moral role models” (p. 337), because according to them, “everyone is watching” (p. 345).

**Education as a Moral Enterprise.** According to Bowen, Bessette, and Chan (2006), “from as far back as Dewey (1897/1972), the moral purposes of schooling have [sic] driven the ethical principles underlying education and leadership today” (p. 1). The idea of education being a moral enterprise began with the development of schools by Christian churches as far back as the late 1790s in Ontario (Kolberg & Hersh, 1977; Ministry of Education, 2015). Although governments in both Canada and the United States developed a secular public school system, the Christian church had a strong influence on the structure of schooling that included a moral component.

Kolberg and Hersh (1977) maintained that, “Whether we like it or not, schooling is a moral enterprise” (p. 53). Twenty years later, scholars such as Starratt (1994) and Sergiovanni (1996) addressed the topic of “moral communities” and the social context of schooling. Phrases such as *moral agent, moral purpose, or moral goals* of twenty-first century schooling began to dominate education literature (Furman, 2004). Claxton (2013) argued that the neoliberal agenda has moved the conversation away from education as a moral enterprise into one that is technical and void of
any moral reasoning. The neoliberal agenda is to make schooling strictly about results, data, and testing. He stated:

They [the government] treat it [education] as if it is a technical process of getting kids grades and standards and so on, and yet we forget that education is a moral enterprise. It is saturated with judgments and what’s worth knowing and how to behave and how to use your mind and what kinds of questions you are allowed to ask. It is saturated with values so I think it is worth having to think about the extent we actually surface those issues because we cannot wish them away. Government people like to talk about standards and raising standards and levels of achievement as if these things were self-evident, as if they were unproblematic. But actually you have to ask yourself standards of what? (Claxton, Edtalks, April 2, 2013)

Through a systems theory lens, Mahoney (2008) proposed that schools function like a family. Within these relationship dynamics are emotional connections that are both positive and negative. These dynamics result in “ethically complex situations” (Mahoney, 2008, p. 54) in which educators interact with each other, students, parents, and the community. Quick and Normore (2004) and Sergiovanni (1999, 2007) referred to schools as “life-world” epicenters where community, culture, and climate are all related to the moral tone set by the administration and teachers. Education is a moral enterprise and the standard set exists both in the school and beyond the school community. Educators have been given the responsibility of addressing morality each day, whether it is through stopping a schoolyard fight or modeling care and compassion for all students (Quick & Normore, 2004).

Quick and Normore (2004) emphasized that, “As a moral enterprise, education must stay above political power plays and ensure that all individuals have an equal voice in the education conversation” (p. 343). This is a difficult task to achieve as Quick and Normore (2004) acknowledged that education is inherently a political act, often caught in the middle of power struggles between politicians. They suggested that ethically driven educators “work to evaluate and discard the old and inequitable, and create new structures, policies, and procedures that are just and fair to everyone” (p. 344). It has come back full circle to the ethic of justice.
If education is a moral enterprise, then it is important that ethics and morality be taught in teacher education programs. However, this appears not to be the case. Sanger and Osguthorpe (2011) reviewed studies across the world on the moral training of teachers and found that “scarce attention [has] been given to the moral work of teaching within programs of teacher education” (p. 569). They pointed to a wide variety of barriers including, a lack of common moral language and an uncertainty on how to teach it. In another study in the Netherlands, Willemse, Lunenberg, and Korthagen (2008) concluded that there seems to be very little consensus internationally on how to teach ethics and morality to teacher candidates. Studies by Revell and Arthur (2007), Campbell (2011) and Maxwell et al. (2016) replicated Willemse et al.’s findings both in national and international studies. Whereas some teacher candidates described an ethical and moral component to their teacher training, “others were not aware of input in this area, had never discussed moral education as part of their course or in school and had not had the opportunity to observe or discuss practice in schools” (p. 446).

It seems contradictory that education is considered a moral enterprise, yet educators are reluctant or unable to talk about morality or ethics. Perhaps it is because teachers are expected to work, teach, and dialogue in this moral institution, yet are not given the tools to either teach, talk, or have a defined process on how to engage ethically or morally with themselves, others, or students. Sockett and LePage (2002) concluded:

Teachers do not lack moral sophistication because they are not moral people. Just the opposite, most teachers are drawn to teaching because of their moral commitments. Moral language is missing in classrooms, but it is also missing in the seminar rooms and lecture halls of teacher education. (p. 171)

This sentiment was voiced by some of the participants in this Delphi study as an area of concern. The exact reason why moral language and conversation is absent in teacher education programs across the globe remains a mystery and perhaps is a starting point for future research.

It May Be Time, but Exactly How Do We Do This? According to Strike (1990), “It is simply naïve to suppose that instruction in ethics in teacher education programs can significantly form or reform character” (p. 48). Scholars have pointed to the need to teach and address ethics with
educators (Bowen, Bassette, & Chan, 2006; Campbell, 2000, 2001, 2013, 2014; Maxwell et al., 2016). However, research across Canada and the United States present a very different picture. In one recent study by Maxwell et al. (2016), ethics education was examined across Canada, the United States, England, Australia, and the Netherlands and found that “among 151 education programs surveyed, a relatively small percentage contained a required ethics course…an ethics-related course was mandatory in only 6% of the teacher education programs” (p. 136).

O’Neill and Bourke (2010) believed that teaching ethics is not an easy task and requires university instructors to provide “systematic structured learning opportunities that enable teachers to develop all the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to think and act ethically” (p. 170). To complicate the issue, Bowen, Bessette, and Chan (2006) argued that “professors should not be involved in teaching ethics when they themselves have had no educational training in the subject….What does not make any sense is the failure to provide all current and prospective educators with tools and techniques to identify ethical behaviors and a framework to assist in analyzing these behaviors for the purpose of making ethical decisions” (p. 4).

Strike (1990) proposed that, rather than attempt to reform teachers’ character, teacher education programs should assume positive intentions that all of their candidates are good people to begin with, and focus on helping them learn how to make sound ethical decisions. In keeping with this view, Campbell (2001) believed that ethics cannot be imposed, but rather educators must internalize it and make it an integrated part of their professionalism. These ideas are interesting but do little to help professors or instructors of ethics in teacher education programs actually perform such tasks. Using case studies as examples is the most common method to facilitate discussions on ethics in teacher education programs (Campbell, 2014). However, if the point of each of these conversations is simply to point out the mistakes of others, then how is it really helping teacher candidates learn how to be ethical? Perhaps, it does not (Campbell, 2014).

Ethical institutes such as the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics (Santa Clara University), the W. Maurice Center for Applied Ethics (University of British Columbia, Faculty of Medicine), and the Ethics Network (Ryerson University) provide detailed ethical decision-making frameworks. It is interesting to note that these institutes are not part of the faculty of education in
their respective institutions, confirming Campbell’s (2014) observation that “there has been a general neglect in teacher education across international contexts of the teacher’s professional ethics” (p. 84). Building on Campbell’s finding, Maxwell et al.’s international study asked faculties of education why they excluded ethics in their teacher training programs. The responses varied from lack of time; lack of qualified staff; financial constraints; and resistance from faculty, administration and teacher candidates. When probed even further, some of the more troubling comments included “Ethical scandals are rare in teaching” and “Ethics is too personal and subjective to be taught as part of preservice [teacher education] education” (p. 145).

Summary. All of the themes that emerged in the literature point to a growing trend of increased pressure on educators both inside and outside of schools to be morally upstanding at all times (O’Neill & Burke, 2010). Although scholars acknowledged the connections between ethics, teacher preparation, and teacher behavior, the overall sense is that ethics is still being ignored, silenced, or minimized in the competing world of issues to address in education (Campbell, 2014; Claxton, 2013).

In two separate instances, academic scholars addressed contradictions and spaces of possible action related to critical theory. One inconsistency referred to the ethical standard of the community that holds teachers to an incredibly high standard, while at the same time, loosening the societal standards in other areas (Starratt, 2012). The second area of ambiguity was noted by Manley-Casimir and Wasserman (1989). Teachers work in isolation and behind closed doors, but in reality, their profession is under constant scrutiny by the public. These two examples - glass houses and glass walls - are areas of contradiction that an educator must face every day.

Critical theory asks that possible actions be suggested rather than just presenting a list of negative observations. Some of the issues presented in this literature review can offer suggestions that can be addressed in teacher education programs or ongoing professional development and support. Others such as the ethical standards imposed by the community are much harder to resolve and would take teachers advocating on their own behalf to address this contradiction. The conceptual framework that follows this literature review draws from the work of O’Neill and Burke (2010), Furman (2003), Starratt (2004, 2012), Valenzuela (1999),
Campbell (2000, 2001, 2013, 2014), and Noddings (2011, 2012). Reoccurring themes in the literature resurface in the Multiple Ethical Paradigm demonstrating the complex nature of ethical decision-making; and how important it is for educators to understand its power.


The basic premise of this conceptual framework is that it is impossible for educators to make ethical decisions based on one form or notion (Eyal, Berkovich, &Schwarz, 2011). A Multiple Ethical Paradigm is necessary because of the complex nature of ethical decision-making. One ethical belief system alone cannot address the multi-faceted decision-making process that educators experience each day. The Multiple Ethical Paradigm presents several lenses to view situations so that teachers can consciously make decisions that are fair and inclusive for all students.
Ethic of Justice. The ethic of justice refers to “the rule of the law” and concepts related to fairness and equity (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005, p. 13). It would seem that the ethic of justice is quite simple since all an administrator has to do is follow “the law,” but this is not necessarily true. Although the ethic of justice is based on laws, rules, policies, and procedures, they are often not prescriptive but rather open for interpretation. French and Weis (2000) believed administrators are faced with much more complicated dilemmas related to the ethic of justice. They align these issues with three philosophical concepts, deontology, teleology, and consequentialism.

Deontology refers to the duty of obligation and was a prominent theory developed by philosopher Immanuel Kant (Kay, 1997). Teleology refers to the purpose behind an act (French & Weiss, 2000). Lastly, consequentialism is seen as the opposite of deontology since it is most concerned with the outcome of an act of justice (French & Weiss, 2000).

Eyal, Berkovich and Schwartz (2011) defined the ethic of justice slightly different and divided it into two categories. The first category relates to Rawls’ (1999) tenets of social justice, which view equity as being “grounded in a social contract and focuses on individual rights and equal treatment” (p. 398). The second category refers to Mills and utilitarianism, which views ethics as being for the good of many - not the good of the individual. This creates a tension for both teachers and administrators who must straddle these diametrically opposed views.

According to the Ontario Education Act (1990), Part XIII, Behavior, Discipline, Safety, it is as administrator’s discretion if a student should be suspended. Careful wording of the Act include words such as shall and may, which gives administrators choice within the ethic of justice.

The ethic of justice challenges educators to examine their behavior and ask questions such as: Is what I did fair and just to students? What laws or policies guide me to know and understand that my conduct was acceptable or not acceptable?

One of the most prominent examples of an ethical dilemma relating to the ethic of justice occurred as a result of Jordan Manners’ murder in a Toronto high school. Jordan Manners, a
fourteen-year-old student at C.W. Jefferys Secondary School, was found dead from gunshot wounds in a school stairwell (Falconer, 2008). The Ministry of Education hired human rights lawyer Julian Falconer to conduct a full-scale inquiry. During the investigation, a female student disclosed to Falconer that prior to Manners being killed, she had been sexually assaulted by three male students in a washroom and had reported it to the administration. The administration did not follow legislation and report the incident to the police or Children’s Aid Society (Falconer, 2008). As a lawyer and citizen, Falconer was legally bound to report the incident to the police and the Children’s Aid Society, who in turn reported the incident to the Toronto District School Board and the OCT.

During a discipline hearing at the OCT, Vice Principal Silvio Tallevi stated he reported the incident to his principal but to no one else since he feared for the female student’s safety. He knew the student came from a very religious family that might assume she had invited the sexual assault and punish her for it (Ontario College of Teachers v. Tallevi, 2011). Tallevi’s actions are an example of an ethical dilemma. He struggled with his duty to report, which is a legal obligation, with his fear of the outcome of his actions. In the end, Tallevi chose not to follow the law, considering the girl’s safety at home a priority. Tallevi’s decision to defy the law ultimately cost him his career; in the end, not only did the female student’s parents find out, but so did the rest of society in a very public hearing and from a public report, The Falconer Report (2008).

**Ethic of Care.** Quick & Normore (2004) indicated that there needs to be a balance between an ethic of justice and ethic of care. An educator cannot simply focus on the “rules” but needs to have a sense of compassion and empathy when working with students.

Nel Noddings (2012) took the fundamental concept of care and framed it within an educational setting. She viewed educators through a holistic lens, as being part of a mutually dependent education community. Educators, parents, students, administrators, and trustees must engage in a relationship of mutual responsibility. Part of that responsibility is every one taking care of one another. Noddings referred to educators as moral agents, who should care about their students on many different levels, including their intellectual, emotional, psychological, and physical
health. Noddings would call an educator unethical if he or she did not demonstrate this level of care for every student.

As mentioned in previous chapters, Noddings’ ethic of care came under scrutiny and criticism by feminist scholars who saw her model as placing teachers in the role of servants or martyrs (Taylor, 2005). Instead, Taylor referred to Emmanuel Levinas and his work on care, which she described in relation to ethics as seeing “the other.” For Levinas, the ethic of care was relational and maternal; with these feelings of care for “the other” comes ambiguity and guilt. For Levinas and his followers, the ethic of care had nothing to do with autonomy. By nature of it being relational, we are all bound by the other to either care or choose not to care (Taylor, 2005).

Foucault believed that care must begin with self-care; in other words, “Care for others should not be put before the care of oneself” (Foucault, 1997, p. 287). His concept on the ethic of care is also related to the critical theorists’ focus on identity discussed in the next chapter. For Foucault, the ethic of self-care was directly related to identity, and in order to begin the process of taking care of the self, it begins with knowing oneself (Menihan, 2012).

These three concepts of care all intersect each other at some point - from Foucault (1997) who believed it had to start with the self, to Noddings (2011) who saw it through a holistic lens, to Levinas, who saw it as relational.

The ethic of care component places a great deal of ethical responsibility rather than legal accountability onto educators. It spreads this ethical responsibility amongst the entire education community. It asks everyone to examine his or her own behavior and role in taking care and doing no harm to others (O’Neill & Burke, 2010).

In another aspect of the ethic of care model Valenzuela (1999) accused white Anglo-Saxon teachers of not truly caring for Latino students, but rather pretending to care. She stated this was incredibly damaging to Latino students in the United States since it was a form of invisible abuse. O’Neill and Burke (2010) added that authentic caring, the type Noddings refers to, has been replaced by legislated caring, which is not the same.
Inauthentic care or “faking” care can be very harmful to students. Thus, Valenzuela’s study raised important questions: How do we prove when an educator is faking caring? What standards and definitions do we have in the profession to do this? In an ideal world, Noddings’s ethic of care philosophy is well-intentioned. However, if there are already studies to prove that faking caring is damaging students further, then what recourse does the profession have? The recurring questions of whether or not ethics can be taught or legislated, and how to tell if it is authentic, weave in and out of this study.

**Ethic of the Profession.** According to Shapiro and Hassinger (2007), the ethic of the profession examined what it meant to be professional and what behaviors are considered acceptable by the profession. It asked educators to consider what is best for the student first. In Ontario, the ethic of the profession draws upon the *Ethical Standards of the Teaching Profession* created by the OCT, “At the heart of a strong and effective teaching profession is a commitment to students and their learning” (OCT, 2014). The College defines the ethics of the profession as care, respect, trust, and integrity. The Alberta Teacher’s Association Professional Code of Conduct (2004), Nova Scotia Teachers’ Union Code of Ethics (2002), and the National Education Association Code of Ethics (1975) in the United States are all very similar to the Ontario College of Teachers’ Ethical Standards.

In this study, there are moments when the ethic of the profession comes into question regarding ownership. In Ontario, the teacher federations first created a professional ethic for educators that eventually became the responsibility of the Ontario College of Teachers in 1997 (OCT, 2014). The College then created the ethical standards of the professional that are used today. Rather than engage in a debate about ownership, this study focused on the content of a variety of ethical standards from different provinces and in the United States, and concluded that the ethic of the profession are all very similar.

**Ethic of the Community.** The ethic of community takes into consideration that public schools are not private institutions but part of the public education system. Citizens pay taxes towards the operation of schools and have a say in how they are managed. Schools and teachers are part
of a large community that includes parents, students, trustees, and public organizations (such as mental health services, community police, and social workers).

The community assumed the responsibility of setting the moral tone and standards of teachers and schools as far back as the 1850s in Ontario (ETFO, 2006). Although some of the standards have changed, the role of the community has not. Educators who work in isolation run the risk of not having their finger on the pulse of the community, while those who dismiss the community as being interfering or trivial, fail to see the power of community standards in relation to educator conduct.

The concept of ethical relativism must be addressed once again when discussing the ethical standard of the community. Beebe (2003) stated that conventional ethical relativism is when, “The culture or society is the highest authority about what is right for individuals living within that society. On this view, an individual’s will is subordinate to the will of the cultural majority” (p. 3). The ethical standard set by a community can vary from city to town, province-to-province, country-to-country. This places educators in a very precarious position where they can be judged, vilified, or praised, depending on the ethic of the community in which they work. It also points to a contradiction in the field with regard to moral relativism. On one hand, scholars do not think ethical relativism has a place in the profession (Campbell, 2000, 2001), yet on the other hand, it seems to suit the ethic of the community in having the ability to judge educators.

Educators are sometimes caught in the middle of this argument on ethical relativism and some of the most prominent areas of struggle in education have been between teachers and the community, such as in the cases of Ontario teachers Paul Fromm and Abi Mansour. Both teachers challenged the standards of the community through tribunals. Unlike legal hearings, which are governed by appointed judges, tribunals are made up of members of the teaching profession who are put in the position of judging their peers.

Abi Mansour was found guilty of professional misconduct on the basis that he often began his class with “Bonjour fags and fagettes,” called a student with special needs “stupid,” and mistreated a student with Autism (OCT, 2012, 2013; OHRT, 2011). Mansour minimized his
behavior and in his defense filed a human rights complaint against his school board and the OCT, citing discrimination of his human rights. The Ontario Human Rights Tribunal dismissed his allegations of racism and stated, “This misuse of the Tribunal’s procedure is an abuse of process” (OHRT, 2011, p. 13). What Mansour failed to realize was that the community standard did not accept verbally or emotionally abusing students based on their sexual orientation or ability. The community decided the students’ need for protection under the Ontario Human Rights Code trumped Mansour’s allegations of racism and discrimination. Mansour, not satisfied with the Tribunal’s decision, took his case to the Ontario Superior Court of Justice where he was ordered by the court to pay the OCT $10,000.00 for what was seen as unnecessary extensive legal fees.

Both Fromm and Mansour are examples of educators who failed to see the power of the community standard, especially when it is supported by legislation. In a battle of rights over behavior both inside and outside of the classroom, these teachers could not accept the tenets of ethical relativism, and that the community, not the teacher, sets the standard.

**Ethic of Critique.** Starratt (2004) stated, “If the ethic of justice looks towards fairness, the ethic of critique looks toward barriers to fairness” (p. 47). The ethic of critique makes educators examine issues of privilege, power, culture, and social justice. It looks at justice through a critical lens and draws upon the writings of Freire (1970), Foucault (1983, 1993, 1997), and Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) to examine issues of race, gender, class, sexual orientation, and ability.

Ethic of critique is especially important in this study because of the impact it has on students. If we as a profession are not addressing ethics in education, then what impact does this have on minoritized students? Are they being treated fairly or is this lack of regard for ethics in our profession contributing to systemic discrimination?

Eyal, Berkovich, and Schwarz (2011) stated that the ethic of critique is perhaps the most important of all of the paradigms in our current education system. They believed that teachers and administrators must have more than a superficial understanding of how the education system
can oppress minoritized students and their families. They argued, “The need to deconstruct current social structures is strongly represented in the ethic of critique” (p. 406).
A Revised Multiple Ethical Paradigm

The original Multiple Ethical Paradigm has been updated twice since it was first introduced circa 2004. I propose that it be updated once again to include two more paradigms; the Ethic of the Self and the Ethic of Discomfort. Both the Ethic of the Self and the Ethic of Discomfort address issues that relate to our current education system that were outlined in the literature review. They also incorporate concepts raised in critical theory and allow for a much deeper analysis of the importance of ethical decision-making in education.

Ethic of the Self. While the Multiple Ethical Paradigm is well suited for this study, it is conventional and limited in its scope. It does not fully address issues related to diversity and complex human interactions. Teaching is a public profession, and as such is based on emotional, intellectual, and social communication between a teacher and his or her students. However, a teacher’s interactions simply do not end once the school bell rings. He or she must communicate with administration, colleagues, parents, teacher federations, and the community. With such a wide grouping of interactions, the self plays a central role in a teacher’s ability to remain grounded in the education system. The ethic of the self is perhaps one of the most difficult concept for educators to navigate.
L.A. Napier’s *Indigenous Leadership Model or Naturalistic Model* (1999) focused on the importance of the interconnection between people and nature as part of survival (Ahnee-Benham& Napier, 2002). In order to survive, we must acknowledge the connection between our mind and our heart. Also, we must be able to identify the importance of being connected to our self.

These concepts of interconnectedness and self-awareness relate to our own sense of ethics. We cannot say in our profession that we support ethics in education, if we cannot live it. The Naturalistic Model asks that educators internalize the notion of ethics and then reflect on how it affects them. It asks teachers to make the connection between their professional sense of ethics and their personal sense of ethics. This seems to be a very difficult task in education.

The concept of the self and complex human interactions are best understood in psychological terms. Critical theory, the theoretical framework that guides this study, is a blend of Marxist and Freudian ideologies. The self, according the Freud, is the core of a person’s being whereas identity is a social construct that influences a person’s sense of who he or she is. The self is fixed and does not change, whereas identities shift and change as the person experiences life.

Many critical theorists do not distinguish between these two terms making the literature on teacher identity or a teacher’s sense of self very confusing (Laplanche & Pontalis, 1973). Akkerman and Meijer (2011) stated the literature on teacher identity lacks a clear definition, and that, instead, multiple definitions exist. The topic of identity is universally explored in many fields and what originally was a psychological or philosophical debate has become part of political and post-modernist debate.

We all have multiple identities, including that of mother, father, sister, brother, gay or lesbian, black, brown, Muslim or Christian for example. All of these identities come together in a teacher to develop his or her own belief system and sense of self. However, if a teacher does not have a well-developed belief system or sense of self, that connection, as described by Napier, becomes weak or unstable. A teacher’s identity is further compromised if he or she is not allowed to develop and assimilate his or her own belief system, but rather have one imposed.
In their research on ethics in business, Barnes and Kellner (2006) presented many similarities between faculties of business and faculties of education, ignoring the importance of addressing an individual’s understanding of himself or herself in relation to ethical thinking and decision-making. Barnes and Kellner (2006) stated that training programs in business and education dictate to students how they should behave as professionals rather than asking them how they think they should behave.

Out of all of the concepts addressed in ethics, the ethic of self is perhaps the hardest to decipher since the private becomes public. Legislation and the public nature of teaching took control of teachers’ personal lives as far back as the 1850s when teachers lost their right to be able to conduct themselves in public as they saw fit and areas as private as marriage and pregnancy became justified grounds for dismissal (Richter, 2006). This certainly did not occur in the fields of medicine, law, or engineering. The repercussions of these actions by government and community have in essence created a very difficult identity for teachers to understand and navigate.

Ahnee-Benham and Napier’s naturalistic model is good in theory, but in reality, there is nothing natural about the development of a teacher’s identity. It has not had the opportunity to form on its own natural accord but rather has been created by the profession. No wonder it is so difficult for teachers to come to terms with their sense of self and identity and it should be no surprise that a teacher’s sense of ethics is so hard to define given the circumstances described above.

**The Ethic of Discomfort.** The aim of social justice education is to disrupt normative thinking and create enough discomfort that everyone involved begin to question their beliefs and assumptions. Foucault defined this space as the ethic of discomfort (1994) and it is in this space that proactive and transformative education occurs (Zembylas, 2015). The original Multiple Ethical Paradigm included the Ethic of Critique, which addressed social justice education. However, it did not examine the discomfort that can occur when social justice issues are raised in an educational setting.
In a study by Pinto, Portelli, Rottman, Pashby, and Barrett (2012), their findings revealed that social justice education was not a priority for many school administrators in the early 2000s. Instead, administrators placed greater emphasis on subject mastery, classroom discipline, and assessment. The study was disconcerting since the majority of principals interviewed failed to address systemic discrimination in their schools and its impact on marginalized students. Further, administrators neglected the importance of addressing systemic discrimination with new teachers and in teacher education programs. “Some school administrators’ silence on the issue of social justice, equity and diversity reveals [sic] a lack of attention to a critical-democratic ideal among those interviewed. Some school administrators flatly denied that equity or diversity were concerns for them” (Pinto et al., 2012, p. 9).

When pushed further to address equity and diversity issues in the interviews, Pinto et al. stated that many administrators spoke of learning styles rather than race, class, or gender. It was clear that administrators refused to move out of their comfort zone when challenged, and simply reiterated a superficial understanding of a complex issue.

Eyal et al. (2011) identified the increase in social activism in schools amongst educators as a sign of the times, that education was changing, and that social justice education was changing the face of our schools. Many of these changes involved a new language that talks about creating safe spaces for students, disrupting normative thinking, and making schools equitable and inclusive.

However, several academics (Hytten, 2015; Zembylas, 2015) have raised concerns about the way social justice education is being taught. Both Zembylas and Hytten believed that some teachers have a poor understanding of how to teach social justice in an ethical manner. Hytten stated:

I suspect that one of the reasons students struggle with social justice teaching is because of how they were exposed to them, especially from teachers who made them feel stupid, intimidated, guilty, angry or silenced….It is surprising that educators who teach for social justice do not pay more attention to teacher ethics (Hytten, 2015, p. 2).

Zembylas and Boler (2002) challenged the possibility of creating a safe space in schools, and asserted teaching through a social justice lens is much more complicated than defining a few
terms. Zembylas (2015) further stated, “For example, forcing students to accept a collective ethos about what is considered ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ when they are not ready to understand the complexity and ambiguity of existing conditions constitutes a form of ethical violence” (p. 5).

Hytten champions educators’ political stance and bravery to challenge students on normative, discriminatory, and dominant thinking. However, this fine line between comfort and discomfort, between challenging and pushing, and between dialoguing and silence, is where ethics needs to be considered. It is in this volatile space that Zembylas suggests that ethical violence can occur and that students can be harmed or traumatized.

Zembylas (2015) addressed the concepts of ambiguity and vulnerability and stated that both educators and students must come to this common place of discomfort when working through social justice issues. The teacher and students must acknowledge their power and privilege as well as their lack of power and privilege. Teachers need to be skilled in navigating these potentially harmful and volatile conversations in their classroom, and must ensure at all times that the tone of conversations remain ethical and respectful. Having said that, Pinto et al. (2012) pointed out that if administrators are uncomfortable addressing social justice issues with both new and experienced staff, then when and how are teachers being trained? According to Pinto et al.’s study, they are not. Teachers are not being mentored by their administration on how to address social justice education and the downward spiral of avoiding discomfort at the cost of marginalized students just gets deeper and deeper.

Boler (2004) and Conklin (2008) offered ways to teach within a social justice framework that remains ethical and addresses discomfort. They suggested that educators honour all students’ perspectives on oppression, power, and discrimination, and slowly help take them to a place that is more just and fair. Teaching social justice cannot be done in one lesson or in one day or even one course. Rather, in order to break systemic oppression and discrimination, it takes systemic social justice teaching, which involves many lessons and conversations over a period of years. It takes strong and consistent mentoring from administrators to push themselves and their staff to have uncomfortable conversations without repercussions with each other, and with their students. The ethical approach honours time, context, and care.
Both social justice and ethics are vital issues to address in education and one cannot occur without the other. Social justice education must be ethical, and ethics in education must address social justice issues. If not, ethics in education can itself become unethical.

Summary. The Multiple Ethical Paradigm is often taught in principal qualification courses but not commonly taught to teachers in teacher education programs (Eyal et al., 2011). One Canadian study by Langlois and Lapointe (2007) examined the use of the Multiple Ethical Paradigm in relation to principal’s work. They found that new administrators focused on the ethic of justice more than any other tenet and referenced laws and policies to guide their decisions. Experienced administrators incorporated the ethic of care and the ethic of critique to guide their ethical decision-making process. They concluded that the more reflexive and experienced an administrator becomes, the more he or she seems to understand that one type of ethic cannot guide his or her decisions.

Unfortunately, there has not been a similar study done with teachers to see if their application of ethics changes over time. The Multiple Ethical Paradigm has not been identified in teacher training programs, including in Ontario. Teachers and administrators both face the task of having to make ethical decisions on a daily basis; as a result, there is no logical reason why both should not have the Multiple Ethical Paradigm as part of their professional training. If teachers are not being given the appropriate tools to address ethics - such as a paradigm, framework, model, or mentoring, then we should all be asking exactly how are they are doing it.

The Multiple Ethical Paradigm, Ahnee-Benham and Napier’s Naturalistic Model, and Zembylas’ Ethic of Discomfort, create a framework that explores many key issues regarding ethics in education and ethical decision-making. The original paradigm offered a good starting point, but failed to capture the full breadth of issues in the education system. By introducing the Ethic of the Self and the Ethic of Discomfort, the framework now aligns itself with critical theory. Themes and concepts relating to identity, the self, reflection, ethical decision-making, and care are all reintroduced in critical theory and analyzed at a much deeper level.
Chapter Four
Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that guides this study is critical theory, informed by a wide variety of scholars including Freire (1970, 1998), Kellner (2003), Kinchloe (2008), Griffiths (2009), Freeman and Vasconcelos (2010), Apple (2010, 2011, 2013), and Corradetti (2016). This chapter examines the historical roots of critical theory, its basic tenets and key issues, its application to research, and its importance in ethics in education.

Historical Context. The term critical theory was first labeled in 1937 by Max Horkheimer, a German Marxist philosopher from the Frankfurt School (also known as the Institute of Social Research) in his essay *Traditional and Critical Theory* (Jessop, 2012). The school was originally financed by Felix Weil’s father, a wealthy merchant who supported his son’s studies (Jessop, 2012). Felix, an Argentinean political scientist, was interested in Marxism and wrote his dissertation on socializing the economy. As a student, Weil was fascinated by the eclectic group of Marxists drawn to the school, including Carl Grunberg (political scientist), Theodore Adorno (philosopher, sociologist, and musicologist), Erich Fromm (psychologist), Franz Neumann (political scientist), and Friedrich Pollock (economist). Due to political unrest in Germany, the school was forced to close down and relocated to Columbia University in the Department of Sociology in New York City (Corradetti, 2016). In 1941 the School relocated once again to California. After World War II, some of its original founders returned to Germany to re-establish the school.

The Frankfurt School had an incredible impact on the world of academia in many ways. Interdisciplinary studies, social studies, psychology, political studies, women’s studies, legal studies, all have traces of critical theory in their foundation. Even today, many universities such as the University of California, Columbia University, McMaster University, Northwestern University, Berkley University, and McGill University, have a separate Critical Theory Institute.

*What is critical theory?* Max Horkheimer asked in his essay *Traditional and Critical Theory* (1937, 1975). His simple question does not have a simple answer since critical theory is quite a
complex grouping of disciplines, theories, and reactions. To begin, the Frankfurt philosophers deconstructed the term *critical theory* by referencing the Greek term *krinein*, to “reflect and judge,” and *theoria* as “a way of seeing.” Critical theory was a “model of holistic education” (Kellner, 2003, p. 58) that was interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary. Critical theorists integrated research and ideologies from many disciplines including philosophy, political science, psychology, and history.

Critical theorists valued not one expert’s opinion, but many. It was not seen as a competition of who was smarter, or whose theory was better, but rather it moved towards a collective understanding of how power and oppression affected society. Critical theorists believed that society in general was (and still is) controlled by a series of oppressive systems such as the education system, criminal justice system, and mental health system. These systems promote one way of thinking or believing, and critical theorists aimed to deconstruct them by engaging in critical and reflective dialogue. The goal of these rich discussions was the emancipation of individuals by exposing oppression, power, and discriminatory practices (Freeman & Vasconcelos, 2010).

**Basic Tenets of Critical Theory: Marxism.** Rexhepi and Torres (2011) defined critical theory as:

- a human science, providing a humanistic, anti-positivist approach to social theory. It is also a historical science of society, providing a form of historical sociology. Finally, it is a sociocultural critique, concerned with normative theory or a theory about values and what ought to be (p. 689).

One of the original tenets of critical theory was a rejection of positivism; the theory that there are absolute truths in the world (Corradetti, 2016). Positivism was connected to scientific research and the belief that through rigorous testing, the truth could be discovered. By contrast, critical theorists focused on issues that could not be solved with a simple laboratory test resulting in a black and white answer. They were interested in examining history, human behavior, group dynamics, and power and politics. There were no quick fixes for critical theorists.
Critical theory was a strong reaction to capitalism and its application in the development of a market-driven society based on consumerism, competition, affluence, and commodity (Jessop, 2012). Critical theorists held the Marxist belief that capitalism was the root of many of the world’s problems. With capitalism comes power and the desire to exploit and oppress others. One of the goals of critical theory was to deconstruct power structures and emancipate those who were oppressed (Rexhepi & Torres, 2011). This was achieved in several ways: through critical dialogue, self-reflection, and the deconstruction of language, theories, and institutions (Rexhepi & Torres, 2011; Thompson, 2011).

Critical theorists believed that education was inherently a political act that was based on unequal relationships, and that the central themes of power and dominance are one of its greatest areas of tension (Apple, 2010; Kinchloe, 2008). In other words, they hold that “Politics and education intersect continually…power plays a major role in configuring schooling and social reproduction” (Rexhepi & Torres, 2011, p. 692). Today, social justice educators agree with founding critical theorists that “in our current oppressive, inequitable, neoliberal social and political climate, teacher neutrality is impossible” (Hytten, 2015, p. 8).

Critical theorists acknowledged the importance of ethics, being the study of human value (Thompson, 2011). In fact, “Marx proposed that our ethical concepts need to be grounded in our understanding of the ways in which the material organization of society shapes the ontological reality of human sociality” (Thompson, 2011, p. 161).

Educators are in a position of power. This power can be abused at anytime, resulting in exploitative behaviours towards students, especially those who are marginalized. However, it must be noted that teachers, compared to senior administration in a school board, have the least amount of power. Our current hierarchical education system places teachers at the bottom where those who are in higher positions of power too can exploit them. It is essential that all educators possess a strong sense of ethics in an effort to safeguard against exploitation of anyone who is in a lesser position than they are. Acknowledging this duality, of being both the oppressor and the oppressed at the same time is central to critical theory.
Freudian Theory. A second basic tenet of critical theory is the application of Freudian terminology to explain people’s behavior. The Frankfurt School focused on two specific Freudian theories: instinct and identity theory.

Freud believed that a person made decisions both consciously and unconsciously (Corradetti, 2016). Instinct decisions, that are part of the unconscious, are very quick and often referred to as our “gut instinct.” This is particularly relevant to teaching as educators make hundreds of decisions each day on the job (Manley-Casimir & Wasserman, 1989). Some of them are carefully and consciously thought out while others are much more instinctual such as grabbing a child who is about to fall down the stairs.

Despite its relevance, the relationship between Freud’s instinct theory and teachers is not a popular research topic. The only study I was able to find is The Teaching Instinct: Explorations into What Makes Us Human (Tellez, 2016). Kip Tellez, an education professor, focused on the concept of teacher instinct and why it is so important to the profession. Tellez was not referring to the ability to teach instinctively but rather instinctual feelings, such as empathy and caring - virtues all teachers would ideally possess.

Tellez referenced the work of Nel Noddings (2012), who described caring as one of the most ethical virtues necessary in order to be a good teacher. He also cited Valenzuela’s (1999) study on the relationship between White teachers and Latino students, and concluded there were two types of caring: that which is instinctual and based on human feelings, and that which is forced or perfunctory. Valenzuela concluded that the second type of caring is more commonly found in educational settings and is more about appearing to care. She believed that Latino students knew when a teacher did not really care about them, but demonstrated caring because it was part of their job.

The concepts of instinct and caring have been central to this study on ethics. Many scholars like Tellez, Noddings, and Valenzuela acknowledged the importance of having educators who genuinely and instinctively care about students.
In reflecting on the scenario of the student who is about to fall down the stairs: What if the student is gay, Black, or disabled? Within a second, the educator has to make an ethical decision to either help the child, or let him or her fall down the stairs. It is horrible to imagine an educator simply letting a child fall because he or she may not like who the student is, or what he or she represents.

If empathy and a sense of ethics are instinctually missing qualities in an educator, can he or she be taught or legislated to be caring and ethical? This question is open for debate and was raised by the experts in this Delphi study.

**Self versus Identity.** A second theme of Freud’s work centered on a person’s sense of identity. In traditional Freudian theory, this refers to the development of the ego, superego, and id (Laplanche & Pontalis, 1973). Later in his career, Freud spent considerable time developing his theories on identity and expanded them to include his beliefs on sexuality, narcissism, and repression (Laplanche & Pontalis, 1973).

Whereas Lauriala and Kukkonem (2005) believed there was no distinction between the terms *identity* and *self*, traditional Freudian theorists would not agree. The self is at the core of every human being and does not change. It is who we are. Identity, on the other hand, is a social construct that is constantly changing throughout the person’s life. Developing an identity is a complex and ongoing process since a person’s identity is never fixed, but considered unstable or fluid as he or she grows and matures (Tyson, 2006). For example, in a person’s lifetime, one may see oneself as a student, girlfriend, boyfriend, wife, husband, parent, aunt, uncle, secretary, manager, or teacher. Circumstances cause a person’s identity to shift and sometimes prioritize one aspect over another; one may say being a parent is more important than being a manager. As Tyson (2006) stated:

> The self-image of a stable identity that many of us have is really just a comforting self-delusion, which we produce in collusion with our culture, for culture, too wants to see itself as stable and coherent when in reality it is highly unstable and fragmented. We don’t really have an identity because the word identity implies that we consist of one, singular self, but in fact we are multiple
and fragmented, consistent at any moment of any number of conflicting beliefs, desires, fears, anxieties, and in tensions (p. 257).

Both teacher identity and a teacher’s sense of self are central themes in this study. Akkerman and Meijer (2011) reviewed existing research on teacher identity from 1988 to 2008 in education and social study journals. They found a ninety-percent increase on teacher identity related articles in a twenty-year period. Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) believed that this was because the education reform movement turned the public’s eye to teachers’ identity. They stressed that educators should be concerned since the motive behind this scrutiny was (and still is) not always positive or constructive. Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) noted that the elevation of a teacher’s identity to that of saint-like proportions only made their fall from grace more severe.

Carter (2009) maintained that the community or media’s role in constructing teachers’ identity for them is not new, and this image of teacher-as-saint is a fabrication of our westernized society. Adding that:

Teachers, like traditional housewife-mothers, are usually constructed as angels or saints or, at the least, clergy, thought to work from ‘love’ or one of its synonyms (passion, engagement, involvement, caring). They ‘care’ for their students and want to ‘make a difference’ (what difference is often left unarticulated). They are widely expected to channel all-but-divine resources of patience and affection to allow them to "help" or ‘save’ even the most difficult. (p. 65)

She further argued that this image of the selfless, pious teacher is gender-specific and more often associated with mothers, not fathers. On this view:

Mothers, like teachers, are often referred to as "saints" or "angels" for their undercompensated, underappreciated work with no clear "quitting time," their tending of children's emotional and spiritual well-being, and the standards of morality (i.e., sexlessness) that are expected to be upheld in public. (p. 66)

Cavanagh (2007) held that a female teacher’s sexual identity was, and still is, controlled by the community and media. Until the 1980s, female teachers were forced to resign if they got
pregnant because it was thought it would upset male students (Cavanagh, 2007). Some school boards in Canada still frown upon female teachers divorcing and they often risk being dismissed (Cavanagh, 2007). Instead, female teachers have always been influenced to remain pure and chaste. Even today, female teachers are strongly discouraged to wear ‘provocative’ clothing to school or be seen in public in any sexualized manner (Cavanagh, 2007).

Cavanagh (2007) noted that Mary Kay Letourneau shattered a pretty, married, Christian mother of three who had sex with her twelve-year-old student the image of female-teacher-as-saint in 1997. Letourneau went to jail, but never said she was sorry or publicly repented for what she did. Instead, she gave birth to two children with her former student, and married him.

Cavanaugh believed that Letourneau’s ongoing behavior set both Canadian and American education systems into a panic. Here was a female teacher who defied the community, legislation, and the patriarchal Westernized Christian image of female teacher-as-saint. Letourneau did not fall from grace the way she should have. Instead of being humiliated by being called a “whore”, Letourneau reveled in it, appearing in photographs wearing provocative clothes (Cavanagh, 2007).

This imposed oppressive identity relates to ethics or ethical decision-making as female teachers are expected to be selfless and every decision they make is for the child, not themselves. If they question this expectation, they are seen as selfish (Cavanagh, 2007). Ethical thinking and decision-making has already been predetermined and scripted for them.

By contrast, the identity of male teachers has never been contested in the same way as female teachers (Carter, 2009). Male teachers are often presented as wise, intelligent authoritarian figures that command and receive respect. This is not surprising considering that gender bias is embedded in Western culture.

Not addressing the issue of teaching identity in teacher education programs, especially the images of saint and authority figure, is ultimately not fair to teacher candidates (Carter, 2009).
Both Cavanagh and Carter believed that teacher candidates need to examine the issue of identity and the reality of how theirs is about change without their consent.

Rodgers and Scott (2008) studied the formation of teacher’s identity and concluded that it is shaped by multiple social, cultural, political, and historical events in an educator’s life. Second, it is influenced by professional relationships and emotions experienced on the job. Third, like Freud, they agreed that a teacher’s identity is constantly changing and evolving. Developing a strong professional identity is crucial for teachers since it helps them understand “how to be,” “how to act,” and “how to understand” their role as educators (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009, p. 178).

Rodgers and Scott (2008) also identified the importance of acknowledging a teacher’s past experiences, both personal and professional, in helping to shape his or her identity as an educator. Olsen (2008) discovered that teachers who had a former career often transferred their skills and knowledge. Their entry point into teaching was quite different compared to first-career teachers. He concluded that second-career teachers had a better understanding of their shifting identities and were often more confident professionals (Buchanan, 2015, p. 708). He also noted that second-career teachers were older and had more lived experience that helped them understand the education system, whereas first-career teachers were often young and just out of school themselves. Whereas second-career teachers already identified themselves as professionals, first-career teachers often still identified themselves as students.

The shifts in a teacher’s sense of identity are important to identify since it relates to a teacher’s sense of power and professionalism. At times, the teacher may feel in control of his or her classroom and confident that he or she is a good teacher. At other times, if under scrutiny or judgment by administration, parents, or the media, he or she may feel like a bad teacher.

This fluid teacher identity is not always harmonious, and conflict and tensions in the profession can greatly affect a teacher’s emotional well-being. Buchanan (2015) pointed out that if a teacher’s identity does not fit with his or her school’s culture and climate, he or she will have
difficulty developing relationships and a sense of belonging. The teacher will feel disconnected, perhaps resentful, and isolated.

Hargreaves’ (2000) work on teacher identity referred to four specific phases that align with the history of education. The first phase occurred in the early twentieth century where male teachers were seen as technicians and female teachers as babysitters or surrogate mothers. Hargreaves referred to this as the “pre-professional” stage of teacher identity where teachers did not have a great deal of status or power. The second stage occurred in the 1960s alongside social reform and liberation movements. In this stage, unions were formed and teachers were aligned with other unionized workers. Hargreaves described this as the “autonomous professional” stage where teachers were allowed to work in isolation with little interference from the government, parents, or public. The third stage in the 1980s saw a rise in collegialism and the education reform movement encouraged teachers to work collectively in terms of curriculum and standards. This was known as the “collegial professional” stage.

The last stage is still to be determined as Hargreaves predicted sixteen years ago that two things could happen: teachers would either rise to the position of a modern professional, with accreditation and status, or they would regress into the role of technician and surrogate mother. Buchanan (2015) argued that we have clearly moved backwards towards a deskilled profession with a lack of autonomy and voice. He believed that “The current emphasis on standards, accountability, and curriculum fidelity does not value teacher autonomy or authentic collegiality, but rather appears to resemble the post-professional model that Hargreaves feared” (Buchanan, 2015, p. 702).

Hargreaves work on teacher identity was published the same year as Jeff Schmidt’s book, discussed in a previous chapter. Stern, (2001) in summarizing Schmidt’s book, stated:

The profession promises positive changes in your life, seeks to control your environment completely, demands obedience to the views of leaders/professors, uses guilt and shaming to promote activity, promotes total vulnerability on the part of its members, has its own scientific dogma and worldview, takes away self-confidence, and claims to be the only path to salvation. (p. 183-184).
Schmidt, like Foucault (1983) addressed the soul and referred to the education system as being “soul crushing.” For Foucault, “attending to your self is attending to your soul” (1983) and the goal of taking care of yourself and your soul first, is freedom.

Schmidt’s book does not describe enlightened professionals who have a strong sense of self, identity, and self-worth. He does not describe education as liberating. Like Freire, Schmidt came to the same conclusion that in order for education, educators, and students to be truly free of this institutionalized oppression; one must become a radical, which is exactly what he did (Stern, 2001).

**Foucault on Identity, Reflection, and Self Care.** Foucault (1997), a modern French philosopher, social theorist, and post-Freudian thinker, wrote, “for what is ethics but the practice of freedom, the conscious (reflechie) practice of freedom?” (p. 284). Foucault spoke a great deal about power, oppression, identity, the self, and reflection. In the latter part of his life, Foucault addressed ethics, self-care, and identity in *Ethics Subjectivity and Truth* (1997). Not only did he believe the concept of care of the self was vital, he saw it as necessary for emancipation to occur. If one took care of oneself, he or she would develop a strong sense of ethics. This, he said, was only possible through *reflechie*, reflection (Foucault, 1997).

Foucault (1983, 1997) noted that Christianity disparaged the concept of self-care and reflection that originated in Greek philosophy as being selfish and narcissistic. Christian ideology, which dominated the development of schooling in North America, required that teachers be selfless and that their personal sense of self-care and self-worth were to be put aside (Carter, 2009). The concept of self-care was replaced with caring for others first and teachers who did put themselves first were criticized (Mehinan, 2012). For example, in Ontario in the 1850s, teachers were expected to take care of approximately one hundred children, teach them, cook for them, shovel coal, and not have a family life of their own (ETFO, 2009). The image of the schoolmarm has not truly faded away in our province and our Judaeo Christian roots in education still appear in the Ontario Education Act (1990), as discussed in a previous chapter.
Even though in Ontario teachers hold the status of a certified professional through the OCT, various stakeholders have largely manufactured their identity. This is a reoccurring theme in the literature review and in this study.

If teachers do not have a voice and do not own their professional identity, then how are they supposed to develop a sense of ethics? By Foucault’s standards they cannot. By not being able to form their own identity, their own sense of self, and take care of that self, educators are left with little choice but to accept a professional and personal identity imposed and enforced by the community and the government.

Critical theory that focuses on identity is crucial to this study since it brings together this rich dialogue on the philosophical and political influences on education today. Critical theorists have raised many important issues when it comes to teachers’ identity and sense of self-worth in the profession. We learn where the selfless educator originated, and question why we have not challenged this oppressive image even today.

**Analysis versus Reflection.** The last set of concepts to explore in critical theory combine the works of Freud and Foucault and their theories on analysis and *reflechie*. What confuses this conversation is the Deweyian notion of ’reflection’ that is popular in education today, and bears little resemblance to what Freud and Foucault defined as the process of self-enlightenment (Rogers, 2002).

Analysis in traditional Freudian terms refers to the intellectual, emotional, and spiritual journey of self-discovery (International Psychoanalytic Association [IPA], 2016). Through writing and talking, one tries to bring information from his or her unconscious to the conscious, to better understand oneself. This writing and talking could be free-flowing (such as stream of consciousness) or anecdotal such as describing past events either orally or in writing.

Analysis is also the name of the treatment method used in psychotherapy, which is commonly called “talk therapy” (IPA, 2016). The person does not achieve enlightenment on his or her own but with the aid of a psychotherapist in regular individual meetings. The therapist becomes the
person’s guide and mentor through the murky waters of his or her unconscious world and grounds him or her by being emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually present.

While Freud was researching and writing about the power of analysis in Vienna, John Dewey, an American educator and philosopher, began to focus his work on the cognitive benefits of reflective thinking (Rogers, 2002).

Freud’s and Dewey’s training, approach to human behavior, and end goal of analysis were strikingly different. Freud was a trained doctor who rebelled against the medical system and developed a radical form of treatment that was not grounded in science or fact. In contrast, Dewey was a philosopher who utilized a fairly conservative positivist approach to identify the process of reflection. Freud’s writings on psychoanalysis were an eclectic journey into one’s mind and soul resulting in knowing oneself. The success of psychoanalysis was dependent on the relationship between the patient and doctor; and it was precisely this relationship that was the catalyst to achieving enlightenment. Last, Freud’s method of treating his patients would be considered unethical by today’s standards. He often vacationed with them leaving no boundary between him and patients. He believed that care could not be slotted into a one hour session and if necessary, boundaries were removed so that he could care for his patients to whatever limit necessary (Pepper, 1996).

In contrast, Dewey’s work on teachers did not focus on their having a mentor or guide to help them become enlightened. Instead, teachers were the drivers of their knowledge, using reflection in the process as a self-help tool to become better teachers. The teacher was the guide for his or her students, and the goal was student success, not teacher success (Rogers, 2002). Dewey’s criteria for reflection entail four elements:

1. reflection is a meaning-making process that moves a learner from one experience into the next with deeper understanding of its relationships with and connections to their experiences and ideas;
2. reflection is a systematic, rigorous, disciplined way of thinking, with its roots in scientific inquiry;
3. reflection needs to happen in community, in interactions with others;
4. reflection requires attitudes that value the personal and intellectual growth of one and of others. (Rogers, 2002, p. 845)

Dewey also described six phases of reflection that began with a description of an experience and an interpretation of the events. The next stage involved identifying a problem or issue that arose from the experience. For example, this could refer to a lesson plan that was not successful, a student failing a test, or a student skipping classes. The teacher then gave a list of possible reasons for the negative event, followed by a new suggestion or idea to ratify the problem. The last step involved the teacher trying the new initiative and beginning the cycle of reflection once again (Rogers, 2002).

Clearly, this process was not at all what Freud described as analysis, nor does it resemble Foucault’s description of reflection, which was about self-care and freedom. Analysis requires considerable time for a person to examine his or her past and it is common for the process to continue for years. Dewey’s concept of reflection was a process to improve a teacher’s practice. It was not about self-enlightenment, ownership, or emancipation. Instead, it was a quick fix for teachers to get the job done.

Once a teacher education program is complete, an educator may be given some guidance by a department head or administrator, but there is no person to sit and talk to on a regular basis about things that did not go right in a classroom. Only recently in Ontario has the Ministry of Education developed a formal mentoring process for new teachers through the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP). It is limited to two years, and after that, a teacher’s lengthy career can proceed without ever having a mentor or guide again.

Having been trained as a psychotherapist, teacher, and administrator, I will share my radically different experiences. To become a member of the Ontario Society of Psychotherapists (the precursor organization to the College of Registered Psychotherapist of Ontario) I had to attend a university or institute that mandated participation in individual psychoanalysis or group therapy, followed by two more years of weekly supervision or peer support upon commencement of
As budding psychotherapists, analysis was explained to us as a profound examination of our thoughts and behaviors. The concept of ownership was fundamental in our analysis, and our conversations and writings were not about the other, but about ourselves. This made my training personal, and there was no escaping having to look deeply into my experiences and beliefs that shaped who I was as a psychotherapist. It was a very uncomfortable experience to publicly discuss my worst fears and darkest thoughts, but I believe it was absolutely necessary. To successfully work with the mind, heart, and soul of others, I needed to fully understand “me.” The more aware I became of my own issues, the more grounded I remained for my patients.

When I read Zembylas’ *Ethic of Discomfort*, I thought back to those years when I willingly sat for hours in group therapy feeling uneasy, just waiting to go home. My goal was to be a good therapist, and I understood discomfort was necessary to take me to that level of professionalism. Perhaps this is why discomfort, which most people want to avoid, did not have the same effect on me. I was, and always have been aware, that the process of growth usually involves an internal struggle and the result is a higher level of maturity and self-enlightenment.

When I entered teacher training, I discovered that the language used was similar to my psychotherapy training, but its application different. As teacher candidates we were told we needed to reflect on our practice. This was done by handing in written assignments about our experiences in our practicum. Some instructors were very direct and gave us a list of questions to answer, while others did not. When discussing our reflections in groups, I was taken off-guard by how impersonal, judgmental, and superficial my classmates’ comments were. These were highly educated people who were clearly following a different set of rules, one that lacked ownership and was not grounded in relationality. Teacher candidates did not question their own behavior, but rather focused on their students’ actions. They spoke of their frustrations and collectively as
we suggested strategies to employ that would make their teaching practices more successful. It seemed as if these discussions were meant to help us be better teachers but not necessarily better people. The heavy reliance on strategies seemed like putting band-aids on a wound, in that they never really got to the root of the problem. It was all about quick fixes and the “other.” This was my first experience of being silenced in the field of education.

After ten years of teaching I decided to become an administrator and once again entered a formal training process that consisted of coursework, a practicum, and mentorship. Even though reflection was part of the coursework, there was a great deal more emphasis placed on relationships in administrator training. Conflict resolution, ethics, and legislation were discussed in the courses, and the mentor, my principal, focused on increasing my ability to make difficult and complex decisions. Relationships were not only discussed, they were developed as my mentor became my confidant and guide to help me prepare psychologically, emotionally, and intellectually for my new role. Administrator training did not resemble teacher training since they are very different roles. Whereas teachers focus on teaching and caring for students, administrators focus on addressing conflicts between teachers, students, parents, and the community. Administrators must learn how to build healthy and strong relationships with all of the stakeholders so that uncomfortable and difficult conversations are grounded in mutual respect and trust. Like psychotherapy, the focus of administrator training is relationality. To remain grounded in daily conflict and crisis, the administrator must have a strong sense of self, and have fostered strong relationships to navigate crisis after crisis, and conflict after conflict.

Current Issues and Criticisms on Reflection. *A Self Reflection Professional Learning Tool* (n.d.) by the OCT is a prescribed set of questions that guides educators through the process of reflecting on their teaching. The College uses the *Ethical Standards of the Teacher Profession* (2014) and the *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession* (2017) to frame the questions. From reading the tool book, it is evident that the OCT is not referencing self-analysis. Instead, the goal of reflecting in teaching is simply to become a better teacher.

There are education scholars who question the efficacy of reflection and whether it is being done properly, consistently, or at all (Clara, 2015; Jaeger, 2013). Several studies on why reflection
only partially works in education point to a system that is too busy, overwhelming for educators, not supported by administration or school boards, and more about “do” rather than “think” (Jaeger, 2013; Hatton & Smith, 1995; Laboskey, 1993; Calderhead, 1989).

Clara (2015) stated Dewey’s original ideas on reflection have been usurped by our bureaucratic education system and the focus is not simply better teaching, but rather success through numbers. Jaeger challenged the data that states teacher reflection leads to student success by pointing to studies done in the 1980s by Vaughan, in the 1990s by Zeichner and Liston, and in the 2000s by Jaeger. He added, “Nevertheless, with many, if not most, teacher education programs holding the cultivation of teacher reflection as a primary goal, it is a tremendous oversight that research on the connection between reflection and achievement is completely absent from the literature” (Jaeger, 2013, p. 100).

Brookfield (2009) argued that the term *reflection* is often replaced with the term *critical reflection*, which implies that the teacher is looking deeper and more profoundly into his or her teaching practice. He maintained that there really is no proof that this is occurring and instead words are being used in education to substantiate practices that do not necessarily exist. Using the word *critical* relates to critical theory, with its purpose being to bring forward issues of identity, power, oppression, or discrimination. As noted by Brookfield (2009), “It is quite possible to proactively reflect while focusing on the nuts and bolts of process and leaving unquestioned the criteria, power dynamics and wider structures of practice” (p. 293).

**Summary.** This discussion on analysis and reflection ends with the importance of developing a sense of self and an identity. Whereas analysis will help a patient develop a strong sense of self and a cohesive identity that incorporates one’s past and present, reflection does little to help a teacher develop a strong sense of self or teacher identity. In fact, Indigenous scholars (Ahnee-Benham & Napier, 2002) would say the exact opposite has occurred in education, and today teachers are even more disconnected from their sense of self or identity.

Reflection in teaching is depersonalized and instead has become “professionalized.” Teachers are not really given time to reflect, nor are there any structures in place for ongoing mentorship
throughout their entire career. Instead, the information presented in this section points to discrepancies in the profession that uses the language but not the process of emancipation. Most teachers would not know the difference between Foucault’s definition and purpose of reflection and Dewey’s. Teachers are taught one method to reflect, and that, according to some critics, may not even be as effective as others claim. This fundamental flaw beginning in teacher education programs, further adds to the complicated reasons that educators are not talking about ethics or ethical decision-making; it has never been a part of their language, process, or thinking.

**Critical Theory in Relation to Research Methodology.** There are two dominant views on how critical research should be conducted. The first view is from Freeman and Vasconcelos (2010) and Jessop (2012) who identified four actions that need to take place for research to be considered part of a critical theory framework. These are:

- a) a theory of false consciousness
- b) a theory of crisis
- c) a theory of education
- d) a theory of transformative action

The term Marxist *false consciousness* relates to Paolo Freire’s theory on the education of the oppressed (Freeman & Vasconcelos, 2010). Freire believed that certain groups of people remain oppressed because of their education, which does not free them but rather further oppresses them by having them internalize the idea that they do not deserve better. This internalized self-oppression is known as a false consciousness (Freire, 1970, 1998). Freire’s goal was to develop a *critical consciousness*, where the learner situates him or herself in the conversation to “understand the complexity of the relations that have produced this situation” (Freeman & Vasconcelos, 2010, p. 13).

Using a critical theory framework, I situated myself in a Delphi study as an active subject responsible for analyzing and posing questions based on the critical dialogue between the experts. Also, I acknowledged that perhaps my own teacher training had not been perfect, but rather as Freire would suggest, an act of further self-imposed oppression. In a Freirian context,
the teacher must see him or herself as both the oppressed and the oppressor, and come to terms with this duality. The Delphi study addressed the concept of the “other” and made the experts question their identity and the contradictions inherent in their role as experts. It also made me question my own.

Freire’s *theory of crisis* did not refer to an external crisis in society, but rather an internal crisis for those oppressed. In discussing ethics in education, much of the literature points to a top-down bureaucratic education system that tells educators exactly what they are going to learn and how they are going to behave. In our era of accountability and transparency, this has become even more evident in education.

Freire stated the oppressed must become part of the conversation and that deconstructing “the values, assumptions, contradictions, and tensions become a major part of the evaluative process, a process that assists in understanding the crisis of which these issues are a symptom” (Freeman & Vasconcelos, 2010, p. 14).

Educators, including the experts involved in this study and I must acknowledge our own oppression as well as our privilege. In critical theory, acknowledging the effect this oppression has had on our *selves* is vital for emancipatory thinking. This was an important step for me as a researcher and it made me think of my colleagues and wondered how often they were aware of their internal crisis and what they meant. Being a doctoral student, I have the privilege of access to a group of academics and experts who can guide my thinking. When do my colleagues have the similar opportunities to be able to be part of the conversation and actually experience emancipatory thinking?

In a Freirian context, *a theory of education* is any teaching or learning that occurs between people; it is not restricted to a formal school setting (Freeman & Vasconcelos, 2010). Particularly relevant to this study, critical theory in Freire’s opinion does not require consensus (Lyons, 2001). The Frankfurt critical theorists rejected positivism as the only way to conduct research. By using the tenets of critical theory, I made a fairly conservative qualitative research method
much more open and rich in dialogue. The goal of this Delphi study was not consensus, but rather to identify commonality or themes.

According to Freeman and Vasconcelos (2010), a critical researcher must be able to establish trust in a study so that there are no barriers to dialogue. In this Delphi study, establishing this trust was important for the experts to feel comfortable exposing themselves without fear of judgment. In fact, “Mutual trust is invited at the onset, when the evaluator describes a critical theory approach with honesty about what it entails” (Freeman & Vasconcelos, 2010, p. 16). It is in this learning environment, free from judgment and public scrutiny, that the experts and I were able to learn from each other and explore the topic of ethics deeply.

A theory of transformative action refers to the emancipatory experience of realizing you are oppressed and that you have the power to oppress others as well, it is situational (Freeman & Vasconcelos, 2010). In critical theory, the process one undertakes to achieve this enlightened state is left open for the researcher to explore. To use critical theory as my theoretical framework, I had to acknowledge that the hierarchical nature of the education system oppresses me as an educator. More importantly, I had to acknowledge that I am in a position of power as an educator, where I can oppress others. Ethics is intertwined in my inner dialogue as an educator, questioning my moral compass on an ongoing basis. Both Freud and Freire used the term consciousness as part of a process of enlightenment. In Freire’s theory, the oppressed are not stupid, but rather unaware or not conscious of their internalized oppression. Since education is a political act, it is up to the educator to create the conditions that will lead students to empower themselves.

**Michael Apple and the Critical Researcher.** Another significant educator who has written extensively about Freire and critical theory is Michael Apple. Apple used many terms in his writing such as critical theory, critical thinking, critical inquiry, and critical pedagogy. This study focuses on the term critical theory and Apple’s work in setting a framework for the critical researcher.
In several articles and in his book *Can Education Change Society?* (2013), Apple held steadfast that there are “nine tasks in which critical analysts much engage” (Apple, 2013, p. 15, p. 207) for a researcher to engage in critical theory. Each of these nine tasks is applicable to this study since they create the framework that allowed me to explore ethics with some sense of guidance and vision. As a researcher, I was not aware that I already was engaged in some of these tasks. The tasks that I had not yet utilized added depth to my study and to my understanding of the relationship between ethics, politics, and power.

Apple cautioned that it is very difficult for the critical researcher to succeed with all nine tasks. Instead, he stated the guidelines below were meant to help the researcher bring to consciousness what exactly he or she was doing (Apple, 2015).

**The issue must “bear witness to negativity.”** According to Apple (2015), the critical researcher must “illuminate the ways in which educational policy and practice are connected to the relations of exploitation and domination - and to struggles against such relations - in the larger society” (p. 12). The negativity I witnessed as a teacher, administrator, law instructor, and adjudicator relates to ethics and the disturbing silence around this issue that I could not explain to others or myself. Ethics is too important an issue to ignore in education, especially in relation to vulnerable students.

As Apple noted, one of the fundamental purposes of critical theory is to reveal issues of exploitation and domination, both in education and in relation to society. Educators are clearly in a position of power, one in which they can easily abuse and exploit others. If educators participated in ongoing dialogue regarding ethics in education, they would have to confront and acknowledge their place of privilege. It would make them more conscious of their thoughts and behaviors in the classroom. Perhaps it would even prevent some of the difficulties educators have faced.

On the other hand, educators are often in the position of being powerless and dominated by a powerful education institution. Again, it would benefit educators if these areas of dominance and power, at both ends of their spectrum, were openly discussed.
The issue must point to contradictions and to spaces of possible action. This study examines contradictions regarding ethics in education and its relationship to teacher training and teacher conduct. In the *Foundations of Professional Practice* (2012), the OCT encourages educators to be life-long learners, yet there is no legislation that ensures educators are engaging in life-long learning. Teacher professional development is not legislated the same way other licensed professions are in Ontario.

A second area of contradiction regards ethics. There is no legislation that states a teacher must learn, discuss, or demonstrate competency in ethics. Although these two examples point to a discrepancy between legislation and the profession, to suggest mandating professional development and professional development on ethics seems to only increase the level of top-down demands on an already over-burdened profession. This is an excellent space for discussion - but not for more rules for teachers to follow.

A third area of contradiction in education is a teacher’s identity that is caught somewhere between being professional and being personal. At the end of a prominent case in Ontario, the Supreme Court of Canada stated, “Teachers are very properly expected to maintain a higher standard of conduct than other employees because they occupy such an extremely important position in society” (*The Board of Education for the City of Toronto v. the Ontario Secondary School Teachers’ Federation*, 1 SCR, 1997, Item 52). This “higher standard” has taken on a new extreme in the era of accountability and transparency, and it is unclear where the line is drawn. For example, in the mid-1980s in British Columbia, John Shewan took a photo of his wife Ilze topless and had it published in a photography magazine. Both were teachers in the public school board, and found themselves suspended without pay for six weeks due to conduct unbecoming a teacher (Kruk, 2015). The case was appealed back and forth between the Shewans and the Abbotsford District School Board until the British Columbia Court of Appeal decided:

The reason why off-the-job conduct may amount to misconduct is that a teacher holds a position of trust, confidence and responsibility. If he or she acts in an improper way, on or off the job, there may be a loss of public confidence in the teacher and in the public school system, a loss of respect by students for the teacher involved, and other teachers
generally, and there may be controversy within the school and within the community which disrupts the proper carrying on of the educational system. (OCT, 1998, p. 1)

What contradiction lies in the messages that our education system gives educators about their conduct? They must behave at all times, in all places, and at all costs. Did one photo of Ilze Shewan in a photography magazine have that much power to shake the public’s confidence in her teaching ability? There seems to be no space for educators to discuss how to deal with ethical dilemmas that could possibly prevent them from making a slip like the Shewans did; the court of appeal did it for them.

Apple stated it is crucial that the critical researcher must find spaces of possible action or else “research can simply lead to cynicism or despair” (Apple, 2015, p. 12). This Delphi study directly asked the experts in the field of ethics to find spaces of action or improvement so that ethics could become part of the conversation in education. The last section of this study presents both recommendations based on the experts’ responses, and as the critical researcher, my own suggestion for spaces of possible action.

**Critical theory requires the researcher to broaden his or her definition of what counts as research.** Apple believed that a critical researcher needs to be open to all forms of research methodologies and must be engaged in research that focuses on equity. Apple stated:

> Here I mean acting as critical ‘secretaries’ to those groups of people and social movements who are now engaged in challenging existing relations of unequal power or in what elsewhere has been called ‘nonreformist reforms’ a term that has a long history in critical sociology and critical education studies.” (Apple, 2015, p. 12)

Although a Delphi study is considered a conservative and positivist approach to research (Avella, 2016), critical theory allowed me to modify the traditional Delphi study model. This created a new space, one in which experts did not have to agree, but rather acknowledge their differences. It also opened up the dialogue using the language of critical theory that focused on power, oppression, and in this case, ethics.
The critical researcher’s task is not to throw out elite knowledge, but rather reconstruct its forms and content so that it serves genuinely progressive social needs. Apple (2015) used the word organic when discussing the purpose of elite knowledge. In many ways, the conversations that flowed back and forth in the Delphi study were organic and fluid. Even though I directed the questions, the responses and counter-responsive took on their meaning. There was no debate over what was “important knowledge” (Apple, 2015, p. 12) but rather a questioning of how to disseminate knowledge or co-create knowledge with experts on ethics.

The critical researcher’s task is to keep the tradition of radical and progressive work alive. Apple stated, “it is absolutely crucial that these traditions be kept alive, renewed, and when necessary criticized for their conceptual, empirical, historical, and political silences or limitations” (Apple, 2015, p. 13). The topic of ethics in education does not seem radical on the surface. This study challenged experts in bureaucratic institutions such as faculties of education, teacher federations, and school boards. It pushed them to think about their role in addressing ethics in education, or in silencing it. As a critical researcher, I was aware that I was disrupting the normative and engaging in a process in which ethics needed to be examined and re-examined. I was conscious of my own need to keep this topic alive given that it had been on my mind since I became a teacher and obviously was of great concern to me. My goal may not be radical but it is progressive, as I continually look for innovative ways to make the teaching profession a better place for teachers to be.

Critical researchers must ask “For whom are we keeping them alive?” This question can be interpreted in two ways. First, if we see critical theory in the spirit of radical activism, then “we” are keeping the dialogue of ethics in education alive ultimately for students and their safety. Ethics in education directly addresses educators’ conduct and how it impacts students. Second, if the conversation of ethics in education vanishes in the next decade, what impact will this have on students?

However, if we see “them” as the status quo, then critical inquiry questions why ethics in education is merely talk, and no action at this point. Who are we really protecting? Apple believed that “the ability to speak to very different audiences is increasingly crucial” (Apple,
The Delphi study spoke not just to experts, but also to those who represented the various stakeholders in education: the government, school boards, teachers, lawyers, federations, policy-makers, and universities. The tradition that Apple referred to is the ability to keep critical theory alive so that it may continue to engage and challenge people to think outside-the-box.

**Critical researchers must act in concert with progressive social movements.** Like Apple (2015), Freeman, and Vasconcelos (2010) argued that a critical researcher must be committed to social justice and see oneself as an agent of change:

> Critical theorists seek to engage stakeholders who may not hold similar values or social positions within a program, practice, or community in ways that foster the transformation of individual understandings and adherences to taken-for-granted beliefs about self and others, while developing a commitment to collective action based on the transformative knowledge generated by group’s interactions…The evaluator becomes researcher, facilitator, negotiator, educator, learner, change agent, and critic.(Freeman & Vasconcelos, 2010, p. 11)

The social justice movement in education has gained some momentum, but continues to battle the neoliberal movement that dominates the United States, and influences Canada. The document *Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy* (2009) signaled a shift in the education climate in Ontario as minoritized students were acknowledged in ways never seen before. Seven years later, some students are still waiting for that promise to become a reality. We continue to have issues in education relating to how minoritized students are treated. My role in this study was to bring together conversations on ethics and social justice in education, and examine how they intersect. I believe equitable and inclusive education must be examined through an ethical lens to fully encompass critical theory.

**Critical researchers need to act as deeply committed mentors.** Apple believed that the critical researcher must be committed not only to research but also as a role model, a mentor, and an activist championing the rights of the disadvantaged or oppressed. My graduate work, published
work, and teaching work, has focused on teacher education through a social justice lens. This dissertation is a culmination of many years of thinking and acting as a mentor to other teachers, to teacher candidates, and to my students. This role will not end with my dissertation, but will carry on as I pursue further research projects in this area.

**Critical research acknowledges the privilege of the researcher.** There is no doubt I have been in a position of power on several levels for many years: as a teacher, administrator, adjudicator, university instructor, and doctoral student. The topic of ethics has forced me to look at the way in which my positions of power have influenced my own behavior. I must hold myself to the same standard as I do my colleagues and question my own conduct both inside and outside of the classroom. I examine my privilege as a researcher in an institution of higher learning that is not fully inclusive, but rather elitist. Doctoral students are those students who have pushed themselves for many years to get high grades to enter the program. The fact that there is an application process is in itself not inclusive. However, this contradiction is not the focus of my privilege since as I stated, I am privileged on more than one level.

**Summary.** This study explores the power imbalance between educators, students, administrators, school boards, and parents in relation to ethics in education and ethical decision-making. It looks at the spaces where ethics is discussed, and where it is overlooked, ignored, or silenced. It examines the impact this silence has had on the profession, on educators, and on students.

Critical theory is a well-suited theoretical framework for this dissertation since it allowed for a deep questioning and deconstructing of the complexities of our education system. Griffiths (2009) described critical theory and research as messy; its purpose is to discover and understand education dilemmas and tensions. As an academic, I would describe my learning style as messy, and I often feel the need to take things apart before I can put them back together again and accept what I have been told. I am also an interdisciplinary thinker who sees connections between subjects and theories, and the Delphi study was a perfect instrument to allow me to do this. Seeing participants’ responses was immediate and my role was to make those connections for the group.
My interest in using critical theory as a framework also relates to my longstanding fascination with psychotherapy and Sigmund Freud. My careers as a psychotherapist and teacher are almost equal in terms of time and I see my two career paths as being related yet separate, as having commonalities but also striking differences, simultaneously. Critical theory allowed me to merge both my career experiences and my belief that teaching is inherently a political act and one that needs to be carefully examined. Psychotherapy training places an incredible emphasis on development and care of the self and its absence in teacher training has always concerned me. Critical theory allowed me to focus on the self and identity, and gave me a reference point in Foucault, who explained its absence.
Chapter Five
Methodology

This study used a Delphi Method to gather and interpret data. Helmer, Rescher, and Dalkey of the Research and Development Corporation (RAND) created the Delphi Method in 1959 (Somerville, 2008). Its original purpose was to use a group of experts in a particular field to predict trends in the military and in science (Somerville, 2008). As a methodological approach it was so successful that it was applied to other disciplines, not only as a means of predicting future trends but also to solve problems in a particular field such as in the sciences and social sciences. A Delphi study creates dialogue among a group of experts in a structured environment either through emails, letters, or an online forum such as a chat room. The participants do not come face-to-face with the researcher, or the other participants; instead they communicate with each other through writing. The researcher asks the participants questions and consolidates their answers to create the next question. After five or six questions, the researcher brings together all of the responses and codes them to identify common themes and issues.

The first step in the Delphi method was to identify an issue I wanted to investigate and create a research question. The second step was to identify experts from various related disciplines such as education, law, and government. The experts did not need to be identical but rather a mixture of professionals and areas of interest was encouraged (Glen & Gordon, 2008). The third step involved sending an “Invitation to Participate” email to each participant. The Delphi method was explained and all participants were assured anonymity concerning publication. The fourth step was to pose a question to the group and give them an opportunity to answer. I then compiled the responses and created subsequent questions based on a theme or comment that stood out from the experts’ answers. This process continued five times until I felt the research question had been sufficiently discussed.

A traditional Delphi study is positivist in nature, in that the experts must come to a consensus to produce the final “truth.” In this study, I removed the concept of consensus and replaced it with commonality so that it would be more in keeping with critical theory. The participants were aware that I used critical theory to inform my study, and that I altered the methodology in order
view the data through a critical lens. This altering of the traditional Delphi method is considered acceptable for doctoral research as identified by Avella (2016). Avella noted that since the Delphi method was first developed in the 1950s, its methodology has expanded and now includes conventional and modified versions.

**Rationale**

The Delphi method is a popular vehicle used to gather data and it offers the researcher many advantages. It is a cost-effective method that simply requires access to the Internet. It can take place over many countries and time zones since participants answer questions at their convenience. The experts often have a vested interest in the topic and are fully engaged in the study. It removes the tension that can exist in face-to-face interviews or focus groups and the physical distance allowed in the Delphi method gives the participants greater freedom to express themselves without peer pressure or fear of offending someone in the room (Avella, 2016).

In this study, the Delphi method gave the experts an opportunity to discuss a particular area of interest. The Internet made this process even more accessible by utilizing an online forum that required a simple sign-on to contribute. In this study, the online forum became a virtual focus group where the experts engaged in a dialogue about ethics in education, while I guided the discussion. It was a convenient and cost-effective research methodology that required little to no disruption for the experts. Lastly, it allowed experts in the field from across Canada and the United States an opportunity to dialogue with each other, despite the geographical distance.

The Delphi study did not require transcription or the lengthy time and cost often associated with it. Quotes were completely accurate since the participants typed their comments directly in the forum. It lessened the possibility of research error and misinterpretation by summarizing each of the groups’ responses and presenting them to the group at each stage of the questioning. Its built-in system of fact-checking assured me that my transcript was accurate.

Critical theory is about reflecting and judging, disrupting, questioning, taking apart, and analyzing issues (Kellner, 2003). It is interdisciplinary, which allowed the experts to comment on philosophical and psychological views of ethics. It respects the voices of many experts (Apple 2013), and its purpose is to expose oppression, power, and discriminatory practices in institutions.
(Freeman & Vasconcelos, 2010). Using a modified Delphi Method as suggested by Avella (2016), gave me far more flexibility, while still maintaining the integrity of the methodology. In keeping with Apple’s nine tasks of the critical researcher, my role was to provoke and guide thoughtful discussions and present themes, ideas, and possible directions to the group.

**Limitations**

Delphi studies are restricted to addressing experts in a particular field. The first challenge was to define the term expert. Several dictionary definitions lead me to the terms “comprehensive knowledge”, “authority on a particular subject” or “special skill or knowledge” (Merriam Webster Online Dictionary, 2017). Since the definition appeared elusive, I chose people who had two or more roles in the education field, meaning, for example, they could be a teacher who became an administrator. This assured me that each person had two or more lenses to view the field of education.

The second limitation I encountered with the Delphi Study was that it did not take into consideration issues of inclusion and diversity. To address both issues, I carefully constructed a list of experts that addressed all three education systems in Ontario: Catholic public, public (both English and French), and First Nations. I chose a wide variety of education stakeholders including teachers, students, administrators, faculty of education professors, education lawyers, policy makers, education social workers, and Ministry of Education employees. However, I had little control over who agreed to participate in the study. Some experts representing stakeholder groups agreed to participate but then did not answer any of the questions. This left a gap in representation and not all voices, such as students, were heard. In addition, if an expert chose to disclose any personal information about him or herself to the group, it was strictly on his or her own volition. Some of the experts identified as LGBTQ, Métis, and First Nations. None of the experts identified as African Canadian/American or belonging to any religious affiliation other than Christianity. This left a second gap in the research. Critical theory is meant to hear the voices of the marginalized (Freire, 1970, 1993), and while this study heard some marginalized voices, it did not hear all.
Ethical Considerations

By using a Delphi study that spoke directly to experts, there were few ethical considerations that were of concern. Often participants are apprehensive to participate in a study that may jeopardize their reputation or employment. In this Delphi study, the experts knew each other’s identity through the online forum, but remained anonymous in transcripts, this thesis, and in any future publications or conferences. The online forum was a closed group, only accessible by password. Considering most of the experts chosen had either published or spoken publicly about the topic, there was very little risk that their reputation or employment could ever be affected by participating in this study that does not reveal their identity.

Instruments

Instruments used in this study were a series of questions posed through an online forum that were continually refined as the study progressed. The forum I chose to deliver these questions and gather data was Google Groups. I created a closed group where the experts were invited to participate in the Delphi study. Once they accepted, they became part of a closed study group. Once the study was complete, I closed the group completely.

The Study

Potential Experts. Cross-referencing University of Toronto library databases using terms such as ethics in education, ethics and education, and ethical issues in education generated a list of potential experts. This list provided a substantial number of scholars from Canada and the United States. Given this dissertation focuses on the Canadian education system, names of Canadian scholars were chosen first from this list. A second list was generated using computer searches for potential experts who work at the following institutions: Ontario school boards; Ontario faculties of education; Ontario Ministry of Education; Ontario College of Teachers (OCT); Ontario Principals’ Council (OPC); Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE); Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO); Canadian Teachers Federation (CTF); Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation (OSSTF); Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario (ETFO); L’Association des enseignates et des enseignants franco-ontariens (AEFO); and
First Nations Education. Finally, I looked at the area of education law and lawyers that went beyond their role as litigators. Examples of this were lawyers who researched, published, and presented at education law conferences or held dual positions as educators as well.

The List of Potential Delphi Experts Rubric illustrates that the potential experts were chosen not only for their knowledge, but also because of the breadth of their professional experiences in education. Many of the experts began as classroom teachers and then moved into academia or managerial positions. At several junctures in their careers, ethics could have been discussed, increasing the depth of their experiences. In total, 24 potential participants were sent an Invitation to Participate email along with a Consent Form and Confidentiality Agreement.

A Delphi study recommends a minimum of 10 expert participants. The first twelve to fourteen participants who replied and submitted their written Invitation to Participate Consent Form and Confidentiality Agreement were chosen to participate. These forms can be found in the Appendix Section.
## List of Potential Experts Rubric

### Positions Held Throughout Career

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Administrator</th>
<th>Superintendent</th>
<th>Director</th>
<th>Professor</th>
<th>Lawyer</th>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>MOE</th>
<th>Other*</th>
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*Other* includes experts who work (or have worked) full time in teacher federations, education organizations, education associations, etc.

The participants were asked to commit to the entire Delphi study, which would take approximately six months, and required them to answer approximately four to six questions online. Their responses could take up to twenty minutes each to write.

The following 13 experts agreed to participate in the study. Their names, name of school boards, and/or organizations have been withheld for confidentiality purposes.
### Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Current Career</th>
<th>Career Path</th>
<th>Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant 1</td>
<td>Education Organization</td>
<td>Child and Youth Worker, Teacher, Administrator, Professor, Education Organization</td>
<td>B.A., B.Ed., M.Ed., PhD.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant 3</td>
<td>Faculty of Education</td>
<td>Teacher, Professor</td>
<td>B.A., B.Ed., M.Ed., PhD.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant 4</td>
<td>Faculty of Education</td>
<td>Teacher, Professor</td>
<td>B.A., B.Ed., M.Ed., PhD.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant 5</td>
<td>Education Law Firm</td>
<td>Lawyer, Professional Development Of Educators</td>
<td>B.A., LLB</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant 6</td>
<td>Administrator, First Nations Schools</td>
<td>Teacher, Principal, former Director of Educational Association, Council Member Self Regulatory Body</td>
<td>B.A., B.Ed., M.Ed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant 7</td>
<td>Federation</td>
<td>Teacher, Federation Administration</td>
<td>B.A., B.Ed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant 8</td>
<td>Student Advocate</td>
<td>Student, Provincial Student Trustee, Director of Student Association</td>
<td>B.A.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant 9</td>
<td>Band Member, Educator</td>
<td>College Educator, Social Service Worker, Government Association</td>
<td>B.A., B.Ed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant 10</td>
<td>Faculty of Theology</td>
<td>Professor, Ethicist</td>
<td>B.A., M.A., PhD.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant 11</td>
<td>Faculty of Education</td>
<td>Teacher, Professor</td>
<td>B.A., B.Ed., M.Ed., PhD.</td>
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<td>Participant 12</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>Teacher, Principal, Superintendent, Education Consultant</td>
<td>B.A., B.Ed., M.Ed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant 13</td>
<td>Faculty of Education</td>
<td>Lawyer, Professor</td>
<td>B.A., M.Ed., LLB, PhD.</td>
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</table>

The participant names used throughout this dissertation are pseudonyms.
**Participant Number 1 - Diane**
Participant Number 1 began her career as a child and youth worker and became a special education teacher in a public school board in a large urban city in Ontario. She worked in both the public and Catholic public education system and was promoted to school principal. Participant Number 1 taught in a faculty of education in Ontario and currently holds a management position within an education organization. She is the author of several education books. She holds a PhD. in Education.

**Participant Number 2 - Fiona**
Participant Number 2 worked for 34 years in the Ontario public education system. She began as a teacher and eventually was promoted to Superintendent of Education and Human Resources. She worked in the both the French-language and English-language public school boards, and recently retired as a Manager of an Ontario education organization.

**Participant Number 3 - John**
Participant Number 3 began his career as a Catholic schoolteacher and also worked as a teacher in a private school. He is currently a professor at a faculty of education in Ontario. He holds a PhD. in education and has published numerous articles and books on education.

**Participant Number 4 - Laurie**
Participant Number 4 worked as a teacher in both the private and public education system. She holds a PhD. in education and currently a professor at a faculty of education in Ontario. Her research and publications focus on ethics.

**Participant Number 5 - Judy**
Participant Number 5 is a lawyer for a mid-size law firm in a large urban city that focuses on education law and self-regulatory law. She presents workshops on education law to teachers, administrators, and self-regulatory bodies.
Participant Number 6 - Valerie
Participant Number 6 began her career as an elementary teacher in a school in northern Ontario and is currently a principal serving primarily First Nations students. Participant Number 6 has been actively involved in education policy and organizations for several years. She served as director for a provincial organization, an executive director for an international education organization, and currently is serving a second term in a provincial organization. She self identifies as Metis and holds a Master’s Degree in Education.

Participant Number 7 - Wren
Participant Number 7 worked as a secondary school teacher for nineteen years, and the last seven as a department head. She currently is working for an education organization as an educational administrator and a liaison with many of the other stakeholders in education. Participant Number 7 creates and delivers professional development to educators on a number of topics.

Participant Number 8 - Gerald
Participant Number 8 is a recent graduate of a university program in Ontario. He served as a student trustee in his school board and as a provincial student trustee. Participant Number 8 began a student-run national organization and he continues to advocate on behalf of students across the country. He is currently the executive director of a political organization for young adults.

Participant Number 9 - Nancy
Participant Number 9 is currently a manager of a First Nations health team. She has worked as a college educator and as a public speaker. She has extensive work experience as a youth program coordinator, program instructor, teacher, and executive director of a First Nations organization. She holds a B.Ed. in Aboriginal Education and currently volunteers on a Board of Directors for a provincial education organization.

Participant Number 10 - Robert
Participant Number 10 holds a PhD. in theology and ethics and works as a professor at a university in the department of theology. He is an ethicist and president of a consulting company
that works with corporations, agencies, and companies developing ethical codes of conduct. He has published numerous articles on ethics, business ethics, and religious issues.

Participant Number 11 - Sarah
Participant Number 11 began her career as a public school teacher in the United States. She also worked as a teacher in an alternative school. She received her PhD. in Educational Psychology and began working as a professor in the faculty of education in an American university. She has authored numerous publications on teacher education and ethics in education.

Participant Number 12 - Peter
Participant Number 12 has worked as a teacher, principal, superintendent, and Director of Education for a French-language public school board in rural southern Ontario. Currently, he works as an education consultant for the province and is on the Board of Directors for an education organization.

Participant Number 13 - Jill
Participant Number 13 holds a Master’s Degree in Counselling, a law degree, and a PhD. in Educational Administration. She is currently a professor in an American university where she teaches law, ethics, and qualitative research.

Invitation to Participate. An Invitation to Participate email (see Appendix) was sent to each participant explaining the purpose of the study. The Delphi Method process was explained in detail since most of the participants had never heard of this method before. Each of the participants was assured anonymity concerning publication. However, in the online forum, participants were made aware that their identity would be revealed to others in the group. Once the participants consented, a signed and scanned copy of the consent form was printed and is being kept on file.

Google Groups. Each participant was given an invitation to enter a closed group, created in Google Groups. I was the administrator of the group and ensured that each member could access the group forum. There were technical issues with Google Groups and it took some participants
several attempts before they could access the closed group. The closed group remained secure and confidential and was not open for others to see or join. Once the study was complete, I closed the group and archived the information.

**Transcribing.** There was no transcribing needed since the experts wrote directly into the Google Group document. I printed the entire document to code and analyze each question. When I completed this task, I sent my results to the group for clarification. This was a beneficial way to code and analyze since the experts gave me immediate feedback and approval. There was minimal chance of misinterpretation in this Delphi study.

**The Questions**

Knowing that I was restricted to approximately four to six questions, I had to ensure that my first question set the tone of the study and was in keeping with both my conceptual and theoretical frameworks. Given this rich and rare opportunity to question experts, I thought about what I wanted to ask. However careful I thought I was, participants reacted to how I crafted the first question.

*Question One:*

As means of an introduction, I initiated the first posting in the group and wrote:

Hello everyone! Thank you for agreeing to participate in this Delphi study on ethics in education.

Before we begin, I want to give some personal context why I chose this topic. Prior to entering the faculty of education at the age of 40, I was a clinical psychotherapist and served six years on the Board of Directors for Ontario Society of Psychotherapists. The topic of ethics was forefront in our professional development, in self-reflection, and in our peer discussions. When I began teaching, one of my earliest observations as a new teacher, was the absence of ethical dialogue among my colleagues. In the past five years, I did some research and found ethics discussed in ‘pockets’” such as in Additional Qualifications and the Principal Qualification Program but there was little consistent evidence in other areas of education.
Three years ago, I had the opportunity to teach Professionalism, Law, and the Ontario Educator to teacher candidates at Brock University’s Faculty of Education. At the same time, I was elected to the Ontario College of Teachers Council and served on the Discipline Committee. I was in a pivotal position in my career that allowed me to participate in ethical dialogue at the beginning and sometimes at the end, of a teacher’s career. The experience left me with many questions, the first I will pose to you today:

*How should educators engage in conversations on ethics?*

Several of the participants had an immediate negative reaction to how this question was worded. They felt the word *should* set a tone that was too prescriptive and judgmental, which was not my intent. Rather than wait until all 13 participants responded, I rephrased the question, which was meant to open up the discussion and also get a sense of what the experts’ perspectives were on this issue.

*How do educators engage in conversations on ethics?*

Ten out of thirteen participants responded to this question.

**Question Two:**

The first question gave me a wide variety of responses, but failed to address one of the most important concepts and themes in this study: the self. The experts talked about “other” educators, but did not address themselves. The next question posed to the group was:

*When have you, and when do you, engage in conversations in ethics?*

The response rate was once again ten out of thirteen.

**Question Three:**

For the third question, I decided to shift to a different focus and begin to address directly the issue of barriers. This was in keeping with critical theory and the conceptual framework related to ethics of justice that examines barriers that keep people silenced (Quick and Normore, 2004): *What creative solutions, other than case studies which many of you already mentioned, can you think of to help teachers get past the*
internal barriers that prevent them from being able to address or just talk about ethics?

The response rate for this question was seven out of thirteen.

*Question Four:*

The fourth question was based on a chart that I created and presented to the participants. It was a summary of many of their responses at that point, and was meant to visually illustrate the two paths that seemed to emerge from their previous responses. One path was called the “formal” route and referred to legislation, regulations, and formal education. The second path referred to teacher-led groups, informal groups or gatherings. The formal path presented a more traditional view that focused on legislation, rules, and higher levels of accountability. The informal path demonstrated a more unconventional view that focused on teacher-led initiatives. By giving the experts a visual illustration, my intent as a critical researcher was to raise the political awareness of the group and have them delve deeper into the systemic issues related to ethics in education.

*Which path do you prefer and why? Which path do you like the least and why?*

The response rate for question number four was six out of thirteen.

*Question Five:*

Knowing that question five was my last question, I examined the data I had gathered to date, and considered what had not been addressed in the study. Using Freud’s theory of the self (Laplanche & Pontalis, 1973) and Napier’s Indigenous model of the self (Ahnee-Benham & Napier, 2002), I decided to address the concept of disconnection both in the field and deep within educators.

*Do you agree there is a disconnect between legislation, professional education, the profession, and the self? What would you label it and do you have any idea why it exists?*

The response rate for this question was nine out of thirteen.

**Closure**

At this point the Delphi study was closed and I analyzed the responses. The Data Section of this study was sent to the experts for final feedback and clarification. This added another layer of fact
checking that was important to the study. The response rate for final feedback was nine out of the twelve experts. They agreed the information presented in the Data Section was an accurate account of their responses. Once the study was closed, I took the data and coded it using the basic tenets of the Multiple Ethical Framework and themes addressed in critical theory.
Chapter Six
The Data

This Delphi study began with a question that could not be explicitly answered using existing research in the field of education. While the literature review, conceptual framework, and theoretical framework presented a wealth of information on the topic of ethics, they did not explain the discrepancy between written work (including scholarly work and legislation) and lack of conversations in the field between educators. My observations as a teacher candidate and as a faculty of education law instructor were that conversations seemed scripted and prescribed in educational settings such as the examination of case studies as a form of pedagogy. These conversations were filled with judgment and centered on what an educator should or should not do. They did not attempt to deconstruct the complex situations educators are often faced with, in terms of ethical dilemmas: the psychological, philosophical, moral, political, legal, societal, or emotional influences. Instead, teacher candidates were given the “right” ethical answer and expected to follow it. These decisions were fortified by legislation, leaving little room for any deep, meaningful conversations on ethics.

My overarching question which I introduced in Chapter One (“If ethics is evident in legislation and research on teacher education and teacher conduct, where are the conversations on ethics among educators?”), attempted to capture what disturbed me about the silence I had experienced in staff rooms for example. I needed a starting point to my study and I decided the first question should center on clarifying what I experienced and witnessed in my role as teacher, administrator, adjudicator, and instructor.
Question One

“How do educators engage in conversations on ethics?”

The Unconscious Discussion. Initially, some of the participants commented, “I would say not often” or, “Sadly, they don’t.” Jill clarified by stating, “My bottom line answer to this question is no. But this answer is more like not exactly.” Laurie who has considerable experience teaching ethics stated, “My short and rather depressing answer to this question is that they don’t – or at best, they rarely do – at least not in a direct and explicit way using the language of ethics.” Judy who worked outside of the field of education stated:

What I do know of teachers’ conversations on ethics with many of the other professions whom I have represented, it seems teachers are not talking about this enough. In the health professions for example, ethics is a critical component to their practice. The preservation of patient privacy and the integrity of the human body are at the core of being a health professional.

Valerie who is an administrator in a First Nations community added:

Do we talk about ethics? Not at all. Are ethics and integrity married? I don’t think so. Other issues – health and safety, the curriculum, the job restrictions, bump ethics out. Where is there time to discuss ethics? We have ethical discussions, but not about ethics.

Some participants, like Valerie, clarified that it was not that educators do not engage in conversations on ethics, but ironically most were not aware that they were doing this – the unconscious discussion took place. The participants did not address the difference between “conversations on ethics” and “conversations on ethical-decision-making” even though these two terms have very different meanings. Conversations on ethics refers to teachers talking about ethics as a subject, while conversation on ethical decision-making implies teachers engaging in ethical conversations with each other to work through difficult decisions. Sarah added:

First off, I think teachers are involved in ethical talk all the time....As they engage in parent teacher conferences, as they engage in school-level policy and decision-making, as they participate in Professional Learning Communities (or
grade level teams), as they build curriculum, as they use tools like community
meetings or cooperative learning or talk about resolving conflicts in the classroom or
engage in conflict resolution within the school – all of this talk is founded in both ethics
and politics and goes on all the time. However, in such encounters, I am not sure the
word “ethics” is ever spoken.
I responded to the group:
When probed deeper, almost all of you stated that teachers are having conversations on
ethics but not often enough, not in the right setting, without an ethical framework or
language, or not consciously. Teachers are not even aware of the amount of ethical
decision-making they participate in each day, or that they participate in ethical
conversations with their colleagues.
John responded:
Teachers, however, are often not aware of ethical thinking or how to work through ethical
dilemmas. They are often inarticulate, and by being so, potentially illiterate, ethically.
While their instincts or habits might serve them well in many/most cases, they would
benefit from training in ethical/legal thinking and developing vocabulary for articulating
ethical decision-making.

Others felt that conversations regarding ethical situations were only discussed when there was a
safe relationship established between two educators. Valerie noted:

It depends on the type of relationship they have and how comfortable they are with each
other. If you have worked together long enough and trust each other they will say what
they think. If they have just started you will get politically correct answers or union
answers.

Wren who represented a federation responded:
The question how do educators engage in conversations on ethics is an important one, but
not a simple one to answer. There are relatively few opportunities to do so. And those
opportunities that do exist are irregular and possibly fraught with potential peril
depending on who is present and how the conversations occur.
The issue of safety was not simply about administrators, self-regulatory bodies, or federations being enforcers but rather the importance of trusted relationships needed in education for safe conversations to occur. Laurie summarized this best by stating:

Yet my longer answer is that teachers do talk about their practice as well as the relational nature of what they experience in a daily sense. Such routine conversations are full of embedded ethical significance even though what seems lacking is the conceptual appreciation of how. What may be seen as otherwise trivial or routine practices have the potential to be ethical or indeed unethical.

**After the Fact or When in Trouble.** Some participants felt that educators engaged in ethical conversations either after-the-fact or when issues relating to professional misconduct were exposed. As Robert noted, “We tend to speak of ethical failures as ‘falling short of a standard’” rather than discussing ethics in a proactive manner. John and Laurie noted that it is common practice in faculties of education to reference cases of professional misconduct in *Professionally Speaking* and online as a way of discussing professionalism and ethics with teacher candidates. Robert felt this practice could be perceived as a negative and a moralistic way in addressing ethics. He added, “Ethics is about right and wrong, good and evil. Teaching has an inherent ethical dimension, but it is only inherently ethical when it is done right, otherwise it is ethically ‘bad.’”

John, Laurie, and Sarah who teach in faculties of education, did not agree with Robert and felt examining case studies on professional conduct was an excellent pedagogical tool since it exposed teacher candidates to “real life” situations. Laurie responded, “They [the students] relish the opportunity to discuss together in collegial and non-threatening ways how vivid portraits of teaching situations and the moral dilemmas that spring from them can be handled and resolved.” She further stated, “I work hard to offer teacher candidates ways of engaging in conversations about ethics. This is done mostly through stories of practice, generally in the form of legal case studies.”
Even though Laurie acknowledged that she used case studies in her classes, she was not convinced that the practice of judging them was as effective as others thought. She noted that there is no research in Ontario that correlates the teaching of ethics through case studies with an increase or decrease in the number of cases of professional misconduct cited by the OCT.

Wren believed that the “right-wing radio and newspapers” play a significant role in vilifying teachers accused of professional misconduct. She felt that the media was not helpful but rather antagonistic towards teachers and the public shut down ethical conversations due to extreme judgment.

**In Administrator Training but Not Necessarily Teacher Training.** Valerie stated there was an ethics component to her principal training, but noted it was not part of her teacher training. Jill, who teaches in a faculty of education in United States, agreed with Valerie, stating:

> I believe that these folks - administrators and teachers wanting to become administrators - who have taken courses [on ethics] are very knowledgeable and aware of ethics in their everyday decision-making….We have a national standard that requires some sort of ethical discussions in administrator preparation programs. There is no such requirement for teachers.

John, Laurie, and Wren did not agree with Valerie and Jill and stated they made conscious decisions to include ethics in their bachelor of education programs. Wren commented:

> I do believe that teacher preparation programs in Ontario do try to instill a sense of ethics in their teacher candidates and certainly the continued accreditation of their programs requires it - Regulation 347/02 Accreditation of Teacher Education Programs section 9 subsection 2 states, ‘The program is consistent with and reflects, the College’s Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession’ and the *Ethical Standards of the Teaching Profession.*

Wren emphasized the importance of practicing teachers enrolling in an ethics workshop and thought it should be a compulsory part of teacher preparation, given that the workshop on ethics provided by the federations presently is voluntary. Wren was the only participant that cited
Ontario legislation while John, Laurie, and Sarah felt it was more a professional duty to teach ethics.

**Case Studies.** John and Laurie underscored the value of presenting teacher candidates with case studies to help them engage in ethical conversations in a non-threatening environment. Wren facilitates workshops on boundary issues and uses videos instead of written case studies. Laurie wrote, “I have found that students - both teacher candidates and graduate students who are often seasoned and experienced teachers - embrace case study pedagogies.”

They also felt that teaching ethics through case studies did not present the topic through a negative lens, even though it assumes the educator did something wrong and focused on correcting behavior. Robert and Sarah challenged this and suggested a philosophical approach rather than a deficit mentality approach to teaching ethics would be more beneficial to teacher candidates.

Laurie presented some of the most complex answers. She agreed with John that case studies had some value, but she also agreed with Robert and Sarah that a philosophical approach was also necessary. She admitted:

> So for me it becomes a matter of enhancing the appreciation of the connections between familiar professional practices and everyday philosophical ethics. I have written about this as the cultivation of ethical knowledge in teaching which essentially aims to augment teachers’ awareness of how what they do in the context of their daily work aligns (or fails to align such as in case studies) with fundamental ethical virtues such as fairness, honesty, empathy, compassion, constancy, courage, and so on.

**Professional Development.** I addressed the issue of professional development and wrote to the participants:

> Many of you were aware that ongoing professional development on ethics is sporadic, if it even exists at all. It does exist at the beginning of a teacher’s career, and it is embedded in Ontario Additional Qualifications (AQ) courses, but these courses are not mandatory. Some of you felt that PD needs to come from teachers and not imposed by the
government or agencies. Another issue is safety. How safe do teachers really feel to discuss ethics in a public forum such as professional development workshop?

Thoughts on professional development were not as clear as some of the other themes. In theory, all participants agreed that professional development is vital to the profession; however Robert did not like the prescriptive nature of how school boards impose it. Wren felt that teachers needed to have more ownership of their professional development, while Fiona felt teachers needed more legislation.

Sarah from the United States discussed the issue of competency and questioned if a competent teacher is always an ethical teacher. “Likewise with education and ethics we have come to the question of practice. Is competence for example an ethical issue? Are incompetent teachers behaving unethically? What does competence have to do with the ethics of teaching?”

Sarah referenced that in the United States, the neoliberal agenda of equating teacher competence with standardized testing is similar to comparing teacher competence with ethical behavior. Is a teacher who is more competent in ethical language and theory necessarily more ethical in her or his behavior? According to Sarah, not necessarily so, and if educators and policy-makers continue to think this way, then teachers may find themselves in more trouble than they are now.

Wren felt that federations have an important role to play in professional development, especially regarding ethics, adding that:

In fact, the pledge states in part ‘I will strive to achieve and maintain the highest degree of professional competence and will always uphold the honour, dignity, and ethical standards of my profession.’ This is always on the last slide of my boundaries presentation.

Last, Robert did not agree that administration or federations should initiate professional development on ethics, stating, “When administration or a teachers federation initiate the discussion, how often is the theme not about ethics as such but about rules, limits and
boundaries.” Robert continued in his dialogue to highlight the importance of viewing ethics from a philosophical standpoint, not one based on rules.

**Speaking as Educators but Not as Participants.** My last observation about the comments made by the participants was directly related to them:

I found it most interesting that almost all of the discussions were about students and other teachers. Only one of you actually included yourself in the conversation. Instead, most of you deferred to the ‘other ‘and not your own conversations beginning with your experience as a preservice student, teacher, administrator, or professor. None of you discussed conversations you had with colleagues or your own supervisors/administrators. This leads me to my next question that I think may be even more important than the first: when have you, and when do you, engage in conversations on ethics?
Question Number Two

“When have you, and when do you, engage in conversations on ethics?”

For question number two, the question shifted slightly from “other” to “self” as I directly asked the participants, “When have you, and when do you, engage in conversations on ethics? What I am looking for with this question, is if conversations on ethics shifted at different points in your career, and the impact this had on you.”

**Blurred Lines: The Personal is Professional.** Two themes emerged from question number two: the complex and blurred line between the personal and the professional, and the isolation many of the participants felt when thinking about ethics. In a profession that relies significantly on open communication and collegial support, it was quite disappointing to hear that many experienced judgment when discussing ethics, or witnessed other educators become silent fearing retribution.

All of the participants were asked to discuss personal experiences with ethics in education however several of them did not answer this question directly or with any clarity. Some distinguished between their personal ethics of, for example, being a parent, and their professional ethics, of being an educator or professional.

Laurie stated that ethics was not part of her teacher training and Robert agreed by stating, “I was never mentored into the ethics of education as a young teacher.” Sarah had a similar experience: “If you asked me this at an earlier time in my career, I would have said rarely.”

Other participants did not see a line between their personal and professional. Valerie admitted, “I do it all the time.” Wren stated, “Certainly, I myself, after many years of work dealing with these kinds of [ethical] issues as a…member, always stop to think about how my words and actions will be perceived.”

In a similar tone, Fiona noted, “Conversations on ethics have been fundamental throughout my life. Whether in my personal or professional life, as mother, friend, or individual, I
systematically engage in conversations on ethics in order to assess situations, make the best decision, or lead to teach.”

Others contextualized ethics strictly within the confines of their job, as noted by Peter, “I have engaged in conversations on ethics with staff that do not respect the code of ethics.” John added, “I engage in conversations about ethics, professionalism, and the law all the time as an Instructor.”

Robert gave the longest answer, stating:

The notions of insight, honesty, conscience and responsibility all play a role in my reflective-practice, but I do not use them in an analytic fashion (as say a hospital ethical committee might do). They usually center on the experience of students: Are they learning? Are they growing? What blocks to good learning are operative in the class? How is this group becoming a learning community or, in Parker Palmer’s phrase, a “community of truth?”

Judgment and Isolation. Many of the participants related ethics to their profession and that it was part of their “job” to discuss ethics with either students or coworkers. There was a feeling of isolation when many of them talked about their own experiences and one did not envision lively conversations at home around a dinner table or in the staff room. Instead, there was a sense of silencing. John disclosed:

I often think about ethics in my own work but I rarely engage in any formal discussion with my colleagues at work. Our institution is so rule-bound and we are held accountable for so many things that you are marginalized if you speak out. Several of the participants were acutely aware of discrepancies when discussing ethics.

Sarah acknowledged that having discussions on ethics is important to the profession but admitted avoiding discussing ethics at times, or having self-censored her conversations in front of colleagues. This led me to wonder if participants in the field of ethics were hesitant at times to participate in conversations, what hope does the classroom teacher have. It seems on all accounts, little.
Question Number Three

“What creative solutions (other than case studies which many of you have already mentioned) can you think of to help teachers get past the internal barriers that prevent them from being able to address or just talk about ethics?”

I pointed out to the participants the commonality of their responses in suggesting case studies are the best way to open the discussion on ethics with educators. I encouraged them to think outside-the-box and describe other forms of pedagogy that could be applied. The participants provided other solutions or strategies for addressing ethics with teachers, which is a testimony to their expertise. As the study progressed, emerging themes relating to barriers and issues of safety dominated their conversations.

Comparing and Contrasting Personal and Professional Ethics. Jill had teacher candidates record a personal code of ethics first and then a professional code of ethics. The students were asked to compare and contrast the two and critically reflect on the meaning of the results. Jill taught in a faculty of education with a large group of internationally trained teachers and found this exercise very beneficial to do before introducing the legislation that defines a code of ethics for teachers in the United States.

Reflective Writing. John who also teaches in a faculty of education uses reflective writing assignments as a way for teacher candidates to think about ethics. He noted:

I draw on reflection to break barriers and address ethics. Reflection is an active, complex and intentional process that weaves theory and practice together….Ethical issues can be addressed through targeted opportunities to reflect on personal experiences and critical incidents emerging from practica observation and teaching.

John encouraged his teacher candidates to “tell the story” and then analyze the incident from different perspectives and lenses. As an extension of this assignment, John then asked teacher candidates to discuss their reflections in small groups or in dramatic re-enactments. This brought
another dimension to the reflection that was no longer private but publicly discussed amongst peers.

Addressing the Legislation and Curriculum. Sarah felt that teacher candidates are in the process of critically reflecting on ethics all the time, even if it is not explicitly stated. At the faculty of education where she teaches, teacher candidates have several opportunities to address ethics directly by examining the legislation and by studying the curriculum. She emphasized that:

Creating curriculum that supports students in becoming more ethical in their relationships and actions, and creating policies in a school that advocates for emotionally, socially, and physically safe and nurturing environments and the discussion that creates such things is all ethical talk and can occur without the word ethics ever appearing.

Fiona who worked directly with provincial policy on ethics felt that there was inconsistency between faculties of education programs in Ontario. Not all faculties teach ethics through a stand-alone course, and some address ethics directly only in one lecture. She added,

This pathway suggests that we rethink the “value” given to ethics in the curricula in order to ensure a level playing field. This in itself is a huge undertaking and would include multiple stakeholders… I would suggest that we articulate the importance of ethics in the curriculum ensuring that, at the end of their training, teacher candidates “get it.”

Comparing Codes of Professional Ethics. Wren who develops and delivers a professional workshop to both new and experienced teachers, reviews the various codes of ethics such as the Ethical Standards of the Teaching Profession, the Teaching Profession Act (1990), and the federations’ Code of Ethics. She felt this method is important since it allows teachers to directly see policy and legislation, and demonstrates the similarities between the various acts and policies.

Through Media. Several of the participants suggested using media to discuss ethics: through a video, newspaper article, or television news clip. Peter who does not teach in a faculty of
education, was not convinced and rebutted, “I thought about other ways of discussing ethics such as showing a video or discussing an article. I concluded that by doing that, you will end up with a case study.” Even though several of the participants agreed that this was a variation of a case study model, it did offer slightly more variety.

**The Concept of Ownership.** Robert had a very different perspective on this topic, noting, “I find that there is a disconnect between personal morality and social/professional morality, not only in the teaching profession but in the corporate world as well.” He did not suggest case studies, but rather that educators begin by taking “ownership.” He questioned:

> Who owns the learning atmosphere of a classroom? Who owns the quality of mentoring for new teachers? Taking ownership would shift the language from “I am doing what legislation tells me to do” to “I own my classroom and the learning atmosphere I create for both students and colleagues.”

He went on to further state:

> Many writers talk today about the de-professionalization of teaching, the reduction of teachers to “educational workers” or “members” of a professional bargaining unit. This “deskilling” of the professional has created a mindset for many teachers—and rightfully so - in which they do not initiate or take responsibility for their teaching, but rather have come to expect someone to tell them what to do. It is not that teachers are irresponsible and simply trying to shift responsibility and blame onto others, but rather, they have slowly stopped taking responsibility for teaching.

Robert concluded:

> When teachers don’t own the expertise of their own profession they begin to feel like cogs in a wheel. When teachers are not allowed to develop an operative vision of teaching and learning in their own school, they become alienated from the education process.

**Issues of Barriers and Safety.** My comments at the end of this section focused on the issue of barriers and safety, since many of the participants stated that the reason case studies are so
popular is that they are “arm’s length.” Some said other alternatives would be too personal, too risky, or could lead to judgment. I responded to the group:

Rather than explore the external barriers such as inability to find a workshop, group, or trusted colleague to discuss ethics, I want to look at internal factors such as the ones I felt were alluded to in some of your responses. In my opinion (and again, freely disagree with me!), we have created the perfect storm in education that prevents teachers from talking about ethics.
Question Four

“Question Four is based on this chart and your experiences. Which avenue do you prefer and why? Which avenue do you like the least and why?

At this point in the study, I summarized what had been revealed so far and created a chart that was based on the participants’ comments on how ethics should be approached in education. There seemed to be two distinct trajectories emerging, one that I identified as formal and the other as informal. There was clearly a tension within this binary and the participants did not necessarily disagree with each other, but expressed ambivalence. I wrote to the group:

The real dilemma seems to be how to best support experienced teachers regarding ethics. We can offer workshops to teachers on ethics, boundaries, ethical dilemmas, etc. and any of the above teaching strategies can be used. However, there is a real discomfort to suggest or impose more PD on teachers.

There are two avenues that I hear everyone talking about—the formal or conventional route that is identified and documented as professional development or the informal route, which is not documented, and teacher driven. The informal route does not focus on education, but rather support.

Question number four is based on this chart and your experiences. Which avenue do you prefer and why? Which avenue do you like the least and why?”
The following chart was based on participants’ comments and was sent to them to reflect upon.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formal Trajectory</th>
<th>Informal Trajectory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presented by boards, federations, or regulatory bodies in the form of PD that can occur after school or on release days</td>
<td><em>Individually driven</em> by a teacher through various channels such as professional development outside of the board, federations, or regulatory bodies. Can be in the form of university or college courses or attending conferences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attached to board PD that occurs during the school year as “official PD” days, so that all teachers attend</td>
<td><em>Teacher-driven</em>: such as the Open Space concept. For those of you not familiar with Open Space, it is where a group of individuals get together to discuss issues. Their comments are recorded so they can go back and identify themes and issues. This is a very simple explanation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attached to the <em>Teacher Performance Appraisal</em> so that it is documented a teacher has reviewed the ethical standards of the profession.</td>
<td><em>Federation driven</em>, where union presidents in schools receive special training on ethics to help support teachers on an as-needed basis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attached to <em>teacher certification</em> so it is documented and reviewed by OCT (in similar fashion to social workers, lawyers, and doctors in Ontario).</td>
<td><em>Professional Learning Communities</em> where teachers gather to discuss specific issues. It would be similar to an “Ethics Community”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attached to the <em>Annual Learning Plan</em> in Ontario, where a teacher would have to demonstrate ongoing understanding of ethical issues.</td>
<td><em>Teacher driven</em> in the form of after school gatherings where teachers meet to discuss ethical dilemmas they are experiencing and need support with. Administrators, department heads, and federation representatives would not be present.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal discussions in each department or staff meeting. This could mean a “case study” is presented to the staff once a month and they can comment on it as part of a staff discussion.</td>
<td>A designated teacher in each school who receives training on ethics and is known as the “Ethical Guide” to help teachers on a one-to-one basis. This is similar to identifying the teacher responsible for health and safety, first aid, etc. It is strictly voluntary.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The chart presented a real challenge for the participants, many of whom could not choose one particular trajectory. After a lengthy discussion of the pros and cons of each suggestion mentioned in the chart, one theme emerged that most teachers could readily identify with: lack of time. The other themes were all significant in presenting a holistic interpretation of issues in education relating to ethics.
**Bachelor of Education Programs.** Like many regulated professions, Robert suggested that all teachers should have to take a course in the philosophy of education through Bachelor of Education programs. Lawyers and doctors must take a course on philosophy, and this participant suggested a traditional academic route by creating a requirement for all teachers. He mentioned:

> For two thousand years ethics has been a branch of philosophy. I believe that it would be short-sighted to ignore this rich tradition…[teachers] have a right not only to be exposed to this tradition but to gain the vision and facility to become independent ethical thinkers.

Judy also noted the difference with other professions and a required standard to study ethics in engineering and law. Jill acknowledged that teacher education programs are the perfect time to address ethics since it does not involve a principal or superintendent imposing it on teachers. Any other time, she stated, “personal or professional responsibilities could quickly get in the way.”

Moving forward, Robert suggested that the government-regulated New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) be the next step for new teachers to then experience ethical decision-making while being guided by a mentor teacher. However, Wren pointed out the inherent problems with teachers supervising teachers, which is not allowed by the federations. Some of the participants reacted to this comment citing it as an example of federations trying to control the profession.

**Through On-Going Professional Development.** Robert grappled with the difficulties in presenting ethics through ongoing professional development. Even though in theory it makes sense that teachers participate in ongoing professional development, there is hesitation when the topic is ethics. He underscored that, “Because one can’t turn back the clock and try to re-program all teachers, it is essential to find ways to keep the educator’s professional conscience sharp and the ethical antennae in the ‘on’ position.” However, later he acknowledged, “Because we live in a pluralistic society, the ethics of the teaching profession cannot be put into a box and passed on within a sterile professionalism that ignores the human reality involved in all moral judgment and ethical commitments.”
John had a different approach and commented, “I like the idea of school district professional development activities or professional recertification expectations….These are common in many workplaces (i.e., online safety quizzes).” John did not see how intrusive this would be on the profession and was challenged by Laurie who felt this form of professional development would not be authentic and teachers “may see it as another tedious exercise to endure that is remote from the realities of their work.”

The participants did not agree on exactly who should deliver professional development on ethics - administration, school boards, teacher federations, or self-regulatory bodies. John stated, “Given the reality of suspicion or even opposition by teacher unions, I would invite them to develop and administer the training. Hopefully, if framed appropriately, they will see this is in everyone’s interest.” In contrast, Laurie felt that the teacher federations should not be involved “unless they are willing to accept that professional teachers can talk about their own and each other’s practice, even in highly critical ways that do not necessarily pave the road to professional misconduct or collegial interference.” Laurie favoured teacher-driven discussions on ethics since it would be “the most authentic.”

Peter disagreed with Laurie and stated:
As much as I would like to believe that the informal route would be the best for everyone, I know, based on experience, that it would not be the way to sustain any teachings regarding ethics. The formal route is the more long-term way of making sure that all teachers have “some” discussion regarding ethics…The formal route will guarantee the principles of ethics.

Wren’s responses triggered the most opposition since she expressed that any attempt to make ethics training mandatory and ongoing would be opposed by the federations for practical reasons. She did not think it was reasonable to have teachers participate in professional development on ethics on their own time. It would be impractical and costly if school boards were to offer release days to all teachers in the province. She emphasized:

If it [ethics] is formal mandatory PD, then it must happen within the instructional day, not as an “add-on.” Staff and department meetings are generally already too long and often
already after school; to ask teachers to hold discussions of this kind on their own time is a very bad idea and as such would be resented.

Sarah felt disturbed by this entire conversation, admitting, “I get chills as I read your suggestions for both formal and informal education….So I wonder and have wondered as I have participated in this response community and listened to and read almost every response by those participating about the deficit orientation that I think is fundamental to this conversation - teachers are deficit in terms of their ethics.” Sarah felt that educators need to be very cautious in how we frame ethics in education since too often it is presented in a negative light directly pointing at teachers.

Wren felt particularly challenged by the group and wrote a second commentary to defend her position with teacher federations. Many of the participants commented that the federations “get in the way” of allowing professional development. Wren felt a need to clarify that the unions do not oppose professional development, as long as they own it.

Lastly, Jill also questioned the group’s comments and rationale regarding ethics and professional development. “If we truly are a profession, why wouldn’t we approach it through methods similar to other professionals such law, medicine, and social work?” As noted earlier in this paper, professions such as law, medicine, and social work have a mandatory ethics component as well as mandatory, documented, ongoing professional learning. It is interesting to note that teaching is considered a certified profession in Ontario, but it does not have the same standards as other certified professions in the province. Jill teaches in the United States and as an outsider to our provincial education structure, she simply asked the question, why not.

The discussion on professional development had less to do with ethics and more to do with territory and power. The topic of ethics got lost in the discussion when participants expressed their opinion about “who” should initiate the conversation. This was a crucial issue to identify in the study since it really gets to the heart of the problem—who owns conversations on ethics?

**The Issue of Time.** All of the participants acknowledged that there is practically no way to find time to discuss ethics in education with working teachers. All the suggestions, whether formal or
informal, pertained to this one problem: time. Wren gave the most explicit explanation for this by pointing out that the teaching profession is so “packed” with bureaucracy and ministry-legislated duties and activities, adding one more “thing” for teachers to learn or discuss would just add to their list of things to do. The battle surrounding what teachers think they need to know and what the government, media, and community tells them they need to know creates tension in the profession that is unnecessary and unproductive. As Robert pointed out, the “deskilling” of the teaching profession has created a group of professionals who have little say or power over their jobs. This entire discussion on ethics is a perfect example of how stripping away teachers’ ownership of the profession has created a disconnect for teachers. This idea became the basis for question number five.
Question Number Five

“Do you agree there is a disconnect between legislation, professional education, the profession, and the self? What would you label it, and do you have any idea why it exists?”

Since question number five was the last question in this Delphi study, I was aware of its significance and the importance of crafting a question that would have the most impact on my study. One participant’s comments in particular caught my attention, as it resonated with Ahnee-Benham’s (2002) and Foucault’s (1983, 1997) concept of the self. Robert frequently mentioned the disconnect that exists in education between the teacher and other stakeholders, between theory and practice, and between academia and the public education system. These various forms or levels of divisiveness create the ultimate disconnect: between the educator and his or herself.

Barriers to Ethics. Participants discussed the many barriers that prevent an open discussion on ethics in the education system. These barriers focused on the nature of the profession, the role of stakeholders, and the overarching influence of Neoliberalism.

John noted:

There is indeed a conflict between public/professional and personal/private ethical discourses…more needs to be done than either unthinking or accepting professional rules or simply regarding ethics as personal and relative….The public discourse concerning accountability, tainted by neoliberal efforts to critique public educators and undermine the teaching profession makes thoughtful ethical discussions difficult. It forces educators to be defensive to protect themselves and the profession.

Valerie felt that the federations create a divide between the profession and the teacher from the onset of a new teacher’s career. She stated:

Young and new teachers are being formed by the federations. This is not necessarily a problem but sometimes it is. They refuse duties. They have the attitude ‘It is not my job.’ Teachers need to know from the very beginning what their ethical obligations are. Robert agreed:
I believe that Valerie is correct in pointing out that teachers are often pushed into ethically compromised situations by legislated activities and/or federation directives. Valerie’s thinking that ethics and integrity are not married is a telling one.

Wren felt that others were blaming teacher federations for creating barriers. She felt the role of teacher federations was not properly understood and just because they may oppose an idea, does not mean they are not willing to work with other stakeholders to come up with solutions. Jill saw the issue as being much larger than a federation issue, commenting:

I would agree that in general there is a disconnect with the profession. As to the self, I see an even greater disconnect in that not all professionals get training in ethics, and much is at the discretion/interest of the individual educator...I would attribute some of the disconnect to the sense that our country(and possibly most countries in the world) has lost its moral compass. We can’t seem to agree on what is right and what is wrong, what values we share or should possess….We are polarized with everyone having their own opinion and stubbornly sticking to it.

**The Unique Nature of Ethics.** What became clear throughout this entire discussion was the unique and problematic twist the topic of ethics brings to education. Education scholar Kenneth Strike (1990) refers to ethics as “messy.” Reason or logic does not help to define what is ethical or unethical. A great deal of education pedagogy focuses on techniques, strategies, and new ideas in how to teach students. Ethics is not a strategy that can quickly be checked off at the end of the day; rather, it is defined as a complex process “requiring teachers to painstakingly frame and consider the components of the problem systematically and rationally, and to weigh possible solutions against each other in terms of harms or benefits” (O’Neill & Burke, 2010, p. 169). Robert had similar sentiments and stated:

Ethics education can too easily fall prey to a mish-mash of compromises that reflect the frantic navigating of competing and social and cultural interests, designed more to appease non-educators at the same time protecting educators from being eaten alive by these often conflicting currents.
Laurie, Valerie, Robert, and Sarah questioned whether ethics can even be taught in the first place. Valerie commented that much of education is “based on theories that tell you what to do. What is missing [with ethics] is the discussion. It is hard because it is ephemeral; it is not something solid like skills needed to use a projector. It is abstract.” Laurie concluded, “Or perhaps, in the end, despite our best efforts in teacher education and at the policy-making levels, the ancient concept that “virtue cannot be taught” seems still a reasonable, albeit unsettling, conclusion.”

Valerie continued:
We need to ask teachers what they believe in, in terms of personal ethics and professional ethics. We need to hear what they have to say rather than just talking at them about ethics….Rather than assume or just tell them to ‘do it’ we need to spend time finding out what teachers know, what they believe in, what their experiences are, and then we can discuss an ethical framework for education.

Valerie presented a good solution in how to address ethics in education. However, the reality is that stakeholders do not ask teachers what they know, think, or feel—they tell them what they should know, think, or feel and in the process take away their professional power. Jill added, “We may say that education is important, yet educators have lost their voice on this issue.”

Whereas Fiona felt that we need more legislation and must make educators aware of their professional and legal responsibilities, Laurie had a different perspective and pointed out that it would not be “natural” for teachers to cite ethical standards and legislation. It would appear artificial and perhaps almost unethical. Laurie stated:

So that takes me back full circle to my point above that it isn’t a natural instinct to talk about what one does as being faithful to ethical codes, policy, or legislation. However, it might be more natural to talk about what one does in simple terms of ethical virtue – honesty, fairness, compassion, sympathy, etc.

Sarah observed that education brings together a unique group of stakeholders that are not seen in the same combination in other professions, emphasizing:
Of course there is a disconnect because these entities [the stakeholders] are loosely coupled, if coupled at all. They have competing impetus, orientation, and responsibilities, except, I also believe that what unites these groups is ethical obligation to future children. However, how they are oriented in this obligation and how they best think it might be enacted can operate from very different poles. This disjunct (sic) is fed by a lack of trust between these parties….Legislatures may believe that they need to control the profession and professional educators because they do not believe either that these humans know or will do what is best.

Robert, who did not work directly in the field of public education noted:

Professional ethics in general tends to be rooted in an instrumental model. Business ethics, medical ethics, etc. are often focused on procedures, practices, and policy. While this is helpful (especially in resolving quandary case) a more humanistic perspective is needed, one rooted in the value of the human activity of learning and the human activity of facilitating learning.

Fiona and Robert noted that educators are a diverse community of professionals from different countries, different religious beliefs, and often different ages, spanning from 25 to 75 years of age. Their values may not be in keeping with the community standards or each other’s. Fiona also noted “One could consider this disconnect a generational gap as the professional trained prior to the existence of formal standards may not be as current, depending on the individual.”

Last, Robert saw our current professional framework regarding ethics as problematic, stating, “We don’t have education “here” and ethical standards “there”, as if ethics were some numinous principles that hover over all human activity that are prior to or outside of the activity themselves” meaning ethics cannot be a checkmark of things to do and learn. Ethics affects all aspects of education as it does in society as well.

**The Lost Self in Education.** All the participants agreed that there is a clear disconnect between the self and educators. The “deskilling” of the profession has created a group of educators who
do not think for themselves; the government, federations, school boards, or public do it for them. When given the opportunity to think for themselves most educators are lost. Jill pointed out:

As to the self, I see an even greater disconnect, in that not all professionals get training in ethics and much is at the discretion/interest of the individual educator. Also, as with everything, those persons more inclined to choose a professional development course in ethics are often the ones most likely not to need it.

Laurie agreed that the disconnect between the self and the teacher did not mean that educators were not being ethical; it was that they were not aware of it. She stated, “It is about enabling people and people who truly want to be ethical make the connections between their ethical self and the details of their professional responsibilities and their daily work in schools.”

This Delphi study revealed a wide variety of issues, themes, dilemmas, and observations that provide the profession with information that has never been presented in this type of forum. The participants’ responses addressed when and why we do not talk about ethics, and what prevents us from doing so. They also discussed the effect this has had on the profession and offered suggestions to change this. The conversations were practical and yet philosophical as the participants pondered deeply on some of the more difficult issues such as the relationship of the profession to the self. The conversation has come full circle and themes identified in the study directly relate to the Multiple Ethical Paradigm and to Critical Theory.
Chapter Seven
Data Analysis

Using the Multiple Ethical Paradigm to frame the data brought coherence to the participants’ conversations. However it did not provide a profound analysis of the issues raised in the study; this can only be achieved by incorporating critical theory. The resonating voices of Marx, Freud, Foucault, and Freire provide a deeper understanding of the systemic issues related to education and how ethics centers around this [his]tory. Rather than reiterate all the tenets of the Multiple Ethical Framework and those of critical theory, the analysis of the data is consolidated into three dominant topics: the concepts of self, care, and discomfort. These three concepts are significant in their relationships to ethics and ethical decision-making, and together the impact they have on the education system. The recommendations that follow are based on the analysis of these three concepts.

The Concept of the Self in Educators: Who Are You?
The concept of the self begins this analysis since the self’s major purpose is to ground a person (Baumeister, 1999), and in this context, it grounds the entire analysis as well. Before examining issues relating to care, self-care, reflection, and discomfort, a person really has to know who they are. Baumeister (1999) believed that the concept of the self is ultimately about ownership. If a person could answer the simple question “Who am I?” Baumeister believed the person owned their own identity and sense of purpose in life. For example, if a person answered the question with “I am a teacher” then their sense of purpose could be “My purpose in life is to teach.” However, if the person had difficulty defining who they were (and in this example who they are as a teacher), then Baumeister concluded they would develop a poor sense of ownership. Their life, and in this case their profession, would end up being guided by what others told them to do.

Robert stated that the de-skilling of the teaching profession has stripped teachers of their identity and taken away their sense of ownership. He further added that imposing ethics on teachers rather than having them develop their own sense of ethics has created a love hate relationship with rules and legislation. Several of the participants who teach in faculties of education stated that they use the “blue pages” (the section of the OCT magazine Professionally Speaking that focuses on professional misconduct) to teach ethics. Most of the participants did not have a
problem with this except for Robert and Sarah. They felt teaching ethics by highlighting professional misconduct simply induced fear and did not help teachers develop a sense of self, identity, or ethics. If there is little to hold a teacher to be ethical other than fear of repercussions right from the beginning of their career, then they will never develop a sense of ownership or responsibility. They will always love and hate the blue pages.

My second question to the participants “When do you [sic] engage in conversations on ethics” did not result in a fulsome conversation. Instead, many of the participants gave very short and elusive answers. Fiona, John, and Valerie stated, “I do it [engage in ethics] all the time,” “All my life,” “I have always taken my calling seriously.” In contrast, Laurie, Wren, Robert, and Jill admitted having sporadic conversations on ethics. None of the participants discussed struggling with their sense of self or internal conflict over their personal ethics and professional ethics.

After the first question, I posed this observation to the group:

I found most interesting that almost all of the discussions were about students and other teachers. Only one of you actually included yourself in the conversation. Instead, most of you deferred to the “other” and not your own conversations.

Even experts in the education field who participated in this study, failed to address their self until prompted. The only participant who did address his self was Robert who does not work in the field of education. None of the participants raised the issue of the selfless teacher, even when directed to address the issue of the self. If leaders in the education field grappled this much with their own sense of self and ownership, then it should be no surprise that teachers would experience even a greater struggle. What became evident in the data was the selfless educator in the participants themselves.

Baumeister (1999), like Ahnee-Benham and Napier (2002), believed that the self was not part of the brain or body but existed within a person’s psyche or spirit. All three thought this relationship between the self and the psyche existed in healthy individuals, while its disconnection existed in those who had no real sense of self. This relationship between others and us is what creates our sense of identity. Meaning, a teacher’s sense of self exists and
develops in relation to their students, coworkers, administrators, parents, the community, and most important, their own psyche or spirit.

John wrote extensively about his philosophy of education being “relational.” He shared with the group, “As a teacher educator, I am sensitive to the role that each participant plays as teacher and learner in the relationship, the milieu in which each lives and works.” Later he added, “We need to demonstrate care by developing relationships that lead to growth for our students.” Sarah brought another dimension to the discussion on relationships and referenced, “Appiah’s notion that it is through thick relationships that we can reach across our differences….It is thick relationships that allow others to forgive us and allow us to be who we are and believe as we do.”

Whereas Anhee-Benham and Napier believed the relationship to our selves is the most important one, several participants believed the relationship between the community and the self is the most influential. Not only is this relationship strained and unhealthy, it prevents teachers from developing their own sense of self.

Hogan (2011) built on this theory and stated:

The teacher’s relationship to herself or himself is where the other three sets of relationships - to the subjects of study, to students, and to colleagues, parents, and others - come productively together….If there are contradictions or unaddressed tensions in this relationship [to the self], then clearly the other three relationships do not come productively together in it (p. 38).

Some of the participants felt that the tension that exists between educators and the community relates to the historical tradition of the community having the authority to regulate a teacher’s private and professional life. They expressed strong emotions regarding the role of the community and were against the community having the power to set the ethical standards for the professional and the private lives of teachers.

Wren who is directly involved with teacher federations, discussed how the community can vilify and destroy a teacher’s career, even when proven innocent of any wrongdoings. She wrote of a
particularly disturbing incident where a teacher was falsely accused of professional misconduct. “The emotional toll of right-wing radio and newspaper comments calling for his “castration” throughout the various court appearances and finally the trial was so great that he could not face returning to the classroom.”

Fiona, who works outside of the field of public education, discussed how the power of community judgment stifles an educator’s ability to discuss ethics in any sort of safe capacity and that “It forces educators to be defensive to protect themselves.” In *Images of Schoolteachers in America*, Joseph and Burnaford (2001) consolidated teacher education textbooks from the early twentieth century in United States and noted “In the textbooks on teacher education, one image of the school teacher paragon had a continuous and dramatic presence; teacher as selfless altruist, dedicated solider, patriot, saint or redeemer” (p. 137). A teacher’s sense of self-care, self-worth, and safety were to be put aside. The concept of self-care was replaced with caring for others first and teachers who did put themselves first were looked down upon (Mehinan, 2012). This Westernized Christian persona of the teacher as selfless saint and martyr continues to influence our current image of the teacher in North America (Carter, 2009). This imposed image is oppressive and contradictory considering our Human Rights Code in Ontario and our country’s Charter. In a country that values freedom, diversity, and equality, it is hard to reconcile and justify the rigid and powerful standards set by the community in education.

Foucault (1993) concluded that:

Maybe the problem of the self is not to discover what it is in its positivity; maybe the problem is not to discover a positive self or the positive foundation of the self. Maybe our problem is now to discover that the self is nothing else than the historical correlation of the technology built in our history. Maybe the problem is to change those technologies. And in this case, one of the main political problems would be nowadays, in the strict sense of the word, the politics of ourselves (p. 222–3).

John, Robert, and Sarah were the only experts who identified a teacher’s sense of powerlessness. Their comments resonated with both Buchanan (2015) and Hargreaves (2000) whose research in this area noted that teachers’ lack of power has affected both their sense of self and any real
attempt to construct a strong teacher identity. Robert stated, “It becomes difficult to construct a professional self that coincides with one’s personal self when ethics is presented as a list of ‘new’ commandments.” John agreed with Robert and responded, “Discussion is needed to help navigate the space between these extremes by developing one’s own personal professional identities and decision-making processes.” Jill added to their comments by stating, “I would agree that in general there is a disconnect within the profession. As to the self, I see an even greater disconnect.”

Identity formation, or more specifically, teacher identity formation, has been discussed by Akkerman and Meijer (2011), Beauchamp and Thomas (2009), Carter (2009), and more recently by Clandinin, Long, Schaefer, Downey, Steeves, Pinnegar, Robblee and Wnuk (2015). In theory, teacher identity formation should be addressed in teacher education programs where candidates can discuss who they are as people, and who they want to be as teachers. But as Wang, Hall, and Rahimi (2015) and Clandinin et al. (2015) thought, this is not necessarily the case in many faculties of education across Canada, United States, or Europe. Finland is the only country that spends considerable time discussing teacher identity, teacher values and morals, and teacher self-care. (Wang et al., 2015).

Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) believed that developing a strong professional identity is crucial for teachers since it guides them on “how to be,” “how to act,” and “how to understand” their role as educators. In the discussions on teacher training and ethics, participants did not make the connection between teacher identity and ethics. Instead, ethics became part of a long list of things to learn before a teacher enters a classroom for the first time. The mold has been set for the creation of a selfless, disconnected, educator from the very beginning of one’s career, starting with teacher education.

“Finally, there is the issue of professional identity. What does it mean to be a teacher? How do the hundreds of thousands of teachers in the profession for 10, 20, 30 or more years answer that question?” (Robert)
Conversations relating to the ethic of the profession became complicated and ambiguous when discussing how to implement a code of ethics, how to teach it, and how to enforce it. This became even more problematic when the participants discussed ownership, or lack of ownership by the profession. The entire process of becoming and remaining a professional in education is imposed, rather than becoming a collective engagement of ownership.

In 2006, Canadian photographer Edward Burtinsky’s documentary *Manufactured Landscapes* showed the world the power and destruction of consumerism in our capitalist society. Its opening image of 23,000 Chinese workers all dressed the same, standing the same way, and having the same facial expression was visually stunning and did not need a narrative to describe what the audience saw. In education, we have manufactured the identity of teachers. Teachers’ identity has been largely created for them by faculties of education, school boards, politicians, federations, self-regulatory bodies, the community, and the media. Whether it is 23,000 workers from China or 237,000 teachers in Ontario, their constructed identity in a capitalist society appears to be the same.

If teachers do not have a voice and do not own their professional identity, how do they develop a sense of ethics? By Foucault’s standards, they cannot. By not being able to form their own identity, their own sense of self, and take care of that self, educators are left with little choice but to accept a professional identity manufactured for them by the community and the government.

The conversations on the self and teacher identity permeate this study with contradiction and uncertainty. The conceptual framework, theoretical framework, and literature review presented a range of mixed opinions on the self. Whereas some argued the self and identity are the same, others argued they were not. The conversation of the self comes back to the concept of ownership since it is ownership that drives our sense of ethics and ethical decision-making. Robert concluded:

> When teachers do not own the exercise of their own profession, they begin to feel like cogs in a wheel. When teachers are not allowed to develop an operative vision of teaching and learning in their school, they become alienated from the education process.
When the center of responsibility for education is located outside the individual teacher and the community of teachers in a particular school, the moral quality of what is happening in a school, in a classroom loses its core. The center does not hold anymore.

Overall the concept of the self was incredibly significant to this study since the self is where we all begin our lives. Weaving together the philosophical, psychological, and political importance of the self revealed an education system that has demonstrated a very poor understanding and lack of respect for the individuals who work in the field. The impact of not taking care of the self has come at a great cost to educators who struggle to define who they are, what they believe in, and how to conduct themselves both inside and outside of the classroom.

The Concept of Care and Self-Care: From Selfless to Selfish

Even though all of the participants agreed that the concept of care is extremely important since the field of education is responsible for the daily care of children, their comments did not go into any depth in exploring the impact of inauthentic care or self-care. These three concepts will be examined separately in this section and illustrate their relationship to ethics and ethical decision-making.

Inauthentic Care. Whereas the Ethic of the Self focused on Freud’s theory of identity, it is the Ethic of Care that explains his instinct theory. Instinct theory refers to unconscious decisions and actions that people make every day (Corradetti, 2016). In this study, participants agreed that educators make numerous decisions each day, some of them consciously thought-out while others are not. However, the group was divided on what this really meant in relation to ethics. They disagreed on whether ethics is instinctual or if ethics is something that can be taught successfully to teacher candidates. Laurie concluded “despite our best efforts in teacher education and at the policy-making levels, the ancient concept that “virtue cannot be taught” seems still a reasonable, albeit unsettling, conclusion.”

Laurie, Robert, and Sarah’s comments resonated with the work of Valenzuela (1999) and her study on caring for minoritized students. They believed that teaching teachers to be caring and
ethical in their practice ultimately does not work because it comes across to students as being insincere. It also relies heavily on legislation and fails to connect the human aspect of teaching, which is being responsible for the well-being of others. Sarah concluded, “Likewise, with education and ethics, we have to come to the question of practice. Is competence, for example, an ethical issue? Are incompetent teachers behaving badly? What does competence have to do with the ethics of teaching?”

Fiona, John, and Peter did not necessarily agree with them and suggested more education and more legislation to ensure that educators are ethical and caring practitioners. Fiona believed that “A lack of strong legislation to foster ethical practice and ensure ongoing conversations about ethics with new and experienced educators, government, etc. will continue to erode our “civil” society.”

The conversation on whether ethics can be taught or is instinctual mirrors the tension in our education system, between those who want more legislation and rules, and those who question the rules and their purpose. There was no solution to this philosophical debate in the study and it is unsettling considering the impact this can have on students. Valerie who self-identified as Aboriginal and works with Aboriginal communities noted:

There are lots of unethical decisions such as releasing the EQAO results of Aboriginal children. That is not ethical. It is shaming. In the long run, where do you stand for kids who are at-risk? Who is marginalized? Are we ethical in what we do? Not at all.

O’Neill and Bourke (2010) raised the issue of inauthentic care in general, but the only mention in the literature to the impact inauthentic care on marginalized students was the work of Valenzuela (1999). Only one participant out of the thirteen identified as being part of a racially minoritized group and made the connection to minoritized students. Other participants who identified as being part of a marginalized group did not probe deeper into this discussion or make minoritized students a priority. Through a critical theory lens, their comments did not bring forth a rich discussion or address as Freire (1970, 1998) would, the impact the education system has on minoritized students.
Since Valenzuela’s study was conducted in 1999 in United States, it would be worthwhile to undertake a similar study in a Canadian context, especially in relation to this study on ethics. It would also address prior studies, such as EGAELE Canada’s work on homophobia in schools where LGBTQ students stated the perfunctory care they were offered was not enough to make schools safe or welcoming for them (2011).

**Self-Care and Reflection.** Conversations on care in the study focused on caring for students and there was a notable absence of comments on self-care. As a former psychotherapist, I interpreted this as an indication of the lack of balance in the profession, yet to be fair to the participants, I did not specifically ask them about self-care at any point. The closest conversations came to self-care were the numerous comments made about reflection. Robert stated, “The notion of insight, honesty, conscience, and responsibility all play a role in my reflective practice, but I do not use them in an analytic fashion. They usually center around [sic] the experience of students.”

My understanding of the benefits of reflective thinking was drastically different from the participants and I struggled with their focus on the students rather on themselves. Foucault (1983, 1997) noted that the concept of self-care and reflection that originated in Greek philosophy was looked down upon in the Christian community as being selfish and narcissistic. For Foucault (1983, 1997), ethics was the practice of freedom, and reflection was the conscious act needed to experience it. Foucault believed that if a person took care of himself or herself, then he or she would develop a strong sense of ethics. This, he said, was only possible through *reflechie*, reflection (Foucault, 1997).

John, Laurie, Wren, Robert, Sarah, and Jill stated that teaching the art of reflection to teacher candidates was an essential part of their training. John stated “I urge teacher candidates to reflect on events in which choices were made or dilemmas of practice. I encourage them to tell the story then analyze the incident from the perspectives of different places, and then based on their understanding of professional guidelines.” Jill stated “I draw on reflection to break barriers and address ethics. Reflection is an active, complex and intentional process that weaves theory and practice together.”
None of the six participants connected reflection to freedom or any type of emancipatory act. Instead, their assumptions were consistent with each other as they saw reflection as a means to enlighten teachers on things they need to know such as the role of ethics, legislation, and professionalism. The second purpose of reflection, they believed, was to create caring teachers, not address self-care. Talking about caring, self-care, and reflective thinking relates to both personal and professional ethics. On the surface it can be a comfortable and emotionally distant conversation. However, if the conversation becomes personal, it can be quite uncomfortable. Jill disclosed:

I spend a lot of time thinking about the difference between value and ethics – is what I am doing, say, or think a matter of preference or is it really a matter of right or wrong? I try to censor myself if it is the former but if it is the latter, I feel compelled to speak out, but there is a heavy price to be paid for doing this.

Lastly, Sarah quite candidly spoke about her discomfort in participating in some of the conversations in this study. She stated “I get chills as I read your suggestions” and “I feel resistance to this conversation.” Despite her discomfort, Sarah continued to contribute to each conversation rather than withdraw. Her comments lead us to our final concept and analysis of the data; being the concept of discomfort in relation to the self and to ethics.

The Concept of Discomfort: Education and Its Discontents

In order to understand my rationale for including the concept of discomfort as one of the more significant themes both in the data and literature, the relationship between internal (psychological) and external (political) discomfort must first be explained. Internal discomfort refers to the space in our psyche where the self is developed. In Freudian terminology, resistance refers to the action of trying to avoid painful thoughts, feelings, or memories. The role of the psychotherapist is to help the patient develop a tolerance for this internal discomfort, so that he or she can work through the pain and not avoid it (American Psychoanalytic Association [APA], 2017). For this to happen, the psychotherapist must develop a high tolerance for internal discomfort since he or she will feel the pain his or her patient is feeling. This is referred to as transference (APA, 2017). The therapist builds up this tolerance for discomfort through the act of
reflection. In psychotherapy, reflection is about taking ownership of your feelings first, and the feelings of others (your patients’) second.

Teaching reflective thinking and tolerating uncomfortable internal thoughts and feelings are a large part of a psychotherapist’s training. The Code of Ethics for the American Psychoanalytic Association (2017), states that a psychotherapist must be engaged in “constant self-examination and reflection” in order to be considered an effective and ethical practitioner (p. 1).

In contrast, teacher education programs focus on reflection as a vehicle to improve practice. Teachers are trained to externalize, not internalize their reflective thoughts, and focus on the other - the student, the parent, the administration, the community, or the trustees. As part of a cognitive process, the teacher reflects on how to make a better lesson plan or a better test to help students in order to make everyone in the education community happy. Participants who taught in a faculty of education spoke at great lengths about teaching and using reflection, but only one addressed the issue of discomfort. Laurie stated:

Teachers would have to develop a level of comfort in talking with one another about their own and each other’s practice [sic] – both the good and the bad – as their perspectives on good teaching without fear of interpersonal friction or formal reprisal for interference in the work of their colleagues.

I think back to my teacher training and how confused I felt when the concept of reflection was first presented to our class. Since the definition, process, and result were so different from my psychotherapy training, I wondered what educators did when they felt uncomfortable regarding a situation with a student, parent, or colleague. I questioned what mechanisms were put into place to help that teacher work through difficult thoughts and feelings. Twelve years later I believe I have finally found the answer. Nothing. Even though this may sound bleak or pessimistic, discovering problems is a necessary first step in helping others. In my recommendations, I offer some suggestions to start this conversation.

Both Freud (Corradetti, 2016; Pepper, 1996) and Foucault (1994) believed that if a person had a poorly developed sense of self, they would not be able to tolerate a great deal of discomfort.
Instead, Freud believed the person would resist and deflect (as opposed to reflect) their negative feelings onto others. Without a strong sense of self, it becomes increasingly more difficult for a person (educator) to tolerate any internal or external discomfort. The process of deflecting or othering supersedes any feelings of ownership and the educator is left feeling powerless and silent (APA, 2017).

By contrast, external discomfort refers to the visible tension in education between the right and left in North America. Educators are caught in the middle of this tension and if they are not grounded, their discomfort with conversations on ethics and ethical decision-making will not feel comfortable or safe.

The aim of social justice education is to disrupt our thinking and create enough discomfort that we begin to question our beliefs and assumptions (Eyal et al., 2011). Foucault (1994) defined this space as the ethic of discomfort and it is in this space that proactive and transformative education occurs (Zembylas, 2015). However, when the concept of the self and the concept of discomfort intersect, it creates a fragile state for most educators, even the participants in this study. John, Laurie, Sarah, and Jill are published professionals in the field of ethics, both in Canada and in United States. Even though they held positions of power, they still felt that someone or something had power over them and that they could be punished, dismissed, or reprimanded for speaking publicly on ethics. Critical theory stresses the importance of people being able to identify this duality or contradiction and some of the participants struggled with this tension of discomfort.

Throughout the entire study, the participants disputed who had the most power in education. Whereas Wren and Robert saw school boards, the Ministry of Education, and the OCT as being the most powerful, Fiona, John, and Laurie saw the teacher federations in this position. Sarah and Jill who work in the United States saw the National Education Association as being very influential. What this really indicated was the systemic nature of oppression in the education system, since all the stakeholders mentioned have considerable power over educators. Second, it revealed that even though the participants considered themselves experts in education, they did
not necessarily equate their status with power. Power is never absolute and the field of education is no exception.

Fiona, John, Laurie, Sarah, and Jill identified education as a political or contested space that teacher candidates need to learn how to navigate. They also discussed the struggles and feelings of discomfort that this political space created when conversations in their faculty became too heated or judgmental. Some mentioned feeling silenced which led to isolation. Sarah and Jill spoke of their fear of a neo liberal agenda taking over education and how the topic of ethics could be used against teachers. Sarah stated:

At least in the US context, teachers are constantly under fire. Discourse about them almost always presents them as deficit – not up to par in terms of appropriate practice, intelligence, attention to diversity, etc. Almost every article I see about teachers in the mass media in the US focuses on how bad teachers are in some way or another. I know as a teacher educator that you invited me to professional development or an after school group to “talk about” or be “taught about ethics” or someone in my school gets “special training” and then comes and talks to me about my “ethics” – it sounds like it would be just another opportunity to mark me or other teachers educators as “deficit – an opportunity to label me “unethical.”

Zembylas (2015) added that the concepts of ambiguity and vulnerability must be addressed in social justice education and stated that both educators and students must come to this common place when working through social justice issues. The teacher and students must acknowledge their power and privilege as well as their lack of power and privilege. Critical theorists emphasized the importance of educators acknowledging this ambiguity as well. However, this is very difficult to do if the educator does not have a grounded sense of self or ethics and does not feel comfortable.

John identified that “classrooms are and will always be political spaces” and later noted:

By valuing my personal practical knowledge and understanding the wider education landscape, I was able to recognize the authority of my experiences. This enabled me to
move forward to make changes with confidence even as I recognized the education law milieu remains contested territory. Take the law into my own hands, as a teacher educator was a first step towards relinquishing power to beginning teachers.

Unfortunately, most teacher education programs have primed educators to reflect for the sake of other, and to silence or deflect all uncomfortable thoughts and feelings. After all, the teacher-as-saint image means that you do not complain (Joseph & Burnaford, 2001). These actions of othering and silencing do not address discomfort, but rather repress it. When social justice issues are addressed, it appears our natural inclination is not to lean into discomfort, but rather to deflect, oppress, or silence. Even though Sarah described being uncomfortable during this study, she identified the importance of naming it as her own, and continue to participate for the wider goal of social justice education.

Discomfort is a major issue in most people’s lives and jobs as it relates to our ability to handle negativity, both internally and externally. It is poorly understood in the teaching profession and this implication has far reaching consequences. Educators have been trained to deflect negative feelings whether in our professional relationships, conversations, or professional training on social justice. This has created two significant gaps in education. The first being an educator’s (in)ability to articulate ethics and ethical decision-making and the second being their difficulty in working through social justice issues in education. We will do anything not to be judged in our current climate of transparency and accountability.

The three main themes of self, care, and discomfort, are all connected to each other and to ethics and ethical decision-making. Like dominoes, if the first piece falls, then so do the rest, and ethics and ethical decision-making become lost in the chaos. The following diagrams represent the consequentialist cycle of function and dysfunction for the two professions. Whereas the psychotherapist can operate as a free agent, the educator appears trapped.
Start career by nurturing an identity

Can openly discuss issues without fear of retribution

Taught how reflection starts with the self and self-care

Ongoing mentorship and support throughout entire career

Must question, monitor, and own their behavior

The Cycle of Function for Psychotherapists

Start career with an imposed selfless identity

Remain silent for fear of retribution

Taught reflection is about the other and caring for others

No ongoing mentoring, support, or safe space

Behavior dictated as good or bad by stakeholders

The Cycle of Dysfunction for Educators
Reflecting upon this data analysis, I realized there is one item I would change if using a Delphi study in the future. As a research methodology, the Delphi study offered many benefits such as the ability to access participants (without geographical barriers or high costs of travelling) by using an online social platform. Using critical theory as my framework allowed me to reframe the data to identify themes and issues. Critical theory meant I could interrupt the participants’ thoughts by asking questions that required them to look deeply into themselves.

If I could begin this study again, I would start by removing the word “expert” and replace it with “experienced professionals.” Defining the participants as experts seemed elitist and this was not my intention. If I had used the term experienced professionals from the beginning, it would have read as less judgmental in the overall study. To address this issue as best as I could, I consciously avoided the term “expert” in my writing, and instead used the participants’ pseudonyms or the term “participant.”
Overall, a conscious blending of the Delphi study methodology with critical theory provided me with rich and in-depth discussions. It allowed me to examine ethics through multiple lenses and disrupt the participants’ thoughts on ethics. Critical theory brought the significance of my prior career to the forefront and disrupted my thoughts on ethics. I was not aware of how much of my past was influencing my thoughts on being an educator.

The gaps identified in this analysis point to serious pedagogical concerns beginning with teacher education and its focus on reflective thinking and neglect of self-care. The internal discomfort that begins in preservice education extends to an external discomfort once the teacher enters the political arena that we call a classroom. Addressing inequities and ethics in education becomes a difficult task when educators are not given the proper guidance to know themselves and build resiliency within the profession. The consequence of an imposed and judgmental identity is a silence that is unhealthy for both the educator and profession at large. The second consequence is the impact these actions can have on students. If the field of education is truly concerned about students and their emotional, physical, and intellectual well-being, then it needs to admit that its understanding of ethics is mistaken and it is time to look at resolving the issue.
**Recommendations**

Both the conceptual and theoretical framework created a structure that helped me analyze the data. They also filled in gaps in my knowledge on this topic and let me see where other gaps still exist in the literature and research on ethics. The following recommendations are based on my concluding thoughts and observations. In keeping with critical theory, I direct these recommendations to “us” since I am part of the teaching profession. If I am asking educators to change, then I must be willing to do so as well.

The three dominant themes of self, care, and discomfort provided a rich discussion regarding ethics and ethical decision-making in the education system. They also guide this discussion on possible pathways moving forward. The participants in the study touched many of the solutions upon and I have incorporated their thoughts. I have also included the thoughts of critical theorists and as a critical researcher, my own.

**The Politics of Our Selves**

**Let Us Find Our Selves and Take Back Our Voice.** In questioning the concept of the self, Sarah shared a quote from one of her teacher candidates. “The work I have to do to learn to teach – what people call content – is like they say, perhaps not always that difficult. But it is always hard because it fundamentally calls into question who I am as a person.”

According to Foucault (1983), “the most important principle in ancient philosophy was to “know thyself” (Lecture Number 3). Throughout this study, philosophers, activists, and academics have mulled over the concept of the self, the importance of taking care of the self, and the essential practice to “know yourself” before anything else. In *The Ethics of Identity* (2005), Appiah focused his thoughts on the process of identity formation, ethics, and identity politics:

> the idea of finding oneself, of discovering, by means of reflection or a careful attention to the world, a meaning for one’s life that is already there, waiting to be found. This is the vision we can call authenticity [sic]: it is a matter of being true to who you already are. (p. 17)
Appiah (2005) believed that we all have an individual identity and a collective social identity as well. Our two identities exist in relationship to each other, but if we do not have a strong individual identity to begin with, our social identity becomes difficult to understand and navigate. Like Foucault, Appiah valued the notions of self-reflection and caring for the soul in order to know who you are first, and what you are, second.

As a result of the Westernized Christian influence on our North American education system, educators have not been encouraged to know or take care of their selves. Instead, they have been told they need to be selfless, put the care of others before themselves (Mehinan, 2012), and accept a manufactured identity.

It is time for educators to acknowledge and understand the detriment of putting their selves last. Christian ideology has exploited the teaching profession for many years by creating an identity based on martyrdom and selflessness. Educators need to put their self first, take care of their self, and create boundaries within a profession that is asking too much too often.

The double standard of how female teachers are expected to act and be a role model is antiquated we need to shed the conservative clothing of the school marm for good. Female teachers need to be seen as professionals who take care of themselves and balance their duties of a teacher, with their own personal and professional lives. Feminist educators need to advocate having the standards of the profession in policy brought into the twenty-first century and the Judeo-Christian values of the Education Act under Duties of Teacher, Item 264, 1 (c) need to be revised. A teacher’s “purity” has nothing to do with their ability to be a good teacher; it is a direct judgment on their character that needs to be removed from the Education Act.

The next step for advancement in educational scholarship in ethics is to integrate work being done by business scholars who are addressing issues of the self and identity in large organizations. Rozuel and Kakabadse (2010) believed that an employee’s sense of self is indicative of his or her sense of ethics and morality. The more organizations encourage nourishing the self in their employees, the stronger the company. Rozuel and Kakabadse (2010) wrote:
Individuals who maintain a pure and solid connection to their self act in greater awareness of the other’s humanity while enacting their ethical values and principles; on the other hand, those who failed to connect to their self yield more easily to the pressure of social conformity, relinquishing their personal responsibility by claiming to be just an agent within the system. (p. 426)

Educators have to follow a set of rules and orders that has little to do with their personal beliefs. The compartmentalizing of personal and professional values is one reason why educators seem to have such difficulty taking ownership of the profession. This compartmentalizing, Rozuel and Kakabadse (2010) noted, was damaging to both the employee (in this case teachers) and to the organization (in this case the education system). Employees develop a false sense of self as a means of survival, and Rozuel and Kakabadse (2010) warned that this is even more dangerous because the employee’s actions become inauthentic.

The hierarchal nature of the education system, the role of the government in creating and implementing legislation, the stakeholder model, and the power of media and social media, create an incredibly tight web of systemic barriers that prevent educators from having their own voice. Results from this study indicate that educators would benefit from reclaiming their identity in order for ethical language to be their own. The idea of reclaiming language is common with many marginalized groups who have had their identities hijacked. There are many examples that can be found historically in the Black civil rights movement, feminist movement, and gay rights movement. Most of the examples center on reclaiming or redefining language of minoritized groups. In education, teachers need to be able to speak on behalf of their profession without fear of retribution or public vilification as described in the study by some of the participants. For educators to have a sense of ownership we will have to fight to get our voice back first and I see this dissertation as a first steps towards that goal.

**Let’s Introduce the Ethics of Spirituality to the Multiple Ethical Paradigm.** The conceptual framework that guided this study, the Multiple Ethical Paradigm, was limited in its scope. As a result, I added two more tenets - the ethic of the self and the ethic of discomfort. Both concepts
addressed many issues that the original framework did not and complimented the theoretical framework used in the study, namely, critical theory.

There is one last tenet that needs to be added to the conceptual framework in order for it to be truly a holistic model; the ethic of spirituality. The ethic of spirituality refers to a person’s personal belief system, which refers to a higher self, divine being, order, truth, or reality (Sheep, 2006). Whereas the self relates to one’s sense of identity and thoughts, the soul refers to one’s emotions and sense of faith. It is an acknowledgment of a higher order or being (Nash, 2001) and involves a person having a deep sense of self and others. The ethics of spirituality is not about organized religions such as Christianity, Judaism, and Islam (Nash, 2001), it is much more personal. Rozuel and Kakabadse (2010) elaborated further that:

many spiritual traditions speak of a higher Self [sic], a part of our being that stands outside the personality, outside the conscious self, and outside the categories of conscious experience, including time….Human beings are most essentially spiritual, whether they are conscious of their spirituality or not, and their spirituality lies in the self. (p. 424)

Rozuel and Kakabadse’s (2010) work centered on business ethics and workplace values, and they concluded that spirituality in the workplace brings people together whereas expressing religious views often divides. They noted:

Workplaces where people are allowed to be ‘whole’, that is, to express emotions, feelings, aspirations alongside rational thinking, tend to foster greater intuition and creativity, while reinforcing trust, honesty, and organizational commitment. (p. 428)

Sheep (2006) added that employees who saw themselves as whole people (meaning acknowledging and respecting their physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual self), had a much stronger sense of ethics. They placed much more value and meaning on their work, and they treated their workplace as a community, not just a job. When organizations did not treat their employees as whole people, their workplace became fragmented and silent spaces, which affected everyone’s morale.
Nash (2001), like Ahnee-Benham and Napier (2002) and their ethic of the self, also believed that “the best pedagogy aims first at the heart and soul before it can find its way to the mind” (p. 9). Kung (2007) argued, “If education is about making choices, it needs to address the ethical responsibility of recognizing wholeness in education and the recognition of the person as spiritual” (p. 1). She stated this has been resisted both in teacher education programs and in school boards, but did not elaborate on why this has occurred.

It is interesting to note that Robert, Sarah, and Jill all discussed the concept of faith and organized religion. They did not shy away from the relationship between ethics and religion, but rather observed how it is often part of the language of Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and Judaism. However, none of them pursued this relationship any further by suggesting an ethic of spirituality. Considering the number of experts in this study that believe teachers do not have a sense of self, it would interesting to find out how many of them also believe that they do not a strong sense of spirituality, and if they believe the two are connected.

Since the development of a public, secular education system in Ontario in 1807, references to spirituality have been scant in our schools. Along with this lack of dialogue on spirituality, this dissertation has established there has been little conversation on ethics as well. Rozuel and Kakabadse (2010) suggested that embracing a strong sense of self and spirituality go hand-in-hand with a strong sense of ethics that can permeate into a person’s workplace. They placed great value on employees taking time to getting to know their self, create an employee identity, and foster a strong work ethic. The value of nurturing an ethic of spirituality in a workplace then extends itself to the ethic of the community. When spirituality is placed at the forefront, all stakeholders join together through the common commitment to a higher order. This is completely unheard of in our current education system.

Our education system sounds like the organizations described by Sheep (2006) and Rozuel and Kakabadse (2010) that does not treat employees as whole people, but instead has created fragmented workers. Sheep (2006) referred to the fragmented worker as living in “quiet desperation” (p. 363), meaning they do not state how they really feel, they have a poor sense of self and worker identity, and remain silent on ethics. As such, our education system’s way of
dealing with ethics is backwards. By dictating ethics and ignoring the self, self-care, and spirituality, our education system has failed to create any meaningful change in the profession. Perhaps this is why the conversations on ethics are silent rather than robust and deep.

**Care**

Caring is about much more than being nice. Developing a professional ethic of care involves helping teachers to develop their professional practice and ethical knowledge so that they fulfill their moral and legal duty of care. (John)

While all the participants agreed the concept of care is central to education, they did not present consistent or cohesive ways to address it in teacher education programs or in the profession in general. Many thought reflection was the best tool to helping create caring teachers and referenced educators who inspired them such as Dewey (John), Starratt (Jill), or Parker Palmer (Robert). At this point, I add my own voice, and default once again to my training as a psychotherapist, to offer a suggestion.

**If We Borrow From Psychology, Then Let’s Use the Same Definitions and Meaning.** We need to address the use of the terms *self-reflection, reflection,* or *reflexive thinking* in teacher education programs. If education wants to borrow terms from psychology, then the terms should have the same definition and meaning. It is unclear when and how education changed the terminology to mean something different; nevertheless, it is John Dewey who is credited as the first education scholar who used the term reflection in relation to teaching. In *How We Think* (1910), Dewey defined reflection as “active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends” (p. 118).

Jaeger (2013) argued that the term reflection in education training is inconsistently used and applied. Some faculties of education (for example in the United States), impose a strict definition of reflection and how the teacher candidate must use it to increase student success (Jaeger, 2013). My experience as an educator has been that there is little time to reflect on your practice
when you become a full time teacher. There is no time or room when following legislation; it simply must be done without thought.

As mentioned previously in this paper, Dewey’s concept of reflection has little similarity to Freud’s or Foucault’s. In keeping with the radical spirit of critical theory, I propose that we use Dewey’s definition of reflection with caution, and include Freud or Foucault in teacher preparation programs. The sole purpose of reflection should not be to increase student success; but rather to increase an educator’s sense of self-awareness and identity. The end result should be to foster and nurture strong professionals in the field, but putting the other first cannot do this. Perhaps one of the biggest casualties of the education system is the lack of self-care, self-development, and enlightenment, educators have been afforded.

**Let’s Give Educators a Common Ethical Language and Agree on How To Teach Ethics.**

John suggested, “While their [teachers’] instincts or habits might serve them well in most cases, they would benefit from training in ethical/legal thinking and developing a vocabulary for articulating ethical decision-making.”

Willemse, Lunenber, and Korthagen (2008) found that one of the major issues with teacher education programs in the Netherlands was a lack of moral language. Their study is consistent with other studies that found this same issue: a lack of common ethical or moral language that would help educators articulate and formulate ethical decision-making processes (Campbell, 2010; Socke & LePage, 2002). Socke and LePage (2002) found that “Moral language is missing in classrooms, but it is also missing in the seminar rooms and lecture halls of teacher education” (p. 171). In the Delphi study Laurie noted that “Many such as Ken Strike, Hugh Socke, and in Sweden, Gunnel Colnerud, have written for some time about the lack of moral or ethical professional language for teachers.”

Willemse et al. (2008) questioned the role of reflection in teacher education programs and how effective they truly are if educators do not even have a common ethical and moral language in the first place. They believed that reflection, at best, is a superficial tool that does not allow for any deep or meaningful insight into one’s own sense of ethics and morals. An Ontario study by
Campbell (2010) found that educators do not have a common language or, in some cases, any language at all to describe the ethical decision-making process they experience in teaching. This lack of language has led those in the profession to be ethically illiterate or defensive for fear of being perceived as an inadequate professional.

Currently in Ontario (and in Canada in general), there is no one way to teach ethics in education. Although individual teaching styles are always encouraged in education, the current state of affairs of ethics education is disjointed, convoluted, and disorganized (Maxwell, 2016). Fiona who worked directly with a provincial policy organization saw the faculties of education as being inconsistent and noted, “There are excellent practices here and there but the field is, at this point, far from leveled.”

Several education scholars and Fiona and Robert believed that the real issue is that we do not have a common foundation for faculty of education professors to teach ethics. We have professors who are educated in education, and Bowen, Bessette, and Chan (2006) believed that they do not necessarily do a very good job of teaching ethics to teacher candidates. Instead, Bowen et al. suggested the education of ethics begin with the professors or instructors so that they would be competent enough to bring some depth to the conversation with their own students. They suggest ethics be taught as a process rather than a value, and that the process should begin with self-awareness.

The lack of understanding on what ethics is about, the misuse of definitions borrowed from psychology, and the inconsistent way teacher candidates are being taught how to make ethical decisions, needs to change. Once educators have found themselves and their voice, their next step needs to be the development of ethical language that begins in teacher education, and should continue throughout their entire career. As stated in the literature review, it is time.

Let’s Acknowledge the Limitation of Using Case Studies and Find Other Ways to Address Ethics. The participants had excellent suggestions on how ethics can be taught and produced a comprehensive list of various pedagogies to approach the topic. This was only done when I urged the group to think beyond case studies. Case studies are a common pedagogical tool used
by many professions such as lawyers, doctors, and social workers. They allow professionals to examine issues at a distance and attempt to problem solve. If case studies are used, Bowen et al. cautioned, “the purpose for examining case studies is not as much to determine right or wrong…but rather to emphasize the process[sic] of developing critical thinking skills” (p. 5).

What is evident from the Delphi study is that case studies seem to be the dominant teaching method used by faculties of education. Kenneth Strike (1990) made several bold claims regarding popular methods used to teach ethics, the first being that approaching it with “horror stories” of teacher misconduct was inappropriate. Second, he believed that “teachers who engage in child abuse or who sell drugs to children do not need to be taught that it is wrong. They already know that” (p. 47).

Laurie, Robert, and Sarah believe the only way to have a safe conversation on ethics is to remove all judgment. Case studies become problematic since they are inevitably judgmental and as Robert suggested:

> Instead, [teaching] the philosophy of ethics would remove all of the judgment-laden conversations beginning with teacher candidates and continuing on with experienced teachers. Teacher candidates would be encouraged to think rather than just obey, and experienced teachers could discuss the topics more freely.

Warnick and Silverman (2011) and Robert believed that ethics needs to be taught not from a personal point of view or a judgmental point of view, but rather philosophically. If professors of education are not knowledgeable about ethics in philosophy, then they cannot teach it effectively. As Strike pointed out in 1990 and applies even today, it appears what is still being taught is a very superficial form of ethics that has little depth and more scare tactic.

Instead of relying on written case studies, other forms of instruction need to be used as suggested by the participants: role playing, investigative reporting, movies or documentaries, guest speakers, or field trips. Jill suggested that teacher candidates write out their personal code of
ethics and the ethics of the profession and compare the two. Peter suggested that one way to teach ethics is to address it through ongoing mentorship and coaching. He stated:

Another way to discuss ethics is by coaching a staff member. Coaching is a nice way to discuss issues by using reflective practices. Without focusing on the issue, the coach should be capable to bring to light on the issue and find reasons why all actions should be grounded and based on ethics.

Overall, the participants provided options on how to address ethics in education. Most of the participants’ suggestions focused on content rather than process. Together, with works cited by scholars, and the next suggestion to be presented in this dissertation, a more comprehensive strategy is emerging.

**Let’s Create an Ethical Decision-making Framework for the Profession and Teach It.**

Maxwell (2016) suggested that the teaching profession change how it addresses ethics to teacher candidates across Canada. Rather than use case studies to illustrate right or wrong behavior, he suggested that teacher education programs use a cognitive psychology approach and:

show that behavior, both ethical and unethical, is rarely the product of careful, conscious reflection on moral reasons. Instead, ethical decision-making is primarily driven by a diverse set of intuitive processes over which individuals have little conscious control.

(p. 76)

Maxwell suggested that faculties of education concentrate on the psychological process that occurs rather than the judgment of right and wrong. He believed if teacher candidates had more time to truly examine their own psychological processes and motives, then their approach to ethics as an educator would be more authentic.

It was interesting to discover that many other professions and institutions related to ethics had a step-by-step ethical decision-making framework. None of the participants who taught at faculties of education mentioned using a framework like these in their classrooms. Telling teachers to
think and behave ethically is simply not enough. Teaching them a step-by-step cognitive process such as those illustrated below, would help the teaching profession enormously.

The following two diagrams are based on ethical-decision-making frameworks, one relating to university governance created by Penn State University, and the second by Trillium Health Partners used by health professionals in Toronto.

Figure 1 based on Monitoring University Governance
(Penn State, 2016)
Whereas the participants focused on case studies and reflection, it is noteworthy that none of them, including myself, thought of something much more process-based and straightforward such as the two diagrams above. These frameworks are simple, straightforward, and are used in other professions responsible for the care of others.

Not only would these frameworks guide educators’ cognitive process, it would give them the language and that is so clearly missing in our current teacher education programs. Using an ethical decision-making framework could significantly impact our education system by lessening the political edge that seems constant in education. If educators continue to be scrutinized, then we really need to give them as many tools as possible to armor themselves.
Discomfort

The Fudge Factor Theory. The discomfort described both by the participants and in the literature often referred to judgment. One way to alleviate this discomfort is by removing judgment, but as Laurie noted, this can be very difficult.

In Ariely’s book *The Honest Truth about Dishonesty* (2012), he explained the fudge factor as that deceptive space where good people cheat or lie “a little” and convince themselves that it is okay because of its small scope. By lying and cheating a little, people convince themselves further that everyone will still think they are a good person. Guilt, fear, or judgment stop people from crossing the line and committing serious acts of lying or cheating, but “fudging” the truth is perceived as okay. Ariely believed everyone will act unethically under the right circumstances, and one way to begin ethical conversations, is by removing judgment.

If teacher education programs began conversations on ethics using the fudge factor theory, it automatically would remove any fear of vilification and place everyone at ground zero. By framing the conversation around “we all can do something unethical at times,” its main purpose then becomes why unethical behavior occurs in the first place. Second, it would remove teachers from the over-elevated status of martyr and saint that the community has given them, and turn them into real people who make real mistakes like everyone else.

Let’s Express Humility Not Defensiveness. Throughout this paper I commented several times that I witnessed educators becoming defensive when ethics was mentioned. I believe that many take on this defensive stance because of the historical and current implications of what the conversation implies: that one has done something wrong. If we continue to teach ethics from a consequentialist judgmental standpoint, both emerging and experienced teachers will not change; to be defensive is a normal response (Hytten, 2015). How do we get teachers to express their own fears, mistakes, and ethical dilemmas if all we have given them is a punishment model? It will not happen.
Hytten (2015) used the term *reflective humility*, which does not necessarily mean baring one’s soul to the education profession. Instead, she referred to it as a “pause” that educators should take in order to acknowledge their own privilege, biases, and judgments. This is similar to critical theorists, with one difference: the acknowledgment of our own power is not just intellectual; it is felt emotionally as well. It would be proactive if educators admitted their faults as opposed to having the media, government, and governing bodies do it for them. To express humility and not defensiveness would be very hard for many educators to do, but worth trying.

**Conclusion**

What is the impact of having our profession steeped in stakeholders’ agendas, politicians’ platforms, and social media’s judgment? It has obliterated any sense of self in educators. It has made all conversations on ethics not just uncomfortable but dangerous, whether in teacher education programs, staff rooms, or public hearings. Like most contentious issues, no one wants to talk about ethics because no one wants to be implicated. As mentioned by Robert, this silencing has come with a cost as educators have retreated into their profession relinquishing their role to that of a deskilled worker.

Many of the participants in the Delphi study stated they would not openly discuss ethics with their colleagues or supervisors. It is very telling when even so-called experts, who are highly-esteemed, felt it could be dangerous. If it feels dangerous to them, then no one in education is safe. Working and living in a state of constant fear of reprisal is not healthy, nor is it acceptable in education.

When I began this journey several years ago, I really did not know what I would discover. The deeper I delved into the topic, the more I realized that the systemic nature of power and oppression in education has made conversations on ethics invisible. Ethics and ethical decision-making’s relationship to psychology, psychotherapy, politics, philosophy, and social justice created a much more complex picture than I ever imagined. Throughout this dissertation process I realized that my professional and personal past had a direct relationship to my research question. In fact, it is the reason I asked it in the first place. As I stated earlier in this dissertation, most teacher education programs have primed educators to reflect for the sake of the other, and to silence or deflect all uncomfortable feelings. It makes perfect sense, considering my
past training and profession, that something did not feel right to me from the very beginning of my career as an educator; I could put my finger on it until now. The conversations that I experienced as a teacher candidate, teacher, and adjudicator, were highly judgmental. The silence I heard were those too afraid to be judged.

Ethics and social justice education can bring together powerful change for educators and students. I would go so far as to say they are critical for our children’s future if we really want a just, kind, fair, and peaceful world. Robert suggested that ethics be taught from a philosophical rather than a consequential point of view. I am suggesting we consider teaching ethics through a social justice lens, one that directly addresses issues of race, gender, sexual orientation, status and ability. If we approach ethics through a social justice lens, then we would need to examine systemic discrimination in our education system beginning with policy that defines, controls, and vilifies teachers who struggle to adhere to rigid conformity. Second, through a social justice lens, we would need to address the impact systemic discrimination has had on minoritized students. As Valerie noted, our current practice of standardized testing and the effect it has on Aboriginal students is unethical. It makes one wonder how many other policies we have that affect our minoritized students as well.

Our current conversations on ethics are so stifled, that opening the dialogue and giving educators some breathing room to explore ethics through multiple lenses can only benefit this profession. If we teach ethics and ethical decision-making through a social justice lens that is not to say that we cannot weave the importance of philosophy and psychology into the conversation. We need to take away the focus on judgments of good teacher/bad teacher, and begin with caring for our teacher candidates in a way that is respectful, thoughtful, and professional. This care needs to extend into the profession for an educator’s entire career.

Beginning the conversation on ethics will not be easy if educators have no foundation for the basis of the conversation. They will feel lost if they are not grounded in a theoretical and conceptual framework that supports them. They will feel ignorant if they do not have the research, data, or language to support their dialogue.
This dissertation is a comprehensive examination of ethics and ethical decision making and it provides teachers, administrators, faculties of education, teacher federations, self-regulatory bodies, and the government with a context, framework, data, and analysis of the issues surrounding ethics in education. It provides educators with a language and a variety of approaches that address different pathways in their career.

The answer to solving the issues raised in this dissertation is not with more of the same approaches since this is a flawed model that clearly has not worked in the past. As stated by the participants, it requires a shift in mindset by all stakeholders that will result in changes in policy, teacher education curriculum, the community’s power, and educators’ attitudes towards their personal and professional identities.

I end this dissertation with the story of my art teacher. Rather than look back and wonder if his actions were right or wrong, I refer to the ethical decision-making models presented in this chapter. The facts are we were neighbours in a small town in the 1970s and the standards of the community offered a different set of norms to educators. The laws and policies put into place regarding the ethical standards of the teaching profession did not exist at that time. The actions that occurred between my art teacher and me did not harm anyone nor did I feel uncomfortable. The first time I experienced discomfort was twenty years later, when the scenario was taken out of context and judged by today’s standards, which takes us back to the issue of ethical relativism.

If one day my new neighbours turned out to be students in my class, I would act very different than my art teacher since I am aware that the standards and repercussions have changed dramatically in education.

I am in a very privileged position as an administrator and a faculty of education instructor who can draw upon my professional and academic knowledge to teach and mentor both new and experienced teachers. I can raise the conversation on ethics in classes, in staff meetings, at administrator meetings, and at faculty of education staff meetings. If Freud, Friere, and Foucault were still alive, I think they would agree with me - that it really is time and it starts right now.
References


Appendix A

Informed Consent Letter

Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) 

March 22, 2015

Ethics Protocol Reference #31374

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

Dear Prospective Participant:

I am writing to you concerning research that I am conducting for my doctoral dissertation in order to complete my Doctorate in Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/University of Toronto, under the supervision of Dr. Reva Joshee.

For the past three years, I have been a member of the Discipline Panel for the Ontario College of Teachers. I also taught Education Law at Brock University in the Faculty of Education in 2012. Both professionally and academically, I have been exploring the area of ethics in the education system for years. This research paper focuses on the topic of “Ethics in the Education System.” It will explore how and when the topic of ethics is being discussed in education, and the impact this is having on the profession. This study will shed some light on an important topic that seems to be scant in some of the current education policies and academic literature. Its results will benefit school boards, teacher federations, regulatory boards, faculties of education, and teachers.

You are being contacted as an expert in the field of ethics in education. This list was compiled using online data on academics, teachers, administrators, researchers, and federation management. The list focuses on provincial and federal experts, as well as a few experts from United States.
Participation in this study is strictly voluntary and participants may withdraw at any time. The method of inquiry I will be using is a Delphi Study. This requires participating in an online forum through Google Groups. There are approximately 4-5 twenty-minute sessions with other experts that will take online place over a nine-month period.

If you are interested in volunteering to participate in this Delphi Study, I have outlined the details below.

- A Delphi study requires a group of experts in a particular field of study to participate in an online forum with other experts. Similar to a face-to-face focus group, the experts will know who the other participants are.
- A Delphi Study requires participants to answer an initial question, followed by at least three subsequent questions, and one final review. The time commitment to answer each question should be approximately twenty minutes. Due to the amount of data the researcher must collect, code, and analyze at each stage, it is expected that this Delphi Study will take approximately nine months.
- The online forum is restricted to the participants and to the researcher and only accessible by a protected password. The data collected will remain confidential and only available to the researcher and supervisor. A hard copy will be stored in a fireproof box in the researcher’s home and destroyed after five years.
- If a participant chooses not to complete the study at any time, they may do so. The participants at no time will be judged, evaluated, or placed in any harm. There will be no value placed on their responses or comments.
- The information provided by the participants will be used in a final dissertation thesis. As well, it may be published in education journals and presented at education conferences. Experts’ names will not appear in any published material or presentations.
- A final draft of the data will be sent to each participant for clarification before final submission to the University of Toronto.

If you have any questions, concerns, or complaints, you may contact the University of Toronto Office of Research Ethics for questions about your rights as a research participant. You may reach them at ethics.review@utoronto.ca or 416-946-3273. Please reference protocol #31374.
If you volunteer to participate, please type in yes on each line provided.

_______ I agree to participate in an online Delphi Study with researcher Christine Bellini from the University of Toronto.

_______ I understand that the online forum will be restricted and password protected, and only accessible by the participants and researcher.

_______ I understand that the members of the Delphi Study will be made known to each other in the online forum, but all names, institutions, and work places will be removed in the data collection, publication, or presentation of this study.

_______ I understand that I will receive a gift card as a token of appreciation.

_______ I understand by answering yes to each of the above statements, I am giving electronic consent to participate in this Delphi Study.

_______ I will sign the Confidentiality Agreement and email it back to the Researcher along with this document.

Please send this email back to christine.bellini@utoronto.ca. You will then be sent an email with your username and password in order to access this study.

If you have any questions about this letter, please feel free to call or email me at the numbers listed below.

PLEASE KEEP A PAPER COPY OF THIS ELECTRONIC CONSENT FORM FOR YOUR OWN FILES.
Thank you for your time.

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Appendix B

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

BETWEEN

__________________________________________(The Participant)

(Please print your name)

- and –

Christine Bellini

(The Researcher)

THE PARTIES AGREE:

1. In this Agreement:

   (a) “Confidential Information” means any personal information, such as name, age, gender, place of employment, specific institutions and/or addresses.

2. The Researcher agrees not to use Confidential Information at any time in the dissertation, in any prospective academic publications, or at any education conferences. Institutional types or roles will be made public in order to contextualize the meaning of the participants’ comments and/or observations.

3. The Participant is aware that identities will be revealed during the online study. The Participant agrees not to make public at any time, the names or comments of the other participants.
Entered into this ___________ day of _____________, 20___________.

________________________________________  ______________________________________

Participant                              Christine Bellini, Researcher