FOR THE LOVE OF TEACHING: PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS’ EXPERIENCE OF MORAL EDUCATION

Anne Marie Foley Ruiz
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FOR THE LOVE OF TEACHING:
PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS’ EXPERIENCE OF MORAL EDUCATION

A Dissertation Presented

by

ANNE MARIE FOLEY RUIZ

Submitted to the Graduate School of the University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

May 2023

College of Education, Teacher Education and Curriculum Studies
FOR THE LOVE OF TEACHING:
PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS’ EXPERIENCE OF MORAL EDUCATION

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ANNE MARIE FOLEY RUIZ

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The first glimpse of this project came to me sometime in the year 2007. I was working as a kindergarten teacher in a charter school in Manhattan. I remember sitting on my colleague’s desk after school one day telling a group of teacher friends that I wanted to go back to school because there was something more I needed to learn about teaching, but I didn’t know what that something was…. Sixteen years later this labor of love is ready for the world. It is nearly impossible to acknowledge all of the individuals who contributed to this work, but I will make my best attempt here.

Most obviously I want to acknowledge my spouse, love, and partner in this life, Juan Manuel Ruiz-Hau. I am ever grateful for your endless support, encouragement, and belief in my ability to make this work a reality. My children, Ana, Elena, and Manolo, who have only ever known me as working towards this end, this is for you. Remember that you can do anything as long as you keep trying to make it happen. My siblings, badasss themselves, for reminding me that this day would come and for appreciating the effort it has taken. My parents for instilling in me an immense curiosity and impulse to understand the world and my place in it at ever deeper levels.

Deepest gratitude goes to my advisor, Dr. Darrell Earnest. Thank you for taking this on without knowing how it would go and for coaching me, pushing me forward, and reminding me that this work is important. Drs. Hamilton and Cheries for staying the course with me and hastily responding to even the smallest indication of forward motion, you have no idea how much that motivated me to finish.

Love and appreciation for my work family, from TLC, PS23, GP, ARPS (especially CF), UM CoE, GCC, U28, and LES. You all have inspired this work and
kept me going when I was lost and wanted to jump off this path. My siblings in this field, thank you for joining me on this journey to improve our passion.

Without my participants this work would never have been. This is the result of their openness and vulnerability, willingness to spend hours divulging themselves. Their candid responses in my interviews allowed me to see the world through their eyes. I hope I did justice to their descriptions.

This work was motivated by my novice teacher self, to the girl who knew she wanted to touch the lives of children and families in meaningful and lasting ways. It was she who propelled me to keep searching when I could not find the words to describe what I wanted to write about. It was she who brought me back to this work through marriage, children, pandemic, school administration, and all the frenetic variables that came alongside. I hope these words will find their way to help novice teachers to retain and understand their own passion and purpose, especially once the pressures of “rigor” feel too heavy to carry. Remember that the moral work you are doing is important, vital even, to teaching.
ABSTRACT

FOR THE LOVE OF TEACHING:
PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS’ EXPERIENCE OF MORAL EDUCATION

MAY 2023

ANNE MARIE FOLEY RUIZ, B.A., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS
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Moral aspects of teaching arise each and every day, yet we lack information about how prepared teachers feel about this critical aspect of teaching. This multi-case study explores perceptions of five pre-service teachers in an elementary teacher education program in Western Massachusetts. A series of interviews explore their histories prior to the program and their experiences in the program as related to the pre-service teachers’ orientations to the moral work of teaching. Research questions address the awareness and self-efficacy of student teachers in implementing the moral aspects of teaching. Using Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clark, 2006), this study explores beliefs and contextual factors that may influence student teachers’ experiences of moral education.

The results support the hypothesis that pre-service teachers believe teaching to be inherently moral, as described in the Moral Work of Teaching (Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2009) theory. Using Bandura’s (1997) Self-Efficacy Triangulation Theory, data were analyzed to determine the degree to which experiences in the teacher education program contributed to the participant’s self-efficacy for the moral work of teaching. There are three key findings of the present research. First, pre-service teachers are able to reflect
upon and describe the various ways that teaching is inherently a moral act with appropriate prompting. Second, pre-service teachers indicate that they would have benefited from more formal preparation in the nuanced elements of the moral work of teaching, which has implications for their self-efficacy in this area. Lastly, there are nuances to the moral work of teaching that have been so far unidentified in the Moral Work of Teaching (Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2009) framework, specifically regarding Teaching Morally.

This research seeks to contribute to the knowledge about new teachers’ dispositions towards and preparedness to support the moral education of their elementary students, with implications regarding coursework and practicum experience requirements in teacher education programs. More focus on this area to name the complex variables that influence a teacher’s skill and self-efficacy for Teaching Morally would likely improve outcomes from teacher preparation.

Key words: moral education, teacher education, pre-service teachers, classroom community, classroom management
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

The year was 2001. I was a first-year teacher in the South Bronx, teaching Science as a specialty to kindergarteners and first graders. The specialty position meant that I had a caseload of 16 classes, and I would teach a new class of students every 55 minutes all day long. In that position I taught all different types of classes (e.g., general education, severe special needs, bilingual classes, etc.). In this position I developed out of necessity a set of working skills to handle classroom management and abrupt transitions.

Stephan was a first grader in one of my first-grade general education classes. He was six. I remember him being a funny, charming little guy when it was just him and me, but when he was in the mix of other first graders he had a tendency to be a real nudge. I didn’t know what he would do or say, but the other kids would often freak out at him, yelling at him to stop and that he was bothering them, totally disrupting the lesson and the peace of the class.

To this day one particular occasion stands out in my mind. Perhaps it is because this moment has haunted me since that day, and I wish I could go back and make a different choice. He was sitting with Kwame, a “friend” with whom he often had difficulties, yet Stephan always wanted to be near Kwame. Stephan was doing something, mumbling something under his breath, or kicking Kwame under the table, or some other annoying thing that he would then deny doing and then continue doing, which only escalated the situation. I’m not sure how many times I had to speak to Stephan that day, or at what point my tolerance ran out, but at some point I kicked Stephan out of the
classroom. I ran out of strategies, and finally just told him to go into the hallway, because he wouldn’t stop bothering his classmates, and let us get on with the “learning.”

Please remember that I was a novice teacher with limited strategies, and my own self-efficacy for moral education—or rather, my own capacity to evaluate how effective I was at supporting positive and productive moral learning—was limited or even non-existent. Soon after he was out in the hallway, I shut the door behind him, thereby underscoring that he did not belong with us in the classroom and that shutting someone out was a good option for resolving conflict. I don’t think he expected to be left out there. He started knocking on the door to come back in. As I ignored the knocking and told the rest of the class to do the same, he started trying to turn the knob to return to the classroom. I remember walking back over to the door, holding the knob, and pushing against the door, keeping this six-year-old out in the hallway as he frantically tried to push his way back into the classroom community.

I don’t remember how this story ended. Remember that this was 19 years ago, and the class was only 45 minutes long. I’m sure the classroom teacher came back and picked up her students, and I prepared for my next class. But I do remember viscerally the feeling of pushing against the door, and I remember vividly the sound of his little six-year-old palms slamming against the glass window, trying to get himself let back in. This moment from my first year of teaching has haunted me for 19 years.

I go back to that moment with Stephan often, wishing I could have made a different choice, wishing I had had the understandings then that I do now, wishing I had just taken the time to teach him with love and patience the moral lesson he was showing me he needed to learn in order to participate in my space with those classmates at that
moment in time. Instead, I attempted to teach him with shame and guilt, with fear and exclusion.

Through the years of my teaching, I have seen episodes similar to Stephan’s play out over and over. Teachers sending kids to the office, to the hallway, suspension, expulsion, zero tolerance for bad behavior. Research shows that it is likely these teachers entered the profession with hopes of fostering positive change in their students, to help their students participate fully in positive ways in society. Yet, these students ended up pushed out, sent away, excluded from the community at the time when they needed the most coaching and support.

When it comes to behavior, teachers aren’t fully prepared to teach students in the ways that align with what brought them into the profession in the first place. In our preparation we aren’t taught that students are in a process of behavioral development that unfolds throughout the lifetime. Despite my own preparation program’s focus on “urban education” and “inclusion,” once in the classroom I was caught up in the overwhelming pressures to control the class and cover the curriculum. I was completely unprepared for the complex social and emotional decisions required every day. Despite my training, I found myself struggling to do the work in the loving way that I had envisioned for myself. When I and other novice teachers enter the classroom, we often expect that our students are sent to school knowing everything they need to know about how to behave in a classroom with a group of other students. The repercussion of that expectation is that, for our students who don’t have that knowledge or skill, we deny them the lessons they need in order to participate fully, and we instead force them out of the classroom or school community.
I was led on the journey of this work by the desire to understand my own impact as a teacher, and I spent years taking coursework trying to find the missing piece before encountering the Moral Work of Teaching (Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2009). This theory at once articulates, first, how children learn moral lessons in the classroom space and how the teacher plays a consequential role in this process, and, second, a profound gap in my own training related to such moral education work. Using the Moral Work of Teaching (Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2009) framework, I was able to examine my own experience as a teacher and to identify the areas where I needed become aware in order to create the learning environment that matched my values. I also was made aware of how my own experiences throughout my life uniquely informed my orientation towards the moral work of teaching and how I identified or shut down opportunities for moral learning in the classroom.

These experiences led to the present dissertation study in which I ask and answer questions related to pre-service teachers’ orientation towards and preparedness for the moral work of teaching. I describe the experiences of five pre-service teachers in relationship to moral aspects of teaching. Through a series of interviews, I explored the reasons these pre-service teachers entered the field, their experiences in their coursework and practice teaching placements, and their reflections on how they envisioned themselves in their future as educators. This exploration examines the sense of preparedness these pre-service teachers feel to create the classrooms they envision for themselves and their students. Such analysis will contribute towards the field of teacher education’s understanding of how teachers entering the profession are prepared for and oriented towards this critical aspect of elementary teaching.
Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the degree to which pre-service teachers describe self-efficacy regarding the moral work of teaching. Pre-service teachers are students who are learning to be teachers in university teacher education programs. As will be described in more detail later in this section, the Moral Work of Teaching (Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2009) describes the many ways in which teachers impact their students’ moral development, consciously or not, through the systems and behaviors that influence character and community building that occur in classrooms. Examples of such systems and behaviors include rule making and upholding, sharing, respecting others, listening carefully, caring for others, considering multiple perspectives, collaborative problem solving, and helping.

This dissertation contends that pre-service teachers do not have the necessary understandings to enact the moral work of teaching with intention, which thereby suggests they would lack the self-efficacy to engage in moral development of their students in targeted and specific ways. Further, teacher education programs have a responsibility to prioritize the emphasis on the moral work of teaching to best prepare their teacher education students for working in the field. Though the moral work of teaching does not fit within the traditional “methods” taught in teacher education, it reflects work that teachers—particularly elementary teachers—engage in every day. The research described below is a step towards this goal. The descriptive case studies provide profiles to begin to understand this critical aspect of teacher preparation and will imply that this non-academic area requires more emphasis in teacher education programs to fully equip novice teachers for success as lead teachers in their own classrooms. My
multiple case study approach illuminates through an in-depth focus how pre-service teachers themselves describe their own orientation to such work, and I consider their descriptions both with respect to adding to the Moral Work of Teaching (Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2009) theory as well as identifying potential starting points for students entering pre-service teaching programs.

**Statement of the Problem**

The following section will present a shared definition of morality and an overview of the elements of moral education that are present in a school community. It will briefly describe the nature of moral development in children, and how educators have the potential to influence moral development in the children in their classrooms. Lastly, this section will present the warrant for this research and introduce the major theories used in this dissertation to examine morality, moral development, and moral education. In the next chapter, I elaborate these areas further in a review of relevant literature.

A definition for morality has been contemplated for centuries and can be defined in many ways. For the purposes of this project, I define morality as the developed internal programming for beneficial social interaction that enables human wellbeing and dignity (Rosenberg, 2015). This internal programming develops out of social interactions and relates to the emotional, mental, and motivational states of others (Kullen & Rutland, 2013).

A social code, morality is a set of beliefs and understandings that are used to evaluate and distinguish between right and wrong (Buzzelli & Johnston, 2001). It is a complex aspect of human life that involves issues of what is good, right, and virtuous in what and how we think, feel, and behave, in who we are and in our relationships with
others (Sanger, 2012). Morality is the general internal programming that manifests into specific moral values that drive behavior, both instinctual and intentional. Moral values refer to experiences of positive and negative, good and bad, right or wrong in regard to behavior and thought towards others (Sanger, 2001). Moral values are often foundational for norms, which refer to rules that may come from or express values, though norms may also be arbitrary and based on cultural conventions. Reasoning through how a behavior or idea affects others, moral reasoning promotes moral development (Turiel, 1983). For example, spending time thinking about the ways in which other people experience your behavior builds the capacity for empathy.

Children’s moral development in the context of school depends on support from a practiced, patient, and skilled instructor wise in the ways of moral education. Fluency in the stages of moral development, such as those found in Figure 1, can help teachers understand the various ways that students require scaffolding and support in order to grow in their moral development. Kohlberg’s (1985) seminal research on moral development led to the identification of such stages. Without reference to such a framework, teachers are left with their own reflexive responses to moral transgressions, which are subject to bias and personal interpretation.
I elaborate briefly on Kohlberg’s framework (Figure 1), as using a moral development framework such as the one above can help caregivers understand the stages from where a child holds particular beliefs, and the logical next stage for progression of their thinking. Specifically, children in early childhood or elementary settings are likely in one of three stages identified above: self-interest (pre-school), conformity and interpersonal accord, or authority and social order. Such a framework can support teachers’ moral work in supporting students. For example, in infancy and preschool age a child may learn that hitting is bad from engaging with the adults around them. They develop a sense of hitting as bad because they perceive that their caregivers punish them when they hit others (Level I: Obedience/Punishment; see Figure 1). As they develop their moral reasoning skills, this child will come to observe the nuance that hitting in defense of themselves or others may in fact be “good,” whereas being a passive bystander.
is “bad” (Level II: Authority and Social Order). According to the Kohlberg Framework, it is not until adolescence that individuals may come to understand that not hitting each other is for everyone’s shared benefit of peace and safety.

The earliest years of schooling are vital in the moral development of children. In this stage of development, children are constantly questioning the motives of people around them; children of this age are famous for the often-repeated question: “Why?” Elementary teachers, therefore, have the responsibility to help children develop from a place of conformity as the answer to the place in which they understand that universal respect leads to the mutual benefit of safety for all. Teachers of elementary-aged children carry the double pressure of ensuring the long-term academic success of children in their classrooms, while simultaneously ensuring they have the moral knowledge and reasoning skills required to socially succeed in school and beyond. As such, this study considers how pre-service teachers feel about their own preparation to engage in such moral work.

**Research Questions**

This paper aims to examine the following research questions:

- How do pre-service teachers describe the moral work of teaching?¹
- How do pre-service teachers in elementary teacher education programs describe their self-efficacy to influence moral development for children in their classrooms?

To answer these questions, this research project will coordinate two overlapping theories: the Moral Work of Teaching (Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2009) and Social Cognitive

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¹ This work will refer to both the Moral Work of Teaching theory as described by Sanger and Osguthorpe (2009) and the moral work of teaching as a pedagogical stance inherent in the work of teaching.
Self-Efficacy Theory (Bandura, 1997). The following paragraphs briefly describe these two theories as they relate to the presented research questions and research study. These theories will be described in more depth in Chapter 2, the Literature Review of this paper.

Moral Work of Teaching (MWT) theory describes teaching as inherently moral work. Sanger and Osguthorpe (2009) organize MWT theory through the two-faceted lens they describe as teaching morally and teaching morality. These two-facets of the moral work of teaching can be described as a kind of show-and-tell of moral education. Figure 2 shows the essential elements of the MWT with descriptions of each element, and I describe here each element through the analogy of showing (teaching morally) and telling (teaching morality).

![Figure 2: Moral Work of Teaching Framework (Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2009)](image)

Teaching morally is the show. This lens describes the ways in which a teacher shows their own morality through their behavior and beliefs. It refers to the ways that a teachers’ values show up in their practice through their experience as a teacher. Teaching morally is to teach through example in a way that aligns with what is commonly known to be good or right. Examples of teaching morally include showing and expecting fairness and respect to all members of the school community, including and especially those less...
Teaching morally is ensuring that student voice is heard in the classroom through intentional design of democratic classroom routines, such as classroom rules and consequences. When teachers demonstrate patience and understanding when a student or other community member makes a mistake, they are teaching morally, putting their own morality on display for their students. Teaching morally happens unintentionally and indirectly, though students learn a tremendous amount about morality when a teacher is teaching morally.

Alternatively, teaching morality is the tell. Teaching morality refers to the conveyance, explicitly or implicitly, of what is morally right or good to students. Teaching morality includes the intentional instruction of specific moral values. Teachers are teaching morality when they implement specific moral curricula, such as social emotional learning (SEL) programs or violence prevention programs, about which I elaborate in Chapter 2. Additionally, teachers are teaching morality when they interrupt content instruction to highlight moral values that arise. This type of teaching morality may occur using characters in a novel, or it may occur when a conflict occurs in class. In these instances, teachers explicitly tell students their expectations of “good” and “right” ways of being. More about the Moral Work of Teaching (Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2009) is described in the Literature Review of this paper.

This paper will overlap MWT with Self-Efficacy Theory (Bandura 1977, 1986, 1997). Self-efficacy theory proposes that an individual is more likely to engage in behaviors in which they feel more competent. According to this theory, individuals who believe they are able to do something will be more inclined to pursue that activity, including seeking additional training on that activity. It refers to the belief in one’s ability
to behave in ways that will bring specific outcomes, such as regulating or changing environmental elements (Bandura, 1997). For example, if individuals believe they have the capacity to become a good tennis player, they will more likely pursue tennis lessons, seek to practice tennis more often, ultimately increasing their likelihood of being a strong tennis player.

When used in conjunction with the Moral Work of Teaching (Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2009), Self-Efficacy Theory (Bandura, 1997) helps to illuminate the ways in which the beliefs teachers have about their own abilities for the moral work of teaching influence their actions around moral education. If teachers believe they are capable of enacting MWT to influence their students’ moral development, they are more likely to behave in ways that do so, such as using moral education curriculum with fidelity, making space for moral deliberation in everyday teachable moments, including children in the rule making and problem solving of classroom life, and behaving as a moral exemplar in the presence of their students.

This research will explore pre-service teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs in relationship to teaching morally and teaching morality as outlined in the Moral Work of Teaching (Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2009). Overlapping these two theories, this research will highlight the likelihood that pre-service teachers will engage with the moral development of children, prioritize moral education, and advocate for moral education as an integral aspect of their training as educators.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The child who is not embraced by the village will burn it down to feel its warmth.
- African proverb

This chapter describes the research that exists on the relationship between moral education and teaching. The proverb that begins this chapter reflects the weight of the relationship between a teacher and their students. As a representative of the “village,” a teacher has the power to create a space where children feel seen, valued, and safe. Alternatively, a teacher who does not believe in a child’s inherent goodness has the power to motivate a student to seek to disrupt the peaceful functioning of the classroom. The research presented here can be found both published. First, this chapter presents a description of research exploring the idea of schooling being a moral process. Next, research that supports the benefits of the Moral Work of Teaching (Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2009) as a teaching strategy is presented. This is followed by research describing teachers’ perspectives of the moral work of teaching, and, lastly, in the fourth section, research that describes the ways in which teacher educators can use the Moral Work of Teaching (Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2009) framework to build self-efficacy in this area for their student teachers. This chapter closes with a synthesis of this research and a description of relevance to the research questions posed here.

Schooling as a Moral Process

Educators agree that teaching is much more than simply sharing content with students (Brookhart & Freeman, 1992; Farkas, Johnson, & Foleno, 2000; Goodlad,

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It is a complex, layered interaction that occurs over many moments and is influenced by many variables. Quality and meaningful teaching requires the development of trusting relationships with students, families, and colleagues. Meaningful education depends upon a teacher’s belief in the growth and potential of their students.

Research shows that teaching is inherently moral and cannot be separated from morality (Buzzelli & Johnston, 2001; Fenstermacher, Osguthorpe, & Sanger, 2009). Relationships between teachers and students are powerful for student moral development. The way a teacher acts has large influence on how a student learns to act and what they come to believe about themselves and the world. In my student Stephan’s case, presented in Chapter 1, it is likely that my excluding him and holding the door shut as he begged to come in had lasting effects on his self-worth. The village of our classroom did not embrace Stephan, and in turn he sought to create chaos. This exclusion likely had strong effect on the other students in the room, sending messages of who belongs and what behaviors will be accepted, as well as appropriate ways to respond to antisocial behavior. Teachers’ actions affect how children interpret the reasonableness of reactions to other people and events, a reality that new teachers may feel unprepared for or even unaware of. Positive relationships are necessary for positive impact on students’ moral development.

Teachers manage the psychological, social, cognitive, and cultural aspects of student learning, and they negotiate the logical, social, intellectual, and aesthetic dimensions of classroom spaces and interactions. Alongside the instruction of academic content, the classroom is a place where teachers and students ask meaningful questions, share interpretations, and cultivate their individual interests and talents. While more often
this type of engagement happens in classrooms with thoughtful, dedicated, imaginative, flexible educators, even the most bureaucratic of schools require this type of social negotiation (Buzzelli & Johnston, 2001; Fenstermacher, Osguthorpe, & Sanger, 2009). Teachers, consciously or not, articulate strong perspectives on economic, social, and environmental issues to their students through their comments and behaviors. Even when unarticulated, teachers hold and share a conception of acceptable personhood in the varied classroom social situations that continuously unfold and this conception informs their sense of purpose in their work that is operative in their teaching.

Teachers bring moral matters into schools and classrooms in both implicit and explicit ways, both showing and telling what they believe about goodness and badness. Moral Work of Teaching (MWT) theory (Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2009) articulates the dynamic ways in which teachers implicitly and explicitly teach morality to their students. As described further below, the MWT theory differentiates between teaching morally and teaching morality. Though at times overlapping, these two lenses are helpful tools from which to observe the complexities of how teachers’ work influences student moral development. Teaching morally and teaching morality allow for the analysis of the intentional and unintentional ways in which teachers share and impose their own moral beliefs on classroom relationships and interactions. This framework is a useful tool to guide pre-service teachers as they examine the multiple dynamics at play when creating a classroom climate and culture.
A Teaching Strategy Worth Learning: What Benefit Does an Understanding of MWT Bring to Teaching?

MWT (Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2009) uses teaching morally to describe the implicit ways in which teachers impact their students’ moral development through their own behaviors. Teaching morally refers to the ways in which teachers perform their own morality in front of and in relationship to their students in role as a teacher (Osguthorpe, & Sanger, 2009). The phrase describes how teachers themselves behave as a good or righteous person, and also how they make decisions in response to transgressions that might arise in real time (Fenstermacher et al., 2009). Teaching morally is an aspect of teaching that arises in the very act of teaching. A teacher’s values are apparent in a teacher’s general behavior, and this behavior influences how they present themselves.

Teachers teach morally when they behave in ways that are in agreement with or dissonant to notions of right and wrong. Moral exemplar teachers model integrity for their students when they choose to do the right thing, even when no one is looking (Lumpkin, 2008). Teachers show fairness to students by showing respect for each student as a unique individual. When teachers treat students with respect, they are showing students what respect looks like without explicitly stating what respect is. The students then learn to show respect in return. A teacher teaches morally through showing genuine interest in all students and nurturing unique relationships with each of them, thus modeling virtues that students can then apply to the students’ own relationships (Lumpkin, 2008). Teachers who are honest and trustworthy nurture mutual trust and respect with and among students. Teachers who treat others respectfully, through attentive listening and polite responsiveness, show that they believe in the integrity of
every person. Teachers who execute their responsibilities in accountable ways model responsibility for their students. *Teaching morally* with positive moral character, teachers respond thoughtfully to moral dilemmas that emerge in classroom spaces.

In the case of the interaction between Stephan and Kwame, it would have been more aligned with my espoused values to try to understand the situation, to make space for the students to understand each other, to build their capacity to consider an other’s perspective—and thus foster empathy skills. This event could have had lasting impact on the two students involved and their ability to participate in conflict negotiation and perspective taking, which then would likely have further developed their understanding of the concept of mutual respect. Additionally, my attempts to understand the students’ perspectives is an act of trust and respect for them that would show that I care about them as individuals, respect their experiences, and hold them in high positive regard. My behavioral response to the interaction sent implicit messages to both Stephan and Kwame, as well as to the other students in the class, about what I believed was right and wrong behavior and the reasonable response to such behavior. As is shown in Figure 3, had I responded with the more positive ways to *teach morally*, ways that aligned more with my espoused values, the outcomes from this scenario could have been much different.
Moral work can also be explicitly taught. In Moral Work of Teaching (Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2009) theory, the explicit ways in which teachers tell their students how to be good or righteous people is referred to as teaching morality (Fenstermacher et al., 2009). This element of MWT refers to the direct instruction that teachers use to teach moral matters in the classroom. Direct instruction can be in the form of lessons with moral learning objectives or can be stated tangentially through other content objectives. Figure 4 describes some of the ways that teaching morality can be positive or negative.
Sanger and Osguthorpe (2009) further differentiate *teaching morality* into *manner* and *content*. Figure 5 shows the differentiation as described by the authors. *Manner* refers to a teacher’s way of being in the classroom, the conduct, traits, and dispositions the teacher exhibits in the course of seeking students’ understanding and mastery of the content (Fenstermacher et al., 2009). Whereas *teaching morally* refers to the unstated and hidden ways in which teachers demonstrate their own moral beliefs and values, *teaching morality with manner* describes the active and explicit teaching of students to demonstrate moral values. Teachers use *manner* when they tell their students to be respectful of all students and other school community members, when they create and describe systems that reinforce voice for all students, and when they intentionally share with their students how they make space within the school day for moral development. Teachers explicitly tell their students the path to moral “rightness” in the *manner* in which they describe and establish a moral classroom, including which values should be prioritized as important and salient.

*Teaching morality with content* refers to the ways in which teachers identify concepts for their lessons that intentionally brings students’ attention to matters of moral significance. Many types of programs and curricula exist that aim to build moral development in students or aim to teach “good” character. These programs seek to affect moral development in varying ways, such as behavioral intervention, violence prevention, or social emotional learning, and their names reflect the types of values from which these programs aim to affect student moral development. In this way, moral development curricula are based on different priorities and theories of action. Some are behavioral, some are relational, and some are psychological.
Some schools have adopted textbooks that provide a curriculum on morality as a way to support children’s moral development. Teachers use moral development curriculum for a variety of reasons. Some teachers utilize specific curriculum with the specific intention of affecting their students’ morality. Other times teachers engage these types of curricula because of state or school mandates. Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (Center on PBIS, 2023), Second Step (Committee for Children, 2011), and Responsive Classroom (Responsive Classroom, 2023) are all examples of common moral development curricula used in elementary schools to teach morality with content.

Though teachers may use explicit moral development curricula to teach morality, teachers may also spend class time explicitly teaching about morality within other academic content areas as well. In this way, teaching morality with content can be situated during a read aloud, such as described in the opening vignette, or when teaching the rules of the classroom and school, and in helping students share and negotiate conflict. Though the teachers here are not engaging a specific moral development curriculum, they are explicitly using content to teach morality. Teaching morality refers to all of the times that teachers tell their students ideal ways of being to cultivate moral dispositions in students, both through the use of specific curricula as well as when teachers pause to address moral aspects that arise in literacy, math, or other core subjects.
Teachers can bring moral content into the classroom by interjecting their own moral convictions or expectations, by adopting a curriculum or program designed to teach morality (e.g., character education and life skills programs), by exploring the moral issues within the academic curriculum itself (e.g., war policy, literary characters, species extinction, welfare), or by building capacities necessary for morally good conduct (e.g., empathy, moral reasoning, and perspective taking). (Fenstermacher et al., 2009, p. 10)

While research has found that the distinction between teaching morally and teaching morality through manner and content is complex and overlapping (Rosenberg, 2015), use of these descriptors helps to parse out the many ways in which morality is embedded in the work of teaching. There is a general lack of common language regarding moral development and this lack of clarity has profound effects on classrooms and schools. The use of a common framework and language facilitates the exploration and consideration of the ways in which teachers can make intentional and positive impacts on the moral nature of their work. Additionally, having the language to describe the ways in which teaching is a moral endeavor can build teacher self-efficacy for this far-reaching and important element of the work (Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2009).

Without training in MWT, teachers have the potential to create conditions that have negative impact on students’ moral development. Using the Moral Work of Teaching (Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2009) framework to unpack the as yet unidentified elements integral to “good” teaching, the present dissertation study seeks to identify, name, and reenact the moral elements of teaching with intention that could support students’ moral development. The Moral Work of Teaching (Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2009) framework helps shed light on teachers’ own impact as moral role models and the dynamic ways in which the role of the teacher contributes to their students’ moral development and social competence. In that “being good” and being perceived as good
has long-term implications for school success and self-perception (Adams, Monahan, & Willis, 2015), it is imperative that pre-service teachers are equipped to enact and discuss their ability to support their students’ development in this area. Teachers need to understand the impacts of the moral work of teaching.

Scant empirical research exists on the implementation of MWT. However, Sanger and Osguthorpe (2013) gathered research from like-minded academics for their text, *The Moral Work of Teaching and Teacher Education: Preparing and Supporting Practitioners*. In the first five chapters, the editors share research on the ways in which teaching morally appears in teacher education programs. Teaching morally is described by such tasks as interdisciplinary planning, development of practical reasoning, building awareness of ethical thinking and acting, nurturing a moral stance in pre-service teachers. In the final chapter of this section, Johnson, Vare, and Evers (2010) describe how they used an adaptation of the Moral Work of Teaching framework (Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2009) to revise their core teacher education curriculum to reflect clearly articulated indicators of judgement and action. Judgement indicators include such items as “believing in the worth, ability, and potential of all children” and “acknowledges existing structures or practices that promote inequity.” Action indicators include such items as “addresses the behavior, not the child” and “teaches by invitation – invites students to increase the challenge or decrease the challenge based on performance.”

In her award-winning dissertation micro-ethnography *Portrait of Moral Agent Teacher: Teaching Morally and Teaching Morality*, Rosenberg (2015) uses the Moral Work of Teaching (Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2009) framework to spotlight one moral exemplar teacher who Rosenberg describes as “genuine, humble, and soulful.” In the year
Rosenberg spent with the described teacher, she observed exemplar teaching morally behaviors such as respect, kindness, and fairness. This teacher modeled equitable practices of student voice, providing personal attention, and participation access for all students. She made specific efforts to make sure all of the students felt cared for and not forgotten. She invested in the student experience through intentional volunteering opportunities and opportunities for students to make agentic choices about their own best interests. This teacher acknowledged each child by name, consistently expressed appreciation and demonstrated trust. She provided accommodation for students’ moods and emotions with accessible behavioral regulation supplies and mindfulness about anxiety. Rosenberg mentioned many examples where her subject teacher used sensitive discretion to address students, and she regularly demonstrated her own vulnerability by admitting mistakes and weaknesses and letting her students know her as a person. Most notably, this teacher demonstrated the same behavior to both adults and students, noting that everyone has similar issues and needs sometimes.

Moral manner is more impactful to students’ own moral development than any program of moral content could be alone. Nonetheless, focus is more often on the moral curriculum and the presumed effects of such curricular exposure (Campbell, 2015). Underscoring the importance of manner, positive relationships between and among school community members are vital for any moral education to be effective. In every relationship we may choose to act for the good of the other, or we may distance ourselves according to how we assess another’s behavior. In order to positively engage with children in the moral work of teaching that goes beyond just content, teachers must understand the way their own manner as moral beings impacts the moral development of
their students (Osguthorpe & Sanger, 2009). Moral manner is a precondition for leading engagement in moral content and is thus foundational for fostering students’ moral development. Students know when their teachers are committed to their learning, and they can tell when their teachers genuinely care about them, are trustworthy, honest, and respectful (Birch & Ladd, 1998; Buyse et al., 2009; Doumen et al., 2008). Students will not integrate moral ways of being into their own behavior absent of positive moral manner, even if moral content is present. Teachers must demonstrate moral manner in order for their students to trust that any moral content has value. Teachers must be trustworthy and fair in order to gain the respect required for programs of moral education to be effective. Schools that demonstrate unfair practices, favoring some students over others for example, will struggle to teach their students how to be fair. A teacher’s moral manner implicitly reinforces moral behavior and sets an important foundation for explicit moral education to have meaning.

Explicit moral education programs are described in many ways. Terms that have been used to describe programs for moral education include character education programs, behavioral modification programs, social emotional learning, school culture programs, violence reduction programs, peace building programs, restorative justice programs, and culturally competent pedagogy, to name a few. All of these types of programs are built upon the same idea for the development of prosocial interaction skills and teaching students to “be good.” The lack of consensus in terminology is reflective of a larger problem of confusion around this type of education. In order to avoid maintaining separation of church and state in public schools, programs actively struggle to avoid any religious inferences to their character development programs (Valk, 2007).
The U.S. Department of Education (USDOE, 2005) defines character education as “a learning process that enables students and adults in a school community to understand, care about and act on core ethical values such as respect, justice, civic virtue and citizenship, and responsibility for self and others.” The USDOE further expect that programs of character education teach “the habits of thought and deed that help people live and work together as families, friends, neighbors, communities and nations” and “the attitudes and actions that are the hallmark of safe, healthy and informed communities that serve as the foundation of our society” (2005). Most school systems interpret this mandate through adopting and implementing moral education curricula that emphasize content but not manner.

In their survey results from 112 educator participants representative of schools and districts based on district size and geography of U.S. public schools, Bartolino Krachman & Larocca (2017) found that K-12 public schools in the United States spend between $21 and $47 billion on moral education products and programming per year. The largest investment of that money comes from teachers’ own investments. Educators in this study report that approximately 2.8 hours per week, or about 30 minutes per day, is spent on a mix of highly structured activities and engaging in less formal conversations about related behaviors. An additional 1.5 hours per week is spent on planning moral education lessons, designing activities, or professional development in this area. Educators in this study report that they wish for this type of curricular focus to be institutionalized within the formal structure of the schools, and 82% of the participants stated their interest in having additional training in their schools. This high percentage emphasizes that teachers themselves want more support in this area, highlighting the need
for research that reveals pre-service teachers’ knowledge and readiness to approach such work.

Meanwhile the other elements of the moral work of teaching, such as *teaching morally* and *teaching morality* with manner and content go unexamined and unaddressed. While the Department of Education’s statement provides the motivation for the emphasis on the Moral Work of Teaching, goals for selected programs vary widely between districts. Additionally, very little expertise on the moral work of teaching exists in most school systems. With lack of guidance and clarity, the selection of a program to support moral education is difficult, underprioritized and even at times resisted. School officials are often unsure of what they are looking for to fill this need and unsure how to even describe the needs of the school in this area.

Programs for moral development offer differing priorities and theories of action; some are focused on behavioral modification, and others are focused on relational engagement. Most are based on the principles of behavioral psychology and attempt to alter behavior through manipulating environmental stimuli that precede or follow behaviors (Parker et al., 2010). Many moral education programs are utilized as a means to address problematic behavior in schools (Parker, Nelson, & Burns, 2010). The recently popular Positive Behavioral Systems and Supports (PBIS) (Center on PBIS, 2023), also known as School-Wide Positive Behavioral Supports (SWPBS), is one such program. Research findings indicate that these behavioral programs create an effective school environment where proactive behavioral practices can be implemented successfully (Simonsen, Sugai, & Negron, 2008). When implemented with fidelity and used in combination with professional development, based on measurable data, and prioritized
within the school or district improvement plan, these programs have shown increased consistency among staff behaviors, increase in positive interactions, and decreased office discipline referrals. Additionally, these types of programs have been shown to have an impact on an increase in the number of students meeting proficiency criteria on state assessments (Simonsen et al., 2008). While PBIS uses moral education content to emphasize fairness and accountability within the school environment, in this program there is little emphasis on the ways in which a teacher’s manner may lead to long-term moral development.

In their review of moral education programs, Belfield, Bowden, Klapp, Levin, Shand, and Zander (2015) found impacts of program implementation on students’ understanding and handling feelings, academic achievement and behaviors, cooperation, and dealing with diversity. The researchers also noted improvements in personal behavior and mental health of students. Some programs utilize relational approaches and focus on teaching “how to be good” to each other. These types of approaches focus on altering the relational variables that occur in and around the classroom. The relational aspects of classroom environments (characterized by teacher sensitivity; regular, weekly, or daily lessons that fit students’ emotional and academic needs; stable routines; teacher-monitored engagement; and proactively managed behavior) have been shown to affect positively children’s behavior and engagement in learning (Parker et al., 2010).

Responsive Classroom (Responsive Classroom, 2023) and Second Step (Committee for Children, 2011) are programs that are based in relational competence and aim to bring together the social and academic experiences of the classroom to develop productive and respectful communities. Overall increases in perception of school climate, social skills,
social competence, and reductions in bullying, delinquency, fighting, were also reported. Corollary outcomes for teachers using these types of programs included self-efficacy for building positive relationships with children (Belfield et al., 2015).

Even with a focus almost exclusively on content, it is evident that programs for moral education can be beneficial under certain conditions. Schools that have explicit moral education programs signal to teachers that moral matters are an important part of the work of teaching. The mere existence of these programs as a resource within a school act as an indicator that the program should be taught. However, without ongoing professional development, preserved instructional time within the schedule, and consistent application in the classroom, the beneficial outcomes from moral education programs will not be sustainable.

For student teachers and in-service professional educators alike, hesitation to engage in this area comes from a lack the conceptual knowledge and moral language, and a struggle to know how to identify and scrutinize conflicts between values that arise in everyday interactions in schools (Boulton-Lewis, Brownlee, Walker, Cobb-Moore, & Johansson, 2011). Though moral education programs have been shown to reduce aggression, to increase prosocial behavior, and to create a sense of positive community in schools (Belfield et al., 2015; Simonsen et al., 2008; Boulton-Lewis et al., 2011), solitary focus on embedding programs, without acknowledgment that moral development also happens within authentic social situations, is short-sighted and ignores the big picture of moral development (Fenstermacher et al., 2009; Milson, 2004; Hansen, 2001; Lumpkin, 2008).
Moral education curricula do not acknowledge the implicit ways teachers teach morally, and therefore such programs are alone insufficient in supporting all aspects of the moral work of teaching. Moral pedagogy must also include the range of teaching strategies, from implicitly transmitting information through teacher behaviors and relationships and to design of classroom systems that explicitly instruct on moral concepts and language. Teachers need training on the entire spectrum of moral education in order to feel capable to support their students’ moral development well.

In his 2001 research, to get a sense of teachers’ ideas about how children develop moral values, Sanger (2001) observed the daily interactions of 30 elementary teachers for three consecutive days on two different occasions. He then interviewed and surveyed teachers based on his observations during free time, circle time, meal times, and other routine classroom experiences. He found that teachers spend the majority of their day engaged in moral education. Educators in this study showed a deep engagement in moral questions and helping children show consideration for others. Children in these classrooms were expected to become aware of and understand the consequences of their own and others’ actions. In this study teachers helped children formulate their position and become aware of other points of view through reasoning and problem solving. In addition, teachers set limits and taught children to compromise, share, and listen to others.

Sanger (2001) also found that teachers in this study inhibited moral development in their students. Though they were observed engaging children in moral reasoning, teachers most often used guilt as a strategy for developing empathy and resolving conflict. In their intentional and unintentional avoidance of engagement in certain
conflicts, teachers worked to encourage their students to engage in moral conduct that is aligned with the teachers’ values. Sanger noted that rather than showing unconditional positive regard for all children, many times it was the same children who repeatedly got in trouble or are positively supported. Those students who were repeatedly encouraged were more likely to have positive relationships with the teachers, therefore also benefitting from other outcomes that follow positive teacher-student relationships. Some teachers interrupted children from comforting other children, as well as encouraged competition rather than cooperation among the children.

Unwittingly these teachers were negatively impacting their students’ moral development. They did not yet have the skills to identify teaching morally or teaching morality and the effects as their own behaviors impact their students’ moral development. Teachers in this study at times violated their own expressed values with their actions of condemnation, threat, punishment, or avoidance (Sanger, 2001). It follows that teachers’ in-the-moment decisions did not take advantage of authentic opportunities for moral education, and in fact may have supported an interpretation of behavior inconsistent with prosocial moral behavior. Similar to other research findings (Campbell, 2015), the teachers in this study were unable to articulate or recognize the importance of moral considerations, though the ideas are familiar and important once pointed out. This study highlights the need for teachers to have training in both the implicit and explicit ways that moral education emerges in the classroom. Without training and deeper understandings of the multifaceted ways that the moral work of teaching impacts students’ moral development, teachers may unintentionally create the conditions that counteract positive moral development and lead to negative or antisocial moral behavior. In order to develop
such training to support deeper understandings, we must first understand pre-service teachers’ orientations to this work.

**What are Teachers’ Perspectives on the Moral Work of Teaching?**

As important as the moral work of teaching is, research shows that most teachers are not trained for moral education (Boulton-Lewis et al., 2011; Sanger, 2012). Though teachers report being drawn to teaching for moral reasons, such as wanting to help society and help students grow into good people, they receive little training on how to accomplish those ultimate goals. In fact, teachers more often lack the vocabulary to even discuss the ways in which morality manifests in their classrooms (Sanger, 2012). Without the opportunity to discuss the ways that morality is embedded in their work, teachers are not able to articulate how deeply their work is affected by moral elements.

John Goodlad’s (1990) influential field study of teacher education in the United States found that students and faculty in teacher education programs commonly have an intuitive sense of the moral nature of teaching and are often motivated by moral reasons in pursuing their work in education. However, both teacher education students and faculty were often found to lack the professional language and knowledge with which to intentionally address this supposedly central feature of the work of teaching. This finding has been replicated in subsequent studies (Brookhart & Freeman, 1992; Farkas, Johnson, & Foleno, 2000).

There is a general lack of moral language in teaching and teacher education (Boulton-Lewis et al., 2011; Sanger, 2012), despite the fact that most teachers are drawn into teaching because of their moral commitments to serve children and society in ways that fulfill an individual’s very identity. Teachers are “called” to their profession with a
desire to make a moral impact through relationships. Lack of a professional language specific to the moral elements of their work denies teachers the ability to reflect upon their practice, or to make predictions, theoretical descriptions, or explanations regarding what they do and how they do it (Sanger, 2012). Without specific language to deliberate and describe the moral work of teaching, moral behavior is more likely to be based on instinct, therefore reactive, unplanned, and unconsciously performed. If teachers are not taught and given opportunities to talk about their work as moral, they are not truly able to teach their students morality with intention. This leads to a missed opportunity to do the work that inspires and maintains teachers through the hard parts of the work.

Researchers have found teachers are not prepared for moral education (Campbell, 2004; Milton, 2004; Boulton-Lewis et al., 2011). In their case study research, Boulton-Lewis et al. (2011) found that teachers descriptions of moral values were vague and more concerned with conventional understandings of “good.” According to the researchers, teachers in this study subscribed to a mostly behaviorist perspective of moral learning, describing students’ morality as developing through their responsiveness to associations and through positive and negative reinforcement. Teachers in this study made almost no mention of cognitive development or moral reasoning in terms of moral learning. Teachers described children’s moral learning as based solely on observation of modelling by adult example or incidental learning through chance experience. Only one of the 11 interviewed early childhood educators described learning morally through active participation in solving problems and reflecting on consequences. This study supports the need for better preparation for teachers in the value of moral reasoning and discussion in classrooms. In addition, this study highlights the need for more training in teacher
education on moral development and developmentally appropriate expectations in regard to morality.

In her case study interviews with nine teachers, Campbell (2004) observed underlying philosophical controversies regarding the teachers’ working definitions and interpretations of ethical and moral visions of schooling. Teachers in this study reported conflict between their theoretical values and their values in their classroom practice. Teachers in this study underestimated their own influence on their students’ moral development, while emphasizing the influence of their students’ home lives. While teachers acknowledge that the demands for teachers to contribute to both the intellectual and moral development of children have increased, teachers are not always aware of their own potency in their students’ moral development. While teachers’ responsibilities have increased in this area, the opportunities to articulate, observe, and process moral development as a phenomenon are few. Moral development therefore remains the unarticulated proverbial elephant in the room. Campbell (2004) did find that teachers reported increased awareness of the moral nature of their work through participation in the study. Their increased enthusiasm and interest demonstrate that teachers do benefit from coaching and reflection on the Moral Work of Teaching.

Adams et al. (2015) surveyed teacher educators to determine how much training teachers are receiving in moral education. They found that, because mandatory curriculums have been implemented by the state accreditation boards, teacher educators were embedding the theory and methods for moral education into other courses. Moral education more often was situated in one session of a broader content area, such as Child Development or Classroom Management. Shared language and shared criteria for
development was therefore lacking in the teacher preparation programs. Some respondents reported that it was so little that it was impossible to even quantify the amount of time they were devoting to moral education among the required content for teacher preparation. Though the majority of teacher educators in this study rated the content of moral education as “very important” or “important,” teacher educators worried that there was not enough time to provide training in the government emphasized literacy and numeracy methods, as well as moral education methods.

Despite the quintessentially moral nature of classroom management, namely how people relate and respond to one another socially, when basic academic learning becomes the sole purpose of teaching and schooling, aspects of moral education get usurped by the technical language of classroom management “strategies” and “methods.” In their review of research, Cummings, Harlow, and Maddux (2007) found that both teachers and pre-service teachers showed low levels of principled moral reasoning. The authors attribute these deficits to the technical preparation teachers go through. Rather than raising the status of teachers as critical thinkers, teacher education trains teachers to be technicians. Interestingly, this research was most often based on self-report, and teachers also directly expressed views about the inadequacy of attention given to the moral work of teaching in teacher education programs. This indicates that teachers have a sense of what they do not know but should.

Sanger (2012) describes this “learnification” of education as lacking the meaningful engagement in deliberation about what should be learned, what constitutes a good education, and what are we educating for. Discussions of classroom management too frequently focus on indoctrinating obedience and good behavior, rather than
discussions of empathy or compassion (Milson, 2004). In contrast, a constructivist perspective to the beliefs, attitudes, feelings, motives, and experiences of educators facilitates meaningful considerations in educational practice. A robust moral language will support teachers in the intentional pursuit of moral meaning and value in their practice, and thus directly affect moral education in classrooms. This language should include considerations of moral development in classroom management, as well as allow for the dignity of students and the relationships teachers have with them and that they have with each other. Professional moral language has the power to highlight that the moral elements of classroom life have educational value in and of themselves.

In that self-efficacy and the reasonable expected outcomes are crucial elements of motivation and predictors of future behavior (Bandura, 1997), the Moral Work of Teaching must be treated as an intentional teaching strategy in pre-service programs. For moral education to be effective at developing students’ morality, teachers must believe in their own ability to influence the moral development of their students along with when and how such opportunities manifest in the classroom. Training in the moral work of teaching is not prioritized in most teacher education curriculum. Few teacher preparation programs have faculty with expertise in moral development. Teacher candidates are therefore not properly prepared for the work because of lack of faculty expertise, thus pre-service teachers are inadequately prepared for the moral work of teaching. Once in the field, some teachers have a natural inclination for moral education. These teachers are often referred to as “naturals” and described as having the “it” required for successful teaching. Many other teachers struggle with this part of the work. Without high self-efficacy, these teachers may shy away from this important task or not view it as part of
their responsibility as teachers. Many novice and veteran teachers believe that the moral work of teaching is something that can only be mastered after years of practice. Though the motivation and persistence required for moral education is greater than for most other teaching tasks, many teachers do not see it as part of the work worth acquiring the associated skills, knowledge, and motivations for. In that self-efficacy and the reasonable expected outcomes are crucial elements of motivation and predictors of future behavior (Bandura, 1997), the Moral Work of Teaching framework (Sanger & Osguthorpe) must be used as an intentional teaching strategy. For moral education to be effective at developing students’ morality, teachers must believe in their own ability to influence the moral development of their students.

**How is Self-Efficacy Related to the Moral Work of Teaching?**

Teachers’ sense of efficacy has shown strong effects on their enthusiasm for and commitment to different aspects of teaching. Self-efficacy is related to effort, goals, planning organization, openness to new ideas, willingness to experiment with new methods, persistence to obstacles, and, importantly, resilience with struggling students. Self-efficacy has been associated even with the likelihood that a teacher will remain in teaching (Milson, 2004). Examples of this can be witnessed in all areas of teaching when a teacher has confidence in a subject and therefore is known to teach it well. Self-efficacy drives interest in professional development which in turn further builds self-efficacy. It follows that a teacher’s sense of efficacy has strong effects on student achievement, motivation, and the students’ own self-efficacy.

Self-efficacy develops in many ways. Shifts in self-efficacy come as the result of positive experience, increasing when an individual perceives a performance as successful.
Applied to teaching, self-efficacy in particular areas of teaching develops through successful teaching experiences. For example, a teacher may build self-efficacy for teaching math because they consistently see their students performing strongly in math activities and feel positive after teaching math lessons. Additionally, self-efficacy develops through observation of positive experience, when an individual observes another individual perform well. Continuing our example, observing teaching colleagues who are strong mathematics teachers builds self-efficacy for teaching mathematics because it makes the task accessible, especially with intentional discussion of the strategies used while teaching. Lastly, self-efficacy can develop through persuasion from trusted mentors, when individuals are surrounded by people who believe they are capable. Coaching and social support builds self-efficacy in that collective problem-solving helps to overcome obstacles and persist through growth. Of course, self-efficacy beliefs are subject to decrease when anxiety, frustration or dissonance are present (Milson, 2004).

Bandura (1986) differentiates a teacher’s sense of self-efficacy into two types: personal teaching efficacy and general teaching efficacy. Personal teaching efficacy (PTE) is the belief that a teacher holds about their effectiveness. It involves one’s sense of competence in given situations. Personal teaching efficacy refers to teacher’s beliefs about their own abilities as a teacher. In the example above, a teacher who is confident in their mathematics teaching abilities has high PTE for mathematics, thus believes in their own capacity to teach math.

General teaching efficacy (GTE) is a teacher’s perception that a specific type of instruction or strategy in general can produce learning regardless of outside
circumstances (Bandura, 1986). It refers to the degree to which the environment can be controlled, such as the extent to which students can be taught given other factors such as family life, intelligence, and school conditions (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). A teacher’s beliefs about the whether certain programs will have desired effects, such as mathematics games or even an entire curriculum, refer to general teaching efficacy. Personal teaching efficacy answers reflective questions such as “Did I do a good job?” and “Am I able to teach this?,” whereas general teaching efficacy answers questions such as “Will this curriculum have the desired effects?” or “Will my students learn what they need from this activity?”

When considering self-efficacy for the moral work of teaching, it is important to consider both personal teaching efficacy and general teaching efficacy. Personal teaching efficacy in the moral work of teaching influences mindset around a teacher’s ability to have effects on their students’ moral development. General teaching efficacy in the moral work of teaching impacts what curriculum or professional development opportunities, if any, a teacher will pursue for use in their classrooms. In that personal teaching efficacy influences general teaching efficacy, a teacher’s motivation to try different tools and strategies depends on their belief in their own capacity to influence their students’ moral development.

Findings in self-efficacy research (Narvaez et al., 2008) support the notion that teachers have wide-ranging conceptions of teaching and learning relative to moral development. In his study of 3,585 teachers, Ledford (2011) found that, though only 16% of his participant teachers received coursework in moral education, teachers who receive coursework in moral education reported a greater sense of self-efficacy for moral
education in their classrooms. Milson (2004) found that teachers who received coursework and professional development in moral education rate significantly higher in both personal teaching efficacy and general teaching efficacy for moral education programs.

Gibson and Dembo (1984) found that elementary teachers have a higher sense of self-efficacy than secondary teachers. This is significant because elementary teaching is most often more wholistic and less siloed than secondary teaching. Therefore, elementary teachers are more often tasked with helping students work through problems and social transgressions. This extra practice in the moral work of teaching likely leads to higher personal teaching efficacy in this area.

Importantly, all teachers also report a lower sense of self-efficacy to affect the moral development of students they perceive to lack good character. Participants expressed reservations about their ability to contribute to the moral development of students with character traits and backgrounds that they perceived would make such efforts less effective (Milson, 2003). This finding indicates that teachers who experience students who need further moral development may in fact contribute to the students’ lack of self-efficacy for morality, furthering beliefs that they are unable to grow in that area.

Research has shown that teachers believe moral development happens exclusively within the family unit. Most teachers in Milson’s (2003) study overemphasized the effects of modeling in influencing moral development of their students, especially modeling from family. Sanger and Osguthorpe (2013) replicated this finding with a belief survey of 92 pre-service teachers. Survey results show that participants commonly express the belief that modeling from family is a primary means by which moral
education occurs. Sockett and LePage (2002) examined the journals of in-service teachers participating a master’s level teacher education program. In these journals the teachers were asked to write about and analyze moral dilemma in their work. The researchers found that the teachers struggled to process insights into varying perspectives, especially cultural variations. This finding may indicate the relevance of this work for cultural competence and culturally relevant pedagogy.

The tension between morality and power exists in the power that teachers hold over students (Buzzelli & Johnston, 2001). Teachers, schools, and state departments of education have control over what moral content is favored. If this is not done with intention, these power players risk reinforcing inequitable systems of power and privilege. The state has an interest in certain aspects of civic competence, therefore lines between civic and cultural/religious morality are blurry. Teachers have an obligation to understand these lines, and the dangers posed when these lines blur, in order to make the best decisions for their students to support their moral development (Fenstermacher et al., 2009; Buzzelli & Johnston, 2001). More research is needed to understand the connection between these two areas of study.

How is the Moral Work of Teaching Reflected in the Current Ideologies in the Field of Education? What is the Role of the Government in the Moral Work of Teaching?

Increased attention to academic achievement in content areas has decreased the attention placed on teacher and student well-being (Lumpkin, 2008). While there is recent movement towards elevating the importance of moral education in response to incidents of violence in schools, the ambiguous nature of terms and lack of accountability undermine initiatives to include moral education as a major component of the schooling
experience. High achievement and rigor battle for time in the full school schedule with moral education in the full school day. In an era of education in which teachers are accountable for teaching content standards, the government must then also hold schools accountable for moral education standards in order for these elements to be valued and allotted their due importance within the school day.

Adams et al. (2015) call this structure of priorities a “performativity agenda.” This structure promotes the idea that in order for schools to be successful, students must meet a set of benchmarks at each grade level in “major” content areas such as English Language Arts and Mathematics. Teachers are held accountable for student performance through standardized state assessments, the scores from which determine whether schools do or do not receive state financial support. The performativity agenda of the education reform era gives rise to the neglect of holistic approaches to teaching and learning (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; Adams, Monahan, & Wills, 2015).

Biesta, Priestley, and Robinson (2015) describe this structure of priorities as a means to replace teacher agency with the complacency of “data-driven” approaches that narrowly define student success on “measurable” components of classroom life. Teachers are responsible for utilizing prescriptive, “research-based” curricula that outline exactly how a lesson should be taught. Tight timelines in scope and sequence limit opportunities for responsiveness to spontaneous classroom circumstances (i.e., those that would fall under teaching morally), such as questions, conflicts, and deviations from the planned lesson. Rigid fidelity to curricula remove a teacher from enacting their best judgement and values around teaching and learning for the students in front of them. While curricular books may serve as a good reference for content instruction, these resources
are likely to omit any reference to the importance of moral education, and thereby render a teacher ill-equipped to support the ongoing moral work of teaching that permeates all curricular topics. In addition, maintaining strict compliance to the scripts provided in these curriculum books prohibits any distraction to address issues of moral education that may arise within the content.

In their ethnographic study with six teachers, Biesta et al. (2015) found that though teachers held a strong sense of professional responsibility to develop supportive relationships with their students, teachers reported an emphasis on the need to “get through the content.” They described themselves as responsible for fixing the academic deficits that students demonstrated. Teachers in this study also reported the perceived tendency for their voices as teachers to be ignored or undermined, both by administrators and by the public. Despite this negativity, teachers described their purpose as teachers as equipping students to function well in society, by relating well to others, having fun in learning, and being engaged in school. Teachers in this study demonstrated a general lack of systematic ways to describe their work beyond those provided by policy makers and curricula guides. Teachers in this study were not able to articulate the processes by which they would be able to manifest their purpose as teachers.

When asked to consider the various ways that morality impacts their teaching, Socket and LePage (2002) found that teachers described the teacher education program as representing an “alternative authority to the conventions, dogmas and rules of the school system” (p. 162). The teachers perceived that, in asking the teachers to reflect and deliberate on moral alternatives, the teacher education program was challenging the “rightful” authority of their workplaces. These teachers experienced concern over
teaching moral issues, leading them to question the program faculty and reject of some of the course content. Finally, some of the teachers doubted program relevance, describing the faculty as unaware of the work in schools. Each of these conclusions help to show that the teachers were not engaging in moral dilemma analysis in their master’s program, even when that program believes they provide such education, and this absence served to reinforce the teachers’ low self-efficacy for the moral work of teaching.

Structured, facilitated reflection and instruction using concrete articulated language in the moral work of teaching functions to keep the conversation about moral education alive and within the possibility of transformation and development, thus building self-efficacy in this area. Without such structured dialogue, teachers can quickly become passive and resigned to “the way things are,” disempowered to affect their students’ moral development. Measures for evaluation of teacher education programs rely mostly on contributions to student academic achievement, lacking attention to moral values (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005). This lack of attention ignores the variety of misconceptions teachers hold related to moral development. Moral matters are then relegated to the background in teaching and teacher education, despite the fact that teachers find motivation for their work from moral reasons such as contributing to the lives of young people (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). Under conditions dominated by technical approaches, all teachers, but especially new teachers, are at risk of feeling ineffective in pursuing the moral work of teaching in their classrooms.

If a teacher’s own moral values match those imposed by the standards and school administration, teachers are more comfortable to make what they believe to be the best decisions to support moral development for their students. If a teacher’s values are in
conflict with those values upheld by the standards and school administration, a teacher experiences dissonance between these competing factors. A sense of “moral schizophrenia” in their work (Sanger, 2012) develops and manifests into a confusing classroom context. When a teacher experiences an internal drive to develop their students’ critical thinking, physical and emotional health, citizenship, sociomoral development, artistic appreciation, and personal growth that conflicts with the push for academic performance as determined by standardized curriculum and test results, teachers are left unsure about how to enact moral education in their classrooms. Teachers in this scenario feel unsure if they have the liberty to follow their own intuition in that regard.

**How can Teacher Educators Build Teachers’ Self-Efficacy for the Moral Work of Teaching? Use of Frameworks to Describe the Moral Work of Teaching**

In order to feel supported in their purpose for teaching, teachers need opportunities to discuss and reflect on the moral nature of their work. Despite the narrowly focused and often technical nature of the dominant discourse in teacher education, public and scholarly views of education continue to demonstrate support for a much broader interpretation of the purposes of schooling than producing quantitative scores of academic learning (Hansen, 2001). Such support raises controversial issues regarding what the terms, scope, values, and methods are from which teachers should base practices of moral education on (Berkowitz, 1998). Lack of common foundational language to determine and discuss “best practices” in moral education impede progress. Success in efforts to make explicit the moral work of teaching require faculty expertise in
the moral domain, common moral language, administrative support, and a coherent theoretical framework from which to examine the role of morality in school communities.

Rather than addressed with intention in systematic ways, moral development is largely the result of isolated efforts by individual professors. Willemse, Lunenberg, and Korthagan (2008) found that both student teachers and teacher educators struggle to articulate the moral dimensions of their work. Both groups had a difficult time making their own values explicit, and both groups were unable to describe how they would plan to make their values explicit in instruction. Data from over 100 student teachers (Revel & Arthur, 2007) show that even though moral development is understood to be a part of teaching, these student teachers reported uncertainty in their ability to affect moral development of students or participate in moral education with intention (Revel & Arthur, 2007). Similar reports were found as early as the 1990’s (Bergem, 1992). Thirty years later, moral development should be given its appropriate weight in teacher education and professional development. Teachers cannot “opt-out” of the moral work of teaching—they do it whether conscious of it or not. It is imperative that they are trained to engage in ways that are more reflective and aware of the moral aspects of the field and supported by well-developed language and practices.

In a study of 33 Finnish teachers, Husu and Tirri (2003) found that using a specific framework to examine moral dilemma in classrooms was useful in helping teachers to understand variance in their professional morality as a staff, as well as helpful for teachers to articulate their own values and beliefs related to their school community. Following a framework created a common language that allowed teachers to examine if their own values were in alignment with those of the school community. In examining the
meta school values that represented what the teachers saw as characteristics of a good and
effective school community, teachers were able to understand that notions of school
values among teachers are diverse and often vague. The researchers recommended giving
students and teachers time to reflect on and discuss what their values are and what each
of their values may mean to the school community (Husu & Tirri, 2003). These types of
practices work to clarify and reinforce the language necessary to make explicit the ways
in which the moral work of teaching is relevant to classroom life. With articulated and
shared language, teachers can then be intentional about their own development in this
area, thus building their personal self-efficacy for the moral work of teaching and their
general self-efficacy for explicit programs of moral education, thus making positive
effects to their students’ moral development.

In 2009, Sanger and Osguthorpe similarly used the Moral Work of Teaching
framework to analyze the Child Development Project (CDP). The Child Development
Project was an experimental professional development program for experienced
elementary school teachers in diverse settings across the United States. The goal of this
program was to help teachers foster prosocial development in their students. Over a 15-
year period, CDP designed classroom activities that aspired to form bonds between
people within the institution that satisfy program goals. The program is based on the
values of positive relationships, justice, and democratic citizenship. These values are
further supported by giving students opportunities to cooperate, help, receive help,
discuss, and reflect on their experiences.

The Moral Work of Teaching (Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2009) framework provided
descriptive categories to track the factors behind and describe key features of the moral
nature of the program. Categories used by Sanger and Osguthorpe (2009) include psychological assumptions, moral assumptions, educational assumptions, and environmental characteristics. Using this approach provided an explicit explanation of why the Child Development Project was successful. Using the Moral Work of Teaching categories to describe the Child Development Project, Sanger and Osguthorpe (2009) found that the program relied on the theories of student motivation, attachment, and care. Further, Sanger and Osguthorpe (2009) found that CDP encourages the development of prosocial characteristics, attitudes, motives, and behaviors.

CDP is based on the moral assumption that affect, especially concern for others, provides the basic motivation for prosocial behavior. Using the Moral Work of Teaching framework, Sanger and Osguthorpe (2009) were able to uncover that CDP is based on the educational assumption that schooling is a social endeavor, and that students learn to participate in an active citizenship through direct experience as a member of a participatory community. Lastly, the Moral Work of Teaching framework revealed that CDP, like other similar programs, is contingent upon the people, experience, interpretations, and perceptions of values. The MWT framework was helpful to parse out the unique components of this moral education approach, as well as useful in building a common language of discourse for teachers to understand various approaches to moral education.

Synthesis

Educators agree that teaching is much more than merely sharing information with students. Relationships developed in classrooms are powerful tools for moral development. Students learn from watching teachers engage relationally. Positive
relationships build moral development and positive relational associations. There are many different types of curricular programs that would be considered moral in nature. These programs aim to build moral development in students through character development, violence prevention, and peace building. Though these curricula have a similar overarching purpose, they are not grouped together because of a lack of common language to describe their similar intentions for classrooms. Though there is pressure from the government offices to adopt some kind of program, schools are left to decide what type of program aligns to their values, priorities, and theories of action.

This dissertation promotes a more generalized approach to moral education: engagement in a framework that examines the moral aspects that exist throughout the school day. The Moral Work of Teaching (Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2009) framework provides a thorough lens through which to examine the ways in which schools can be peaceful, safe, accepting, democratic places for all community members. Although teachers most often enter the field for moral reasons, they receive little training in moral work of teaching in their training. Lack of training leads teachers to a lack of language to describe the moral elements of their work. Even faculty in Schools of Education do not have the language to describe the moral elements of teaching. Most Schools of Education do not have an expert in moral development on faculty. Rather, moral development is relegated to one session in a somewhat related content area. Moreover, teachers promote the idea that MWT is something that must be learned over a career, rather than something that can be taught. Thus, they do not know to seek training in the MWT. Because they are not properly trained to understand the importance of the moral work of teaching, teachers underestimate their own influence on their students’ moral development. Lack of training
and language leaves the moral work of teaching left to intuition and reflex of teachers, rather than something that is intentionally used as a tool for student growth.

Teacher self-efficacy in specific content areas affects student performance in those areas. Personal teaching efficacy and general teaching efficacy are both important because both influence student outcomes. Personal teacher efficacy influences the types of behaviors teachers enact in the classroom, and general teacher efficacy influences “buy in” to a particular curriculum. “Buy in” influences the quality and quantity to which teachers use curricula or seek professional development in certain areas.

The current ideology of education is outcomes-driven. Teachers are pressured to get students to perform highly in all areas of academics. Focus on academic achievement distracts teachers from investment in MWT. In response to bullying and other school violence, there is recent backlash pressure to include more moral education in the daily classroom experience. The lack of formal language and consensus on how best to discuss teaching morally and teaching morality make engagement in this area difficult. Teachers who work at high pressure schools (often urban) report feeling conflicted dissonance between how they want to do the work and how they are expected to do the work to keep administrators satisfied. Teachers are left questioning how to teach in a way that aligns with their values.

Without elevating the importance of MWT in schools and teacher education programs, teachers are not afforded the self-efficacy building experiences that encourage them to engage in this work. Low teacher self-efficacy in this area will naturally lead to poor student outcomes, especially for students who develop more slowly or need extra scaffolding. Teachers may avoid conversations about values, afraid they will say the
wrong thing or upset someone. Teachers believe modelling from family is the most relevant aspect of influence on student moral development, but often do not acknowledge their own behavior as influential on student moral development. Teachers are hesitant to do anything that will conflict with the school’s values. Training in MWT builds self-efficacy in that area, thus having a positive impact on student moral development. However, coaching in MWT needs to be in alignment with school values and experiences in schools in order to be most effective. Training in the moral work of teaching should be foundational and included in teacher education programs.

These practices are more than a set of skills, but rather qualities of character and attitudes that must be developed to foster democratic engagement. Development of these qualities depends on student participation in the design of classroom and school policies. This type of instruction requires the development of a classroom culture in which students feel able to express their views, even if they differ from peers or teachers. Teacher must learn how to conduct deliberative discussions and create supportive learning communities that are designed for equal access. As these are skills that are not tested and difficult to measure, many teachers are reluctant to spend time developing these skills. They may be afraid of getting in trouble for discussing controversial issues. Yet, if teachers are to do the moral work of teaching, to help students develop the capacities of problem solving, perspective taking, self-control, cooperation, bias awareness, and communication required for democratic learning communities, they need training in conflict resolution strategies, as well as training in the specific methods used to teach these skills to others.
Pre-service teachers need help to see injustice related to dynamics of power in order to understand how to engage democratically with their students. They must be trained to engage others’ points of view and be open to changing their own minds when given good reasons to do so, even on topics they hold close to heart. While pre-service teachers and faculty in teacher education programs commonly have an intuitive sense of the moral nature of teaching, research shows they often lack the language and associated knowledge to engage intentionally with moral imperatives. This study seeks to further the understanding of pre-service teachers’ orientations to the moral work of teaching, which is necessary in order to develop the type of programming and instruction for teachers that would be most beneficial. More research is required to understand how pre-service teachers experience the moral work of teaching and how confident they feel to enact the moral work of teaching in their own classrooms.
CHAPTER 3

METHODS

This chapter describes the methods used for this study. The research design is a logical plan for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data. It manages four research problems: questions to study, determining relevant data, deciding what data to collect, and process for analyzing collected data (Yin, 2009). The present work uses a descriptive multi-case study design of qualitative research.

Rationale for Multi-Case Study Design

This project utilized qualitative case study design to collect information from participants. Qualitative research seeks to understand how people make sense of their lives and their experiences. If the unit of analysis exists within a bounded system, case study design is the appropriate method of investigation (Merriam, 2009). In this research the unit of study exists within the unique experiences of each of the pre-service teacher participants. Case study refers to an in-depth analysis and description of a bounded system that uses the researcher as the primary instrument of data collection (Merriam, 2009). Each participant brings their own historical experiences and perspectives that contribute to their own bounded experience.

Case study is empirical investigation within real-life contexts. It is an especially appropriate methodology to use when the boundaries between the phenomenon under study and the context itself are undefined and when there are many contributing variables of interest (Yin, 2009). In so far as each participant experienced the interaction between their own perspective and the general experience of the teacher education program differently, the variables that motivate participant utterances and interactions are
subjective. In that investigation in case study is inductive and interpretive, the researcher seeks to uncover the interaction of significant factors characteristic of the phenomenon of study. As focus in case study is holistic and designed for situations in which it is impossible to separate influential variables from the context, this research design was appropriate for use to examine the research questions for this study. Case study research can be used to contribute to understanding complex individual, group, organizational, or social phenomena (Yin, 2009). In this research, case study design allowed for the evaluation of the monumental, complicated experience of teacher preparation through the examination of common themes and noticeable differences among participants.

The “case” under study can be a single person, program, institution, or it can refer to a group or community of some process or concern. Multiple case study has also been described as cross-case, multisite, or comparative (Merriam, 2009). Multiple, or collective, case study design describes research in which a number of cases that share a common characteristic are studied in order to investigate a population or general condition.

When based on a variety of data sources, multiple case studies are rich, empirical descriptions of particular instances of a phenomenon (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). Building theory from multiple case studies is a research strategy that involves using more than one case to create a theoretical construct. The theory emerges through inductive, iterative exploration of the data to the extent that patterns in relationships and experiences are recognized across and within cases and their underlying logical arguments. Theory building in multiple case studies depends on replication logic, whereas each case is its own analytic unit serving to replicate, contrast, and extend emerging theory in the real-
world contexts in which they are situated (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). In this research, each of the participants’ utterances and experiences were first examined uniquely. Then participants’ descriptions were examined for common themes and notable differences.

Research design in case study includes five components: questions, propositions (if any), unit(s) of analysis, logical link of the data to the propositions, and the criteria for interpreting findings. This section will briefly unpack each of these components in regard to this work. More detailed descriptions of these components then follow.

Questions

Case studies are appropriate for how and why questions. This multi-case study aimed to understand the following questions: How do pre-service teachers describe the moral work of their teaching practice? How do pre-service teachers in elementary teacher education programs describe their self-efficacy to influence the moral development of their students?

Propositions

Based on my own experience as a teacher, as well as the observational experiences of the many teachers I have worked with in my career as an educator, I propose that the data found in this study will reflect the participants’ deep desire to engage in the moral work of teaching. I also propose, however, that participants’ self-efficacy to do so will be limited, due to factors connected both to their experiences in teacher preparation as well as within the culture of the elementary schools in which they have participated. While pre-service teachers may have a superficial understanding of the moral nature of the work of teaching, it is only through specific training that they are able to organize the nature of the moral work of teaching. Pre-service teachers may have a
sense as to how they affect the morality of their students, but as the research shows, it is unlikely they have the language and specific understandings to participate in each of the elements of the moral work of teaching with intentionality and awareness. While they are drawn into the field of education with moral intentions, such as helping students and developing capable citizens, pre-service teachers are left to depend on their intuition and impulse to navigate the difficult work of leading children through moral reasoning. As they negotiate teaching core content at the required pace, pre-service teachers are likely to react impulsively to contain moral dissonance, as I did in my own role with the situation I described in Chapter 1 with my students Stephan and Kwame, rather than spend time in important deliberation and negotiation. Therefore, pre-service teachers likely have difficulty in doing and discussing the moral work of teaching. In this way, a first proposition is that pre-service teachers feel underprepared for the moral work of teaching and demonstrate limited self-efficacy towards specific ways to influence their students’ moral development.

A second proposition is that the Moral Work of Teaching (Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2009) theory provides a concrete framework from which to articulate pre-service teachers’ beliefs and understandings of the moral nature of their work. Used alongside Self-Efficacy (Bandura, 1997) theory, this framework helps to uncover pre-service teachers’ self-analysis of their competence for being a moral exemplar for their students, as well as using moral curricula and spontaneous teachable moments to intentionally work with their students on moral development. Coupling these two theories will provide structure and language to facilitate deeper understanding of the ways in which pre-service teachers interpret their own experience and abilities for moral education. Projected
findings indicate that pre-service teachers are underprepared to support their students in moral development. While they may express an intuitive understanding of the moral work of teaching, they do not possess the language or strategic approaches necessary to approach this element of the work with intention.

The goal of this multiple case study is to further the evidence that pre-service teachers require intentional support to be the teachers they aspire to be. They need to practice reflecting on the various ways their own behavior impacts the reflection and behavior of their students, and they need experience and coaching to negotiate moral elements in the classroom, both formal and informal. The ideal place for this support is within teacher education programs, which aim to prepare them as professionals in the field. This research will describe the participants’ self-efficacy for the moral work of teaching in order to make analytic generalizations about pre-service teachers entering the field of education. While this theory is limited, examination of the individual perceptions of these five pre-service teachers contributes to the body of research examining novice teachers’ perceptions of their own preparation, specifically in the area of moral education.

**Units of Analysis**

Units of analysis for study in this work include the utterances and interactions from a series of interviews with five pre-service teachers in the same master’s level elementary teacher education program. Through examining the utterances of multiple in-depth interviews I was able to unpack the character of their orientations towards the moral work of teaching, including any contradictions between what the participants hoped for themselves in their teaching practice, and what they were able to enact in their classrooms. Lengthy, open-ended conversations with participants allowed for an intimacy
that revealed the depth of the participants’ perspectives about their preparation and visions of themselves as teachers. Detailed descriptions of each of the participants, as well as the teacher education program in which they participate, are to follow.

**Participants and Sites**

This study examined the utterances and interactions of participants in a 10-month, master’s level elementary teacher education and certification program at a large public university in Western New England. The university offers both graduate and undergraduate work in the field of education. The College of Education at this university espouses values of “holistic teaching, collaborative research, community engagement, and social justice.” The website for the college states that their course of study will prepare “teachers and leaders who will revolutionize education.” Undergraduate study opportunities include such programs as Early Childhood Education, Special Education, and Community Education & Social Change. Graduate level study opportunities include programs such as Elementary Education; International Education; Language, Literacy and Culture; and Social Justice Education.

Participants in this study participate in the master’s level Elementary Education program referred to as the Collaborative Teacher Education Pathway (CTEP). Students can enter the program either directly from their undergraduate work at the same university in a “4 +1” year program or from another university as a recent graduate or current professional in the “Career Pathways.” The CTEP program is described as “intensive academic study with carefully supervised field experiences.” The program is ideal for individuals who want to “quickly earn a master’s degree and license in elementary education.”
The program is a full-time, rigorous experience that leads to an M.Ed. and teacher licensure in the state. Students participate in intensive, face to face coursework throughout the initial summer of the program. In fall, students are placed in supervised pre-practicum field experiences three days a week in public elementary schools in the region. In January, students return to classes and begin their full-time, five day a week practicum placement, most often in a new school. Students are encouraged to participate in both an urban and rural placement throughout the 10 months of the program.

Coursework is rooted in constructivist theory, multicultural and social justice education, and engaged problem solving and reflection. Required courses include Sheltered English Immersion, Applied Child Development, Inclusive Classroom Application, as well as content courses in mathematics, literacy, science, and social studies.

This program typically enrolls a cohort of 30 or fewer students. The small cohort model aspires to provide “mutual support and close relationships.” Candidates should “demonstrate initiative, highly effective interpersonal and communication skills, a passion for learning, and respect for diversity.” Prior to entering the program, candidates must have a bachelor’s degree with a minimum 3.0 GPA, passing scores on the initial state professional license tests, prerequisite coursework in teaching mathematics and literacy, and experience with children.

According to the Graduate Student Dashboard at this university (University of Massachusetts, 2023), approximately 75% of master’s level students in the College of Education identify as female, and approximately 25% identify as male. Approximately 85% of students are domestic students, and 10% are international. All reported
international students identify as East Asian. Just over 75% of the domestic student population identifies as white, approximately 9% as Hispanic or Latino, close to 6% Black or African American, 4% identify as Asian. Individuals identifying as two or more races were just over 2%.

Two criteria were used to decide how many participants to use: sufficiency and saturation of information (Merriam, 2009). Sufficiency is used to ensure adequate representation from the population. In this research the population refers to participants in the master’s level teacher education program from which the participants were selected. While all members of the cohort were offered participation in this study, eight sample participants were recruited intentionally to accurately represent the present and historic population of the program using demographic information such as gender, sexuality, race, and family-of-origin socioeconomic status. Saturation of information is used as a means to collect “enough” information. While “enough” is measured differently for every study, generally the term describes the time at which the researcher begins to hear the same information reported from new participants. This study reached saturation after sample interviews with approximately 1/3 of the total population.

In attempts to represent an authentic range of demographic perspectives consistent with the College of Education, participants included three white domestic female students, one Hispanic international male student, and one Latina international student. It is interesting to note here that the demographics of the College of Education as reported on the college dashboard do not include the two students in this study as international, though they were both born internationally. Participants included four students in the university’s 4 + 1 track towards their master’s degree, and one student in the “Career
Pathways” track of the program. Figure 7 shows the participant demographic list for this study.

![Participant Demographic List Graphic](image)

**Figure 6: Participant Demographic List Graphic**

**Participant Biographies**

Participant biographies are presented before the results of each case below. Participant names have not been used to protect anonymity, and pseudonyms have been assigned to each. Participants are presented in alphabetical order according to pseudonym. With each participant, I present the participant’s family and childhood experiences up to entrance into the teacher education program, specifically centered around schooling, though also including other biographical information each participant felt was relevant to share.

**Data Collection Instruments**

Case study is explanatory, using a variety of evidence, such as interviews, observations, and artifacts, to answer the *how* and *why* of experience; for example, how do pre-service teachers describe/consider the moral work of teaching, and under which circumstances? Data collection in case study involves multiple sources of information. Case study data is defined as “thick” in that it aims to include as many variables as
possible, portraying interactions over time and space in order to offer insight into why things are the way they are and how they got that way (Merriam, 2009).

The primary data collection tools of this research were interviews. Interviews were in-depth and audio-recorded, conducted individually and in focus groups, as defined below. In addition, I visited the Spring practicum placements of each of the participants to capture environmental elements and relevant classroom artifacts that may have influenced participants’ descriptions. This research also included data sources such as researcher memos, audio records, and photos of classroom artifacts. Below is a description of each of the data collection tools used in this research.

**Interviews**

Interviewing is observing the stories of people’s lives as a way of knowing and understanding (Merriam, 2009). In telling their stories, people reflect, select, and order important details, and make meaning of their experiences. Interviews offer people an opportunity to symbolize their experience through language (Yin, 2009). Interviewing is a method of qualitative inquiry that depends on the belief that people’s stories have worth. Through in-depth interviews with student teachers, this research project illuminated the student teacher experience in relation to the elements of the moral work of teaching in their classroom experiences.

The study featured a series of three interviews, each of which served a different purpose: 1) personal history, 2) experiences as a student teacher and beliefs about themselves becoming a teacher; and 3) beliefs about teaching, moral decisions and conflict resolution, and education. The first interview served as a review of the participants’ time up to the teacher education program. Questions in the first interview
center around the participant’s own schooling history, family structure, and life until the teacher education program. The second interview questions ask the participant to reflect on their time in the program itself, to give a timeline and outline of experiences as they occurred within the program. The third interview is interpretive in nature, in that the questions ask the participant to make linkages between their experiences prior to and in the program. Questions in the third interview asked the participant to make sense of their work as a pre-service teacher, in the graduate classes, in their practicum placement, and in their life as a teacher. Participants are asked to make interpretations about their experiences in the final interview to put the story elements together in a cohesive manner. Interview Protocols can be found in the Appendices of this paper.

In order to capture the essence of both their experience within the teacher preparation program as well as the potential experience they will have as classroom teachers, the primary data collection period was scheduled around the required two-week classroom “takeover” period. This portion of the practicum experience typically occurs towards the end of the program and requires the student teacher to “take the place” of the classroom teacher in planning and executing lessons. During this period, the pre-service teacher will lead the class for much of the day, allowing for full control of the students’ daily experience. Data collection at this time ensured the pre-service teachers have had experience in how they may behave in their own classroom to reflect on. Additionally, centering the data collection period around the “Lead Teach” surfaced dissonance the pre-service teacher felt between their desired “teacher-self” and their actual self as a teacher.
**Focus Group**

This research included one focus group interview with all participants before the start of the individual interview period. Focus group data is socially constructed and is an opportunity for people to consider their own views in the context of the views of others. They are an ideal space for talking about topics “people could talk about to each other in their everyday lives – but don’t” (Meriam, 2009). The focus group interview for this research was moderated as an informal interview with predetermined guiding questions from the Focus Group Protocol in the Appendix of this paper. The goal of this interview was to get all participants thinking about the moral work of their own teaching in preparation for the individual interviews. The social nature of this focus group allowed the participants to help each other think about common experiences in the teacher education program in new ways they might have previously considered unrelated to the topic.

**Audio Recordings**

Audio recording interviews offers many benefits to research. Paraphrasing or summarizing participants’ words acts to substitute the researcher’s consciousness for the participants. Recordings preserve the original words of the participant to refer back to again and again. This iterative process provided real benefit during data analysis in piecing together themes in the participants’ stories.

**Document/Environment Analysis**

This research also depended on analysis of specific documents both around the classroom environment and used by the student teacher. These documents included student work, classroom posters, and bulletin board artifacts that are posted around the
classroom as reference points and exemplars. Additionally, analysis included pre-service teacher lesson plans or relevant student work that was shared with the researcher.

**Logical Link of the Data to the Propositions**

Data from this study was analyzed using the 6-phase guide to doing thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clark (2006). The six phases of this analysis strategy follow an iterative process between exploration of the data and development of findings. Phases of this process are as follows: familiarizing yourself with your data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and finally producing the report (see Figure 8). Outcomes of this process is further described in the section below.

In addition, throughout the data analysis period the pattern matching strategy of analysis for multiple case studies was engaged (Yin, 2009). This strategy looks for centralized themes across multiple cases. In this strategy each set of findings was expanded by the cases analyzed before it, building the case for validity of findings in individual cases. Pattern matching helped to highlight the theoretical replication that supports the final findings of this research (Yin, 2009).

![Figure 7: Six-Phase Guide for Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clark, 2006)](image)

Phase one of Thematic Data Analysis involves familiarizing yourself with the data (Braun & Clark, 2006). Transcribing, reading, and rereading the data all allow the
researcher to become familiar with the ideas that are revealed within the data. Interacting with the data in this immersive way allows the researcher to develop a thorough understanding of the data. For this study, the first phase involved transcribing audio recorded interviews using MAXQDA research software. Transcripts were then combined into one document and printed to create a data set based on interviews with a primary participant. Throughout phase one, the researcher read and reread the interview data of all participants, and took notes on thematic ideas that arose during the transcription process. In phase two of Thematic Data Analysis (Braun & Clark, 2006), initial codes are generated. These initial codes identify features of the data that is relevant to the research questions. Codes in this phase serve as a means to organize the ideas found in the data, rather than specific units of analysis that are broad and used to interpret meaning. In phase two of this thematic analysis, the researcher reread the transcription documents, highlighting participant quotes that seemed relevant to the research questions and theory. The researcher noted each initial code on the printed data set, tagging and naming while rereading through the data, noting patterns and repeated initial codes as they appeared in the data. Codes were then listed in an Initial Codes table (see Appendix E).

Once a long list of codes had been generated, phase three began. Phase three involves searching for themes from generated the list of codes (Braun & Clark, 2006). The intent of phase three is to broaden analysis to the level of larger themes. At this point in this analysis, the researcher examined the list of codes and grouped them into categories according to possible linkages or relationships. Each excerpt was coded to fit in as many different themes as possible. Fifteen initial candidate themes were identified: School Policies, Disposition, Ways of Engaging, Relationships, Beliefs, School Culture,
Values, Biases, Academics, Curriculum, Participant Ethnicity, Text, Rule Negotiation, Class Discussion, and Traditions. Four of these initial themes were found to be specific to only one or two participants’ descriptions. Therefore, those themes were discarded for the purposes of this research. Discarded themes include School Policies, School Culture, Participant Ethnicity, and Text. Further research should examine these themes to examine whether they do in fact have more of a generalizable impact on the moral work of teaching.

The researcher then returned to the data set, reviewed the excerpts, coded the extracts with the candidate themes. Finally, the excerpts were collated in a new table within their identified theme. Descriptions of each of these initial themes can be found in Appendix E. The data was reread in order to substantiate each theme.

Phase four of Thematic Data Analysis serves to verify that the identified themes are in fact separate and have distinct conceptual boundaries (Braun & Clark, 2006). This phase serves to refine the identified themes in two levels: first with the coded data and again with the entire raw data set. In level one of phase four the researcher will read all the collated data for each theme to identify a coherent pattern. If the themes hold up in level one, the researcher will then apply level two of this phase. If the themes do not display a coherent pattern, the researcher will rework or discard the theme. At the end of level one, once all of the themes satisfactorily display coherent pattern, the researcher will have a thematic map from which to describe the themes.

In the analysis for this study, as the researcher applied phase four (reviewing themes) with the identified themes, a pattern emerged that at once validated the elements of the Moral Work of Teaching (Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2009) framework while also
showing that themes in the framework could be further defined. Alongside broader categories of Teaching Morally and Teaching Morality, and the Manner and Content ways of Teaching Morality, the researcher identified that Teaching Morally could further be disaggregated into the Interpersonal and Intrapersonal ways of Teaching Morally. Further, another as yet undefined level of coding was observable. This third level of MWT differentiated Teaching Morality with Manner into two new categories: Rule Negotiation and Class Discussions. Teaching Morality with Content is further differentiated into three new categories: Curriculum, Academics, and Traditions categories. The new level two categories for Teaching Morally can also be further disaggregated. Teaching Morally Interpersonally is further differentiated into three new categories: Disposition, Ways of Engaging, and Relationships. Teaching Morally Intrapersonally is further differentiated into three new categories: Beliefs, Values, and Biases. Figure 9 shows the organization of the original MWT categories, as well as the categories observed in the analysis of this study. Detailed descriptions of each category in the thematic map are included in Chapter 4.
Phase five of Thematic Data Analysis is where the story of the relationships between themes are revealed. It is at this point that the connection is made between the identified themes and the research questions. Researchers in this phase develop a thematic relationship map that articulates what will be described in the analysis. Sub-themes are identified, highlighting any complexity that exists between themes. For this research, the thematic map found in Figure 9 was revealed.

The final report is produced in phase six of Braun and Clark’s (2006) Thematic Analysis. The goal of this phase is to produce a written account of the data that is convincing and supportive of the analysis. It is important to go beyond a simple description of the data and strive for an interesting argument in relation to the research
presented. The analytic narrative produced from phase six strives to be vivid, concise, and logically coherent. The outcome of phase six is this paper.

In addition to the thematic analysis related to the moral work of teaching, data analysis focused on self-efficacy. I engaged Bandura’s Self-Efficacy Triangulation (1997) theory. According to this theory, motivation for attempts at any behavior will depend on an individual’s beliefs and experiences with that particular behavior. In this case, motivation for further attempts at the moral work of teaching is dependent on a preservice teacher’s beliefs about their own competency with the moral work of teaching and experiences with performance of success of the moral work of teaching. According to Self-Efficacy Triangulation theory (1997), experiences include personal direct experiences, vicarious observed experiences, as well as experiences of persuasion from a coach. Experiences and beliefs foster further attempts in that positive beliefs and experiences are more likely to build motivation for further attempts, and therefore indicate higher self-efficacy. Likewise, negative beliefs and experiences foster lower self-efficacy. See Figure 10.
In order to determine a sense of a participant’s self-efficacy for future attempts at the moral work of teaching, participants’ utterances of their experiences and beliefs of the moral work of teaching were coded as positive or negative. This led to a thick description of participants’ self-efficacy as related to the moral work of teaching.

**Criteria for Interpreting Findings**

In case study research it is important to consider the qualities of data that ensure relevancy to the questions being asked. One way to do this with qualitative case study data is through considering rival explanations (Yin, 2009). Rival explanations are explanations for outcomes of a study that rely on a different influence than the variable projected (Yin, 2009). For this multi-case study, I considered two rival explanations in my interpretation of the results. First, I considered the Null Rival Hypothesis. In this type
of rival, the observation is the result of chance circumstances only. In the case of this research, it is possible that the observed patterns across and between pre-service teacher utterances are the result of random experience commonalities. It is possible that the pre-service teachers report of their experience did not in fact relate to their experience in the teacher education program, but rather were a result of their life experience before or outside of the program. To account for this rival explanation, I designed my interview protocols and follow up questions to include attempts to collect evidence about participants’ lives outside of the program. As can be observed in Figure 11 below, the interview schedule enabled multiple opportunities for this type of rival explanation from outside of the program to emerge.

Figure 10: Timeline for Recruitment and Data Collection

As shown in Figure 11, the data collection for this research occurred in second semester of the teacher preparation program. Pre-service teachers from the 2018-2019 CTEP cohort were first introduced to this research at the end of the Fall 2018 semester. At the time this researcher was an instructor for the CTEP Child Development course. Once approval from the Internal Review Board had been acquired in November, I shared my intent to do this research with the current CTEP cohort. I sent the recruitment email and Participant Demographic Questionnaire found in Appendix A and B in January of
Five interested parties were notified of their participation status in February of 2019. The initial Focus Group Interview occurred on March 24, 2019, and the three-interview series for each participant occurred throughout the month of April. Additionally, classroom visits occurred at a point after the initial interview in the month of April. All research data had been gathered by May 2019, when the data collection period was complete and analysis began.

Additionally, there exists the chance for Investigator Bias as a rival explanation for the outcomes observed. My own perspective as an educator may in fact have influenced my interpretations of the utterances in order to support my own personal priorities in the field. To control for this rival explanation, I made my position explicit to the participants, and asked them to co-regulate for this chance as I gathered data. Follow up questions included confirmations and clarifications, such as “Am I hearing this correctly?” and “Is it accurate to say that…?” Additionally, participants read the transcripts of their interviews for corrections and clarifications. This process allowed for any inconsistencies or misinterpretations to be clarified and corrected.

**Trustworthiness Features**

The data for this study was triangulated to ensure the highest degree of trustworthiness. Data was collected through multiple sources, including individual interviews with pre-service teachers, a focus group interview with all of the participants, and classroom artifacts that were documented on photographs and memos then analyzed for themes relevant to the research questions. Lastly, themes uncovered through data collection were supported by a thorough review of theoretical and empirical literature.
related to teacher self-efficacy and the moral work of teaching.
CHAPTER 4
CASE 1: HONEY

Participant Biography

For the purposes of this paper, participant 1 will be referred to as Honey. Recall from Figure 7 that Honey is a white female in her early 20s. She entered the teacher education program directly after attending the same university for her undergraduate degree pursuing licensure in the “4 + 1” route (four years for a bachelors plus 1 year to achieve Master’s of Teaching and Licensure).

Honey has a very close relationship with her mother and younger brother. She describes her mother as “much more like a best friend than a mom.” Honey is also very close to her brother who is an undergraduate student at the same university. Though she is moderately close with her father, she describes him as “tough” and “kind of a jerk.” She notes that he can come across as “rude” and “kind of racist.” She limits her time with him because he says things that she “doesn’t want to be a part of.” Her family all agrees that Honey will be an excellent teacher.

Honey described her hometown as “suburban average” and “predominantly white” with limited opportunity to experience cultural diversity. In the public school elementary and middle schools in her small town, she did not feel that she ever really had to “work too hard to do what was asked” of her. School always “came naturally” to Honey, and she considered herself a “good student.” In high school Honey attended a Catholic private school located in a medium-sized city nearby her town. There she made close friends with “a lot of different types of people.” Though she rejects organized
religion, she contributes her value of “being good to people no matter what they look like and giving back to those less fortunate than you” to her experience in Catholic school.

Honey worked very hard in high school. In our first interview she explained, “I loved school actually. I was a really good student. School has always come naturally to me. I don’t feel like I ever had to work very hard to do what was asked of me in school. It was something I felt like I was good at so I liked going to school.” She was in all of the higher-level classes, and the experience of success in these classes reaffirmed her self-image as a “good student.” Surrounded by other “really smart and driven” people, Honey experienced the school as “really hard” but rewarding. The school culture was one of high achievement and high pressure. Though it was overwhelming at times, Honey felt that she would not receive the same “high quality education” at her local public high school.

Honey always had a close relationship with her teachers. She worked with many of them at the public summer camp in her town. When she aged-out of being a camper in 8th grade, she and her friends asked the director to create a Counselor in Training (CIT) program for them. She then worked at the camp for the next six summers until she entered the teacher education program. In her CIT position she worked with 4th-6th graders primarily. She “loved goofing around with them” and “never enjoyed a job more.” Alongside her work with the camp children, Honey enjoyed the multitasking and the “high energy” required for the job.

Her camp work confirmed what she had known since she was six: she was “meant to be a teacher.” Like “walking or breathing,” being a teacher is something she has always been working towards. Honey believes that “teachers are incredible” and “so
smart.” She admired how “you could ask your teacher anything and ...they would either have the answer or know how to find out the answer.” Honey wanted to be that way herself.

Though she has wanted to be a teacher since she young, Honey went through periods debating whether “being a teacher was too easy.” She knew herself to be “capable of doing really hard things” and was driven to “do a job that required a lot of work.” The teacher education program has taught her that indeed teaching is challenging and requires a lot of thought, creativity, and planning. Despite her initial hesitation, she still believes that teaching is what she is “meant to do.” She shared, “I think that I have just always wanted to be a teacher. I remember being a little kid and wanting to be a teacher. And I would, as I was growing up, try to think of other things that I wanted to be because I was always like ‘no you don’t want to be what you want to be when you were six,’ like that’s not real. I should have grown… I should want to be all these other things. So... I wanted to be a journalist for a while, and I wanted to be a marine biologist for a while. I don’t know, like a bunch of random things. And then I always just kept coming back to wanting to be a teacher. So here I am.”

**Teaching Morality through Manner**

This section will share Honey’s descriptions related to her experiences Teaching Morality through Manner. Descriptions here will relate to how Honey described her experiences setting and upholding social rules and expectations to ensure a prosocial classroom culture. Throughout the interview series Honey emphasized a growth mindset, both for herself and her students. She repeated the need for teachers to be explicit in their expectations, and to practice those expectations as much as students need until they are
capable of success. Her approach is to enable the students to see their individual behavior as making impact on the collective group, and she named several strategies to do so. Honey depended on talking to the students to guide them in their moral development, though she revealed insecurity about knowing what to say and what not to say. She described relying on her intuition and professional network to support her own growth in this area. Below are Honey’s comments that reflected Teaching Morality through Manner from our interview series.

Honey stated that conversing with students is her primary strategy for moral education. She mentioned “being explicit with expectations” as the way to help her students to “be good.” In her conversations, she seeks to “help them grow” rather than “make them feel bad” or “make anyone feel right or wrong.” In our first interview Honey shared, “I feel like that is the most important thing as a teacher is to create an environment of kindness and safety for kids so they feel comfortable coming to school and happy to come to school, and comfortable learning because if you don’t feel like you are in a good space you’re not going to want to be learning; you are not going to be committed to become better if you don’t feel like you are in a space that encourages that.” Honey does not think negative reinforcement, such as “punishing, yelling, or taking things away,” is effective, but did not share alternative approaches. She shared that she feels comfortable to sit with a small group of students to discuss “rights and wrongs,” but she has concerns that she does not have the “language in [her] toolbox of teaching” to ensure these conversations go well. Honey knows that she could spontaneously coach a student through a behavioral issue, but she does not feel prepared to proactively teach the same type of lesson to the whole class.
Similarly, in response to student conflict, Honey said she would “want to have a conversation with the students in conflict, first “individually” and then together, to resolve the conflict in a mutually beneficial way. Honey described that she would remind the students that school is a “cohesive space” where everyone should be “comfortable to be learning” and able to “collaborate.” Honey wants to validate the students’ feelings and to “provide a space for the students to resolve conflict.”

In her first semester placement, Honey became concerned that she did not know “how to mediate unwanted behaviors.” She felt that she was not learning enough information on behavior management in her coursework, and she knew it was an important area to feel skilled. She did not want to “sound mean” or be “yelling at them,” and she “had a hard time demanding good behavior.” Honey decided to intentionally focus her attention on behavior management in her second semester placement. In our second interview she explained, “I don’t really feel like I was taught like how to specifically deal with behaviors. We were taught how to stop them from becoming a problem, but I don’t feel like that will necessarily work every time. So I don’t feel like I was taught really what to do when maybe a crazy behavior situation comes up. That definitely makes me a little nervous.”

With this focus she was able to learn about “setting clear expectations and following through.” Honey learned how to use “call backs, like hear my voice clap once” to get the students back on track. She observed her mentor teacher “stop everyone” after she “gave the expectation” if the students did not follow her expectations. The teacher paused instruction and “had them sit quietly” at their desks until she saw the students were “ready” to “do the right thing.” When they hadn’t been following expectations for
multiple days in a row,” the mentor teacher enforced extra practice during their recess. Honey noted that the mentor teacher “never yelled at them” or “made them feel bad.” Rather the mentor reinforced that “as a collective” there is “something we need to work on, so we are going to work on that.”

Honey learned to engage in discrete redirections with students who are not following expectations. In these interactions, Honey tells the students how the behavior is affecting the classroom as a whole. She refers to the class constitution (see Figure 11) to redirect students toward more prosocial behaviors. Honey described one student who “lashes out and is angry” or who would “be overly silly and unable to get control of his emotions.” Honey thought he was “going through a hard time at home.” Honey noted that the mentor teacher always remained calm with this student and held him to clear expectations. She “pulled him aside and regularly checked in with him.”

![Figure 11: Image of Class Constitution with Student Signatures](image)

Honey noted that she would need to consult with other people in the building, such as the guidance department or principal, about how to manage a student who presented as unresponsive to her approach. She described herself as “not the most
qualified on the subject.” Honey explained that teachers don’t have “total control” over student behavior.

**Teaching Morality through Content**

This section will share Honey’s descriptions related to her experiences teaching Morality through Content. Descriptions here will relate to how Honey described her experiences using moral education curriculum and learning about and upholding classroom traditions that teach moral content. The reader will see that Honey did not describe teaching planned lessons with moral objectives. Rather than specific curriculum, Honey relied on “differentiation” to foster students’ individual moral (and academic) education needs. Honey did not observe or manipulate any moral education program materials in her time in the program, but she did observe other educators implement strategies she assumed came from a program. Honey described “differentiation” as a way to “explicitly teach students what they need to know academically and morally.” She shared structures, routines, and celebrations she observed in her practicum placements that built moral capacity in her students.

Though Honey mentioned strategies that come from moral education curriculum, such as Responsive Classroom (Responsive Classroom, 2023) and Social Thinking (Social Thinking, n.d.), Honey said she “would not recognize” a moral education curriculum it if it was being implemented. She learned from both practicum experiences, as well as her coursework, to spend “the first six weeks” setting up expectations in the room. Multiple times Honey referred to the first six weeks as a crucial time to teach “what is expected in the classroom.” In our first interview Honey stated, “We learned
about setting up expectations in the room for the first six weeks so that for the whole year the students know what’s expected in the classroom so that you don’t have to retrace your steps and then be teaching them that stuff.” While Honey did not identify any curriculum, this strategy is explicit in the Responsive Classroom (Responsive Classroom, 2023) curriculum.

In her fall first-grade placement, Honey observed the first graders participate in social emotional lessons with “little games” in place of social studies or science from the Speech Language Pathologist (SLP). Honey described the lessons as seeming “like it came in a kit.” These lessons taught the first graders “the different emotions and how to handle them.” She recalled, “With my first graders every Tuesday the SLP came in and taught them about social emotional learning. She came in and we would just do little games basically where they would, they had to like hold, have you played headbands? They hold like a card on their forehead, and everybody sees it but the person doesn’t see it and it was an emotion and the other kids had to describe what the emotion was without saying the emotion so that the kid could figure it out. It was very interesting.”

Honey described that the first-grade mentor teacher regularly used the term “unexpected behavior instead of bad behavior.” She described that the teacher “reinforced constantly ... what is expected behavior, what is unexpected behavior, and what could you have done differently.” Honey described the language of “unexpected and expected behaviors” as a “school-wide thing.” This shared terminology aligns with Honey’s values of “not classifying [students] as good or bad.” Honey offered the example of apologizing as an expected behavior. Rather than a punishment, Honey described apologizing is a consequence that is “expected when you make someone feel bad.”
language is captured in the Social Thinking (Social Thinking, n.d.) curriculum, though again Honey did not identify this curriculum.

Honey did not notice any common language being used in her spring fifth-grade placement school for classroom regulation, community building, or social emotional learning. She did not think that the fifth-grade class used an explicit moral curriculum to build community or support emotional growth. Honey described how the mentor teacher shared with the students if their behavior is “hurtful or rude.” Honey described the teacher’s redirections as highlighting how the students “created this specific feeling” for another person. She compared the two levels of her practicum in our second interview when she said, “First grade is a lot more teaching them how to be people and how to be humans and how to interact with each other and adults and figuring out their space in the world and what’s acceptable and what’s unacceptable. Whereas fifth graders are much more expected to know all of that already. It’s a lot more of actual schooling and education and teaching about subject matter than anything else.” Honey did recognize that some fifth graders are not as “kind and respectful to each other” as her current fifth graders are. She also noted that social emotional lessons “probably should be taught every year,” rather than limited to the early years of school. She noted that students “don’t get tested on social skills,” so those skills are not prioritized as students get older.

Honey described her fifth-grade class as a learning environment where all members can “learn, make mistakes, and ask questions.” She noted though that it is “mostly the kids who struggle a lot” who “ask a lot of questions.” Honey aspired to be responsive to the students’ needs and flexible in the assignments she gives them. She described a student who responded to a personal narrative writing assignment by saying
“I don’t have any happy memories.” Honey talked to this student about what he would rather write, and they were able to come to a compromise together.

Honey used a lot of differentiation in the fifth-grade class of her second placement. She and the mentor teacher collaborated regularly to ensure the curriculum was accessible for every student. Honey reflected that much more time was spent planning to differentiate for struggling students; she did not feel she got practice extending lessons for deeper understanding of material. When she told her mentor that she wanted to learn how to provide challenge work, the mentor teacher gave Honey a “resource” for working with higher performing students. Honey did not find “the time” to work with this resource.

The classroom library was another area that Honey mentioned as meaningful for teaching morality through content in her second placement. Honey noticed that the classroom library of her fifth-grade placement showcased many “different cultures.” While she acknowledged that a diverse library supports the development of respect and empathy for difference, Honey wished she had had more coaching on how to talk about different identities with students. She noted in our second interview, “All of the books in the class are so diverse: there’s so many different books about different cultures, books about kids with disabilities and a bunch of different books, none of them are like a stereotypical family really. So, I think that she does a good job of having literature that exposes them to different cultures, but it’s not really a conversation that we have very often in the class. I wish that it was, because I don’t really know how to broach that conversation and I wish that I had a model.”
In her program and placements, Honey observed some traditions that build moral consciousness in students. Line order, Morning Meetings, class jobs, group work, and social groups were traditions that Honey shared that teach students how to “be good” in the classroom. ‘Line order’ is how Honey described having the students line up in the same place every time. Honey’s mentor teacher used line order to control the students as they move in the hallway. Honey shared that line order is a good way to suppress the “silly and chatty” nature of fifth graders. Teachers created the line order considering “who can handle being in the front of the line, who can handle being at the end of the line” and to avoid any possible conflict.

The fifth-grade teacher also taught morality through content with class jobs for everyone. Jobs include “morning meeting minion, magical messengers, eccentric electricians, the fabulous floor cleaners, sassy substitute, the reminder ranger.” The students are responsible to remember their jobs for the two weeks it is assigned to them. In this way they build shared responsibility for the classroom and each other’s experiences within their school day.

Another tradition Honey observed to teach morality through content was lunch groups. Lunch groups are small groups of students who each lunch together in a quiet space usually with an adult supervising and facilitating a conversation. Honey observed students participate in lunch groups in her first-grade placement. One student had difficulty making peer relationships. The lunch group was a time when this student could invite one or two kids to eat in the classroom with him and his paraprofessional. They used this opportunity to discuss and practice expected social behavior.
In both placements, as well as in courses, Honey learned about Morning Meeting. Morning Meeting is a concept that comes from the Responsive Classroom (Center for Research in Education and Social Policy, 2023) program. Morning Meeting is a class gathering upon first arrival to school in which students welcome each other, share about themselves, play games, and learn about the schedule of the upcoming day. Honey observed Morning Meeting used in different ways. In the fifth-grade classroom, students began each day with morning work. Students “all do different activities” and as they finish, they are responsible to move on to another activity. At the end of morning work time, the class holds a short Morning Meeting. The Morning Meeting consisted of a student-chosen greeting and a review of the daily schedule. Honey wished the Morning Meeting incorporated other opportunities to develop social skills as it did in her first placement. She noted in our second interview that she would use Morning Meeting differently in her own classroom. She said, “I wish they did more of like a group Morning Meeting, because our morning meeting is generally just a cute greeting and we talk about what we are going to do for the day and then they go to specials. I would like to do…some kind of fun chat with them. I feel like they could handle that structure of talking as a group and being respectful of each other, and I feel like that is an important thing to teach kids, how to have a group conversation and not talk over each other and be respectful of each other’s opinions, and I feel like morning meeting is a good space for that.”

**Teaching Morally**

This section will describe Honey’s descriptions of herself as a moral exemplar for her students. It will highlight the ways in which her interpersonal philosophies and
experiences, such as how she engages with others and the expectations she has for herself socially, promote or inhibit moral instruction for her students. It will also highlight how her intrapersonal values, personal beliefs, and biases, influence moral education in her classroom.

Honey holds many values and beliefs that motivate her to engage with the work of teaching with love, compassion, and joy. She noted that she “loves working with kids” and “loves the way kids look at the world.” In our first interview, she described, “I am so sad every day when they get on the bus. On Friday afternoon when they get on the bus I am like ‘oh my god I can’t hang out with you for two days.’ I think that they are just great, and I guess that is what excites me the most, I get to spend every day with these like incredible little ten-year-olds.” Honey shared that she was “always on the path to be a teacher.”

Honey wants to work in a school where she will “be trusted” to make good decisions for the students in her class. She wants to make sure she is able to respond to the students’ needs, make her lessons “interactive, interesting, and exciting,” and have the flexibility to decide when their students need more instruction in a particular content area. She appreciated the way her placement schools provided a curriculum for teachers but did not “enforce a specific daily structure.” Honey wants “to be creative and think about how lessons best impact students” in her own classroom. She described, “I love that with my fifth graders, if we feel like they need an extra day, or something got off track, or we wanted to put in a mini lesson that maybe wasn’t super related felt like was important, we can do that. That’s kind of the environment that I’d like to have.”
Honey explained her belief that the purpose of education as “opportunities for young people.” In elementary school, students should experience “the foundation to be a part of society.” Honey described education as “the battle against ignorance.” Honey wants to be a “kind” teacher. Honey understands learning to be an interactional activity, with efforts from both the teacher and the student. She explained that “it’s the teachers’ responsibility to get the student as prepared as possible to take advantage of their own learning, but the student is responsible to be the best learners that they can be. If the teacher is doing everything they can, and the student is still not responding, then it is not the teacher’s responsibility or fault.” She noted that teachers must “hold students accountable for their actions.” Honey describes that sometimes holding them accountable is making space for them to “work through problems on their own.” Honey is challenged by this element of teaching because she feels pressure to ensure the students are happy and having “good experiences.”

Honey wants a classroom experience that is both “fun” and “tough.” Honey aspires to provide a space where information feels “accessible,” and students feel “capable of learning.” During her two-week lead teach opportunity, her students described her as fun, which was a relief for Honey that even when “trying to be the tough teacher” she can also “create a happy environment for them.” Honey described her desire to “push students to what they are capable of.” She talked about a beloved teacher from her high school who made her work the hardest she has ever worked before. She described the class as “intense” in such a way that “everything felt important.” The teacher “pushed us to be better.” Honey aspires to be like this teacher; she hopes her students will think of her as someone who holds high expectations for them.
Honey was inspired by the relationships she had with her own teachers. The relationships she had with teachers motivated her to “excel in their classes.” She always felt her own teachers were “invested in my learning.” Honey wants her own students to know that she is “invested” in their future. She hopes that her high expectations for her students will inspire them to “have high expectations for themselves.” According to Honey, teachers need to “have awareness of what the students feel passionate about” to make the learning relevant to the students. Honey emphasized that “spending the time to understand the students and ask them about their lives both in school and out of school” and to “remember things that they tell you” to show the students “you care about them.”

Honey prioritized the fun in teaching, both for her students and for herself. Her “philosophy about learning” is that things are not “worth doing if you are not enjoying it.” She is concerned that she won’t find a school culture in which she is able to connect truly with her students and have fun with them. She believes that if it is not fun, “it will be a struggle going to work.”

Honey described a good student as someone who has “a willingness to learn.” A good student is someone who “does their best to stay on task and understand, and to seek help when they need it.” Honey does not like to refer to students as “bad;” she described a “not so great student” as one who does not “put in effort, take responsibility, or actively participate in their learning.”

Honey acknowledged students are not always on task and engaged in learning. “Sometimes it isn’t interesting, or you are tired or bored.” She explained that the teacher’s job is to help students be “an active participant” in the classroom. Teachers have the responsibility to make the lesson “something that excites them.” Honey believes
that students need choice to be engaged in their learning. Honey mentioned the contradiction between what she was learning in the coursework and what she observed in the classroom in this regard. She described that her second mentor teacher thinks the students will “be really overwhelmed by options.” Contrary to what her mentor teacher believes, Honey wants to present options rather than always “telling them what to do.”

Honey predicted that she would need to have “conversations about what is right and wrong and good and bad in life” with her students. She wants her students to “feel comfortable having the conversation,” and she described the risk of having “someone feel like they are right or wrong” even if that is not the intent of the conversation. Honey struggles to know how to ensure her students understand “how to engage in a positive way and a negative way.” She described that she has “no real concept of how to talk to kids about giant social issues in our society,” though she acknowledged that these topics are “such an important thing to talk about.” Honey realized that she did not learn “strategies to have those kinds of conversations or teach lessons about those kinds of issues” in her coursework or placements. She described that she is “going to have to struggle through a little bit” when social issues come up, and she will “need to work on” those skills more intentionally. Until she learns more, Honey stated that she’ll “have to wing it.”

The inevitability of conversations with students and colleagues about values and “big social issues” makes Honey nervous. Honey described herself as “someone who avoids conflict,” and she is concerned that she has not had practice mediating conflict among her students or among herself and colleagues. She is concerned that she may come
across as “strong about my opinions” or “create bad relationships with their parents or colleagues” if she says the wrong thing.

Honey’s interpersonal approach with the world around her models the importance of prosocial engagement. Honey is a social person, and she likes to be “silly” and “fun.” She uses her silliness to help create a classroom “environment where things don’t feel as hard.” Honey described her style is as “open, honest, and specific.” She prefers to continuously share with students the details of “what they will be doing next, why, and how” she expects them to behave. This openness provides a “safe space for learning” that Honey values.

Even when the students are in trouble, it is important to Honey that her students trust her and feel safe. Honey emphasized that a teacher needs to make “individual relationships with the kids.” She intentionally sits with “students who need one-on-one attention to help them think.” She engages them on a personal level so they feel cared for and feel that Honey is “not just their teacher but somebody that they can talk to.”

Honey believes it is her responsibility to “model respect in conversations” with students. She tries to “let them complete their entire thought” when they are talking to her. She has been told that she calls on “too many hands,” but she has a hard time moving on” without letting all students who volunteer to speak. She has tried strategies such as “turn and talk” to mediate this challenge, but she said it still “goes on too long” because she gets involved in conversations with the students.

Honey has an easy time connecting with children. She explains that she has always been able to “have good conversations and good banter” with children. Her easy
relationships with children help her to hold space for kids to “feel like they can be
themselves, ask questions, and feel comfortable.”

Honey described her two mentor teachers as “fantastic” at helping her “grow as a
teacher.” She connected easily with both, and she “loved watching them teach.” Honey
described her mentor teachers as “kind and firm,” and reported that both mentors “set
clear and consistent expectations.” From her mentor teachers Honey learned to “meet the
needs of all the kids in the classroom” and “differentiate to make a great learning
experience for the whole class.” Honey observed that the students trusted her mentor
teachers. She stated that her “mentor teachers both did a really good job of encouraging
and helping students to want to be there and want to engage.”

**Reflections on the Teacher Education Program**

Honey found the practicum portion of the program as the most impactful for her
teaching. She found the extensive narrative lesson plans as cumulative assignments
required for her coursework as tedious and unrelated to the practicum experience. In her
practicums, Honey was only required to “write some notes and a connection to a teaching
point.” She used the “I do, we do, you do” workshop model structure for most lessons.
Honey also reported that she knows teachers “have curricula resources and collaborate”
so that they do not have to create everything from scratch. She also knows that her future
classroom will have a curriculum,” so spending time in the program designing her own
lessons felt irrelevant.

Honey shared that the program provided “opportunities to practice teaching skills
but was not explicit enough about guidelines for that practice.” For example, in her
coursework she received a rubric document called “Six Essential Elements of Successful
Teaching.” However, none of the professors reviewed how to use the rubric to improve practice. Honey described that she learned what skills were expected from her after she was already evaluated on them. Honey stated that she didn’t feel that “anyone ever said like these are your expectations and this is how you go about meeting these requirements for your job.” Instead, she relied on her instincts to guide her to do “what would be most beneficial to the kids.”

Parts of the matrix seemed “obvious,” but she would have appreciated some calibration to ensure “student teachers know they are looking at it correctly.” For example, having high expectations is one of the elements on the rubric. Honey described that she “always got good feedback on that element,” so she assumed she was “doing it right.” She went on to say, “It just feels like just such an obvious thing to have high expectations, so it feels like there is something I must be missing.” Honey noted that she feels “lucky” that she had good intuition about “what a good teacher should be.” She explained that some of her cohort member colleagues did not have that compass early on, and this led to poor evaluations from their classroom observations.

Honey also suggested that incoming student teachers need support to balance all of the responsibilities of the program. Initially Honey was “really overwhelmed and stressed” trying to find a system to get all of the required work completed. Initially she “was up late” and “tired every day.” Once she figured out how to use weekend time more efficiently, she was able to be better balanced and do the heavy load of work that was required.

Honey lamented that exploring different identities and values was not something they did in her preparation program. She did not recall reflecting on her own values,
either in the coursework or in her practicum. Outside of some role-play about cultural taboos in her Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) class, Honey did not remember discussing “the individual biases of the cohort members and professors.” A speaker for one course talked about implicit bias, but Honey wished there were opportunities to discuss ways in which to manage their biases in their practice. Honey feels unsure how to let bias influence her teaching.

Despite the lack of overt instruction in this area, Honey acknowledged that teachers are engaging with biases every day. In Honey’s second placement school there are students who are transitioning genders, students of color, students whose families are not from the United States, students with disabilities, and students with limited incomes. In her future as a teacher Honey acknowledged that she will “need to deal with English Language Learners and issues of race, gender, and sexuality.” She lamented her lack of experience in urban schools, and she is grateful to hear from her cohort what teaching is like in urban environments. She explains that the people who are placed in the city have “a lot more experience with diversity” than she received in her two rural placements.

When reflecting on own her practicum experience, Honey explained the racial and ethnic identities of the students of color as “not an issue for the class.” She stated that one student is “an English Language Learner (ELL), but she’s a very high learner.” Honey noticed, “She drops her articles in sentences, or she’ll forget to put the S on the end of a verb, but other than that she is totally integrated.” The other student of color is an “African American boy.” Honey has tried to discuss issues of race with her mentor teacher, a young, white, middle-class, cis-gendered woman. The mentor has reported to
Honey that “they are both very comfortable with who they are, and their parents do a
good job of explaining everything to them.”

Honey struggled to imagine how to incorporate issues of identity into the
classroom experience. She noted that she did not have a model for multicultural
education, nor did she experience instruction in multicultural education in her
coursework. Honey describes that she would have liked to have spent more time in the
program learning how to create multicultural environments. For Honey, lack of
preparation in this area “feels stressful...because I want to do a good job, and I don’t feel
like I have the capabilities of really handling that stuff right now.”

**Self-Efficacy for the Moral Work of Teaching**

Honey described many positive beliefs and experiences that indicate having
strong self-efficacy for the moral work of teaching. Honey’s description of her growth
mind-set for both herself and her students indicates an inclination for taking on tasks she
may not feel comfortable with. Her collaborative approach and reliance on her
professional network indicate she is not afraid to make mistakes and engage others for
help in this area. Honey described her love of children and her desire to make learning
fun and meaningful. She is committed to teaching and sees teaching as an important
element of her identity, which indicates she will do all it takes to continue to learn how to
do the job well. Honey described relationships as her top priority in teaching and
described wanting her students to feel respected and heard. Honey also described her
belief that teachers are responsible for building a good society and helping students to
confront their ignorance and bias. These beliefs indicate a high level of self-efficacy for
implementing the moral work of teaching.
Honey’s practicum experiences provided a good support for her to reference attempts to build moral development in her future classroom. As evidenced in my documentation of the classroom artifacts, Honey was immersed in a motivational environment, surrounded by text that promoted continuous engagement in moral education. Some examples of this text from her second practicum can be observed in Figures 12 to 14 below.

![Image of Anti-Bullying Poster](image)

Figure 12: Image of Anti-Bullying Poster
Figure 13: Image of Student Drawings Reflecting Moral Character Statements

Figure 14: Image of Responsibility Reminder Taped to Student Desk
This model will provide Honey with a good frame of reference as she designs her own classroom.

Honey also had many other experiences that indicate a high level of self-efficacy for the moral work of teaching. She had two positive mentorship experiences with mentors who’s teaching styles emulated her own. She observed her mentors build responsibility and accountability in the students with strategies such as class jobs, call backs, and extra practice. She consulted with other professionals to ensure students had an accessible educational experience. Honey observed programmatic moral education elements such as common language of expected and unexpected behaviors, First Six Weeks of School, and another program implemented by the Speech Language Pathologist in her first placement. The students in Honey’s placements experienced social training through Lunch Groups. In her program, Honey completed the Harvard Implicit Bias Test to develop an understanding of her own approach to teaching diverse identities. These vicarious and direct experiences worked to build Honey’s self-efficacy for moral work of teaching.

Honey did describe some negative beliefs and experiences that work to erode her self-efficacy for the moral work of teaching. She described herself as feeling unprepared for moral education and uncomfortable with moral developmental instruction, especially in the younger grades. She described herself as nervous to allow discourse about values in her classroom for fear of upsetting parents, students, or administrators. She is concerned that her opinions about certain values and virtues may tarnish relationships. Finally, Honey feels that she will have to rely on her instinct for the moral work of
teaching because she cannot articulate a specific plan or strategy that would be effective for that objective.

Honey acknowledged that she did not experience any specific training on the moral work of teaching in her program because the focus was more on lesson planning for specific content areas. Though she observed a program being taught, she never had an opportunity to look at a curriculum closely or implement a moral education lesson. She described receiving no guidance or practice to facilitate productive conversation around issues of values or virtues with her students or with colleagues. The Implicit Bias Test was helpful, but there was not enough opportunity to reflect on what the outcomes meant for teaching practice. In addition, when she tried to have conversations with her mentors about issues of diversity and inclusion, the mentors were quick to say the issue is not a problem in the class and shut down the discussion.

In addition, Honey’s experience in the first-grade classroom caused her to question her ability to teach social skills and moral education to students who need more development in that area. She did not have any experiences in the program that confronted her insecurity in this area. This may influence her self-efficacy for moral education negatively in the future. However, Honey’s positive relationships with her mentors and colleagues, as well as her firm confidence in teaching more generally, will likely help to inspire her to make attempts despite her insecurity.

Honey had many positive experiences with students and has a strong self-image as a teacher. She is confident that she will do well in the field. Her beliefs about education as a means to build a positive foundation for the future and her values toward ensuring accessible education will work to drive her passion to help her students continue
to grow and develop, morally and academically. Examined side-by-side, the beliefs and experiences that Honey described indicate that she is primed for more instruction and support for the moral work of teaching. She indicates interest and understands that the elements of the moral work of teaching will play a large role in her own teaching. She has observed some elements of the moral work of teaching, but she requires more scaffolded reflection in order to make the most of her positive beliefs and experiences in this area.

**Summary**

Honey is a white, middle-class woman in her early 20s. She was raised with religion, and she attended a private, Catholic high school in a large city near her hometown. She entered the teacher education program directly after receiving her bachelor’s degree from the same institution. Honey has wanted to be a teacher for as long as she can remember. She has fond memories of her own teachers, and she is inspired to be tough and caring like she experienced them to be. Honey spent her middle school and high school summers working at a summer camp. There she developed her skills communicating with children and creating fun activities.

Honey described many positive beliefs about self-efficacy towards the moral work of teaching that build on her background and life experiences, as well as her coursework and practica experiences. Honey loves connecting with children and becomes emotionally attached to them easily. She describes herself as silly and fun, and she wants her students to feel valued and seen in the classroom. Honey prioritizes relationships with her students and colleagues. She had strong, positive relationships with both of her mentor teachers. She mentioned a number of times feeling confident to reach out to other professionals for support with students.
Honey believes that education is an act of social justice, and that teachers act to fight ignorance. She aims to hold her students to high expectations and ensure they meet their highest potential. She seeks to build meaning and purpose for the learning that happens, and she emphasizes making connections clear through explicitness. Honey specifically decried labelling any student as “bad,” and is flexible in her mindset for meeting students’ needs.

Honey described the use of content curricula to teach morality. She observed a social skills lesson performed by a colleague in her first placement, and she described some strategies as suggested by the Responsive Classroom method (Center for Research in Education and Social Policy, 2023). She also noted that shared language around expected and unexpected behavior is a way to teach morality to students. Honey emphasized Morning Meeting as an idea time to ensure teaching morality is included in the schedule. She described teaching morality as embedded in teaching strategies such as differentiation and flexibility in student assignments, as well as collaborative games and activities. Class jobs, student groups, such as Lunch Bunch, and organization methods, such as Line Order, were also elements of classroom life in which Honey described teaching morality existing in classroom life.

Honey described teaching morally in her approach and style for teaching. She described showing students that she cares about them and holding students to high expectations. She described being explicit about what she expected from students and giving them many chances to live up to the expectations. Honey described her success as a teacher as depending on how the students feel in the classroom. The classroom environment is also a place from which teachers teach morally. Honey described the need
for a safe and comfortable classroom that fosters respect for all participants. Close relationships are a means from which Honey described teaching morally, both between teachers and students as well as among the students themselves. Building social activities into the school day that allow students to get to know each other personally is a way Honey described to teach morally.

Honey has a strong growth mindset for both her students and herself. She understands her own areas of growth, including learning how to reflect on the impact of her biases on her teaching. However, she is motivated to persist through her own growth, and she is comfortable being in the dissonance of the learning experience. Honey has a strong intuition for teaching, and she engages it regularly when she is not sure of the best course of action. She describes feeling nervous about addressing larger social issues with her students and colleagues because she does not want to upset others with her opinions.

Honey’s dispositions, beliefs, and values, coupled with her experiences in the teacher education program establish a strong impetus for her to pursue avenues towards the moral work of teaching. When presented with opportunities to develop in this area, Honey is likely to seek professional development in this area and continue to work towards this end with her students.
CHAPTER 5

CASE 2: JUNIOR

Participant Biography

Participant 2 will be referred to as Junior. Recall from Figure 7 that Junior is a Hispanic male in his early 20’s. He entered the program directly after attending the same University for her undergraduate degree and is pursuing licensure through the 4 +1 pathway, earning a master’s and teacher licensure in four years plus one year of graduate school.

Born in Columbia, Junior immigrated to the United States with his family for economic reasons when he was five years old. His uncles and aunts had immigrated earlier, and Junior’s parents came to live near them the same city in central Massachusetts. Junior describes the city as “really diverse,” and he appreciates that he grew up with “kids of all races [and] colors.” His family still lives in the same small city.

Junior’s parents “didn’t learn English” formally, though they know enough English “to get by.” Both of his parents were college-educated in Columbia, and they work as Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA) in nursing homes here in the U.S. Junior has a close relationship with his parents. They are financially and emotionally supportive of Junior’s education. Junior’s younger sister was born many years after his family came to the United States. He and his sister have a close relationship.

When he entered public Kindergarten, Junior did not know any English. In first grade, his parents enrolled Junior in a bilingual Spanish/English immersion program that was offered at one of the local public schools. Junior participated in this same program from first to 12th grade. The bilingual program consisted of two classes of 20 students,
and these 40 students continued to be together throughout his schooling experience. Junior reported that they all remain close friends. While Spanish-speaking students were given enrollment priority, the lottery for English speakers was popular in his town. Junior appreciated that at once he has “so many native English speaker friends who grew up learning Spanish and now are fluent because of this program,” while at the same time the environment helped him master English. Junior’s little sister is now in the same program.

Junior wanted to attend college in Boston, but it was financially prohibitive. He decided to attend a predominantly white state university in rural Massachusetts. Junior was not concerned that as a Hispanic person of color he would not be happy at his chosen school. He described himself as able to “get along with most people” and said he does not “care about being in a certain group.”

As an undergraduate, Junior did not have a particular career path chosen for himself. He pursued a Bachelors in Business to ensure “solid money down the road.” Junior initially followed the accounting track. He quickly realized that he was better suited for a “more people related” career. He had taken sociology classes that taught him about “race and race divisions in the US” which inspired him to be invested in issues of equity and social justice. He liked the idea of working in Human Resources to ensure that “businesses are treating everyone right.”

In his third year of college, Junior started to reconsider his career path. Through his undergraduate years, Junior worked as a camp counselor, a tutor for America Reads, and a substitute teacher in the public schools in his home city. He loved “hanging out with kids and leading a group of kids,” so he started looking into the education major. In his senior year of undergraduate studies, he took some of the prerequisite courses for the
CTEP program, and he entered the program directly after graduation. Junior feels like the time he spent on his business degree helped him have a “well-rounded” experience.

Junior described teachers as being “generally undervalued.” He shared that at times he would share his ambition to be a teacher with some people, and they would respond negatively. He also knew that teachers do not make much money. These issues caused him to “hesitate a little,” but his appreciation for “working with kids and helping them learn” overwhelmed his hesitation. Junior values “happiness over money, and believes that living “comfortably and happy” is “better than doing something that … I hate and … making a crap ton of money.”

He describes himself as “social-justice oriented,” and he “wants things to be fair for everyone.” Junior thinks that his background helps him to “have awareness of what a lot of kids are going through” and will help students “feel like they can do their best.”

**Teaching Morality Through Manner**

This section presents Junior’s descriptions of his experiences as they relate to Teaching Morality through Manner. Descriptions here relate to Junior’s comments about setting and upholding social rules and expectations to ensure a prosocial classroom culture. Junior prefers the conversational approach of engaging with students for all purposes, both academic and disciplinary. He wants kids to know how to talk to each other respectfully, as well as him. He emphasizes the need for teachers to show consistency in their expectations with students, and with the group, so that the students trust he is fair. Junior wants to implement a structure to ensure his students are able to talk with him and with each other successfully and respectfully. The utterances that relate to Teaching Morality Through Manner from Junior’s interview series are found below.
Junior shared that a teacher could help students to resolve conflict by facilitating discussions with the students. Junior noted that it is important for teachers to talk with students in a way that they feel they are resolving their own conflicts. Junior described how students can hold each other accountable and set agreements if a teacher is able to develop an “environment in which they can talk to each other.” In his second placement Junior observed the mentor teacher and the special educator facilitate a contract for two students who were in conflict. The contract made explicit that the students agreed not to “interact with each other.” While the students followed the contract for a time, eventually the two students “started talking a bit” on their own. The teachers then led the students in another discussion “end the contract.”

In his placements Junior witnessed “how to start a discussion and let the kids talk to each other to explore a subject.” He learned from his professors what kinds of questions to ask “to get a discussion going” and how to use “analysis questions.” In order for this method to be successful though, Junior noted that the teacher must make “sure that kids know how to talk to each other first.”

In his placements Junior observed “times where kids are allowed to be just talking whenever, and then other times where the expectation is to raise your hand.” Junior acknowledged that in some unstructured class discussions there were students who really enjoyed it and others who felt “overshadowed.” In his second interview Junior reflected, “some students really like being able to mostly share whatever they are thinking of and being really kind of loose with it. But then some other students might have felt like overshadowed by that because then when it’s free discussion in the class, what tends to happen with some students is that, while some students kind of control the conversation,
other ones aren’t good at just talking out when it’s not good to use the hand signal. That’s something that some of them struggled with.” He wants to establish routines for class discussions that ensure equitable voice space early in the year to ensure everyone can be heard.

Junior sought to create a classroom environment that is “well balanced in terms of what appropriate expectations are versus how much freedom” students have. In our second interview he stated, “That’s something I am still working on, knowing how to adapt lesson plans and classroom management at times can improve. There are times where I have let it get a little too loose and then it’s tough to flip that switch and play the bad cop in a way and say alright now we have to do this…but then there’s other times where I have been too much of that strict authoritarian type. So finding that balance I am still working on.” He admitted that he struggles to “stick to the lesson plan.” In the moment, Junior reported that he can tell when he needs to let the students “talk a little more to each other” or when “they are getting out of control.”

Junior acknowledged that “having a consistent strategy” to respond to student misbehavior is important. He reported that students respond best when there “no change in what the teacher tolerates” and “consistency in a system or strategies” for all students. At the same time, he noted the importance of “holding kids accountable” in ways that they can access, and “dealing with kids case by case if they are having difficulties.” Junior’s second mentor teacher used a marble jar to encourage class collaboration. When students were sighted engaging in socially proactive ways, the teacher directs them to put marbles into the marble jar found in Figure 15. Junior explains it is used inconsistently.
Figure 15: Image of Marble Jar Strategy for Classroom Motivation

In his first placement, Junior’s mentor described the class as “the hardest kids she has dealt with in 20 years.” One student “would crawl away” and “sit in a corner.” Junior noted in our interview, “He dealt with severe anxiety, so during lessons he would crawl away and go sit in a corner and do his thing and it was inconsistent to how the teacher would deal with it. She was trying to learn; she told me that she had never had a kid like this before. But like sometimes she would let him do his own thing, and then sometimes she would say no you are with us right now doing this. So then when it got to me teaching, I also had no idea what to do with that.” As a result, Junior felt like he did not know strategies to manage this student’s behavior when he was leading the class.

The teacher “communicated with the student’s parents” every day. The student also worked with “a classroom helper teacher.” The student had “a daily chart” that tracked his behavior in different parts of the day, and the report would go home to his parents. Junior observed “gradual improvement throughout the semester” that he attributed to the behavior chart and shared expectations.

This class had another student with a reputation for “aggressive behavior.” In previous years this student had “fits” and would “throw things and punch people.” The teachers had to “evacuate the whole classroom” multiple times. This student had “shown
tremendous improvement” through his work with a “helper teacher.” Strategies they used included “giving him a five-minute break time” and “talking with him to making a plan” when the student is “feeling overwhelmed” or “unfocused.” His “helper teacher” would sometimes also rub his back during lessons, and the student’s parents provided packs of gum for the student to help him focus. Through these experiences Junior learned that working with parents and “using other adults” can help with student behavior.

With his second mentor, Junior did not observe much consistency responding to rules and misbehavior, and Junior believed the student behavior suffered. His second mentor used a strategy he referred to as “Step Out.” As observed in Figure 17, students were given warnings that would result in them going increasingly farther from the point of instruction, and ultimately out of the class entirely. Junior also used this strategy, mainly to redirect students who spoke out or were talking distractedly to their classmates during instruction. Junior described the strategy as it is used in the classroom in our first interview. He said, “Step out is in one class period if a kid does something disruptive, you’ll ask him whatever it is Step out. What they are supposed to do is get up from their chair and either walk somewhere in the classroom for a sec to get them focused and then come back to their chair. The first one is just a warning, the second time it’s another warning. The third one they are supposed to go to a sealed off desk in the back, it’s a carrel with little walls, they are supposed to go there for five or ten minutes or something. On the fourth one, if it all happens in that same period, they are supposed to go to another teacher’s classroom and take a little break in that classroom…It’s unstructured because at this point I haven’t really asked anyone to go to a different classroom at any point. We don’t keep strict tallies on how many times you stepped out in this period. Sometimes I
do, sometimes I don’t. In general it is just supposed to be like focus, like stop doing what you are doing, telling them like please pay attention. stop calling out, don’t yell over people, stuff like that. Sometimes they respond to it better than other days so it’s very loose.” Procedures for Step Out can be found in Figure 16. Junior reported that some of his program classmates observed similar strategies being used in other schools.

![Figure 16: Image of “Step Out” Procedure](image)

Junior learned that though having students take a break can be helpful strategy to mediate behavior, it is hard to know that students are not “abusing it.” For example, in his second placement, Junior observed a student whose “family let her do whatever she wants.” In the classroom, this student would “flip out” at students and teachers. The student was allowed to “take a break” when she needed to. Junior noted though that his mentor encouraged him to have students to “push through and do work” rather than take a break. Junior noted that he is unsure how to know when a student really should take a break and when to work to build stamina in a student who needs or asks for many breaks.
Teaching Morality Through Content

This section will share Junior’s descriptions related to his experiences Teaching Morality through Content. Descriptions here will relate to how Junior described experiences using moral education curriculum and learning about and upholding classroom traditions that teach moral content. The reader will see that Junior did not implement or observe any moral curriculum in the program coursework or practica. He did however participate in lessons that used the Social Studies curriculum to deliver moral objectives. He noticed that both of his practica presented resources to the students that presented multicultural perspectives. Junior described teaching students at their specific levels in his second practicum, both socially and academically. Junior noted routines and traditions for prosocial engagement that need to be taught early in the year. Below are specific references Junior shared that relate to Teaching Morality Through Content.

Junior said he did not have much experience with moral education curricula. While he knew that the Second Step program was available in his first placement, he never observed any lessons being taught or taught any lessons himself. He thought that his second placement also used Second Step, but he “never was part of looking at the curriculum or being part of those lesson plans at all.”

Junior believes that history and Social Studies content can make moral education “meaningful.” Junior explained to me, “I think a big part of it is doing it in some sort of context and making that context as meaningful as you can. History is a great way to do it, going through examples and then looking at resources critically…as a class having that discussion of what do we see, what do we observe, thinking critically about what is this
resource, maybe who is it written by and not taking resources based on face value.” Both of Junior’s mentor teachers liked to “focus on issues of equity and fairness in society.” His mentors taught about “appropriate cultural words” and explained why some are not appropriate. His first mentor teacher taught about “the origins of Thanksgiving and the misconceptions about it.” His second mentor taught “a Black Lives Matter unit” and a unit on “the Stonewall Riots.” These units took place during Social Studies. In addition, the mentor teachers provided the students with “books about minorities and what it means to be a minority in our society today.” Text from this unit is shown in Figure 17 below.

![Image of Text Highlighting Teaching Morality Through Content](image)

**Figure 17: Image of Text Highlighting Teaching Morality Through Content**

Junior noted that “Science and Social Studies don’t really get prioritized” over math and writing, so opportunities to critically examine content are limited. Junior noted that he also feels that the teaching of social issues did not get much attention in the courses in the teacher education program. Outside of the courses about “Social Studies” and “Diversity Inclusion,” Junior feels the program offered little opportunity to engage with moral issues that might come up in teaching. Junior explained that he would benefit from a “whole course” on moral education. He noted it would have been beneficial to
“track the moral aspects of the practicum classroom” through a formal analysis. In interview one Junior stated, “It concerns me that there is so much emphasis on the content they know as opposed to moral teaching and what kind of people they are becoming and what they are learning about being good members of society.”

While Junior acknowledged that learning content is important, he wished for “a good balance” between content and teaching students to “be a member of society.” Junior acknowledged that there is social benefit in “making sure there are times when kids work alone, in groups, or as partners.” He also knows that “Talk Moves” strategies, like ‘Turn and Talk’ and ‘Share what your partner said,’ help to build social skills and community. Junior learned to “observe students and redirect conversations” to teach students to “talk to each other in a productive and positive way.” Junior recognized that holding students “accountable for their things and giving them an organization system” will build student responsibility. He described “having folders for subjects” as one way to teach responsible organization. He shared that when teachers model responsibility, it helps students to learn themselves. He noted that in his second placement the students often would “lose things” because his mentor was disorganized.

Junior noted that there are many times in his teaching when he needs to stop teaching content to “explicitly teach how to interact” or “how to ask a question.” Junior described that students need a lot of social redirection and coaching. Junior said that students must be taught “how to talk to each other” and “how to follow routines in the first few weeks of school.” In our final interview he noted, “Especially in the first few weeks of school I want to establish routines, establish everything so kids know how to take risks when answering questions or talking to each other, engaging with material,
making sure that they know that they shouldn’t be scared to be told right or wrong by a teacher or to be laughed at by students. When kids know how to make mistakes and take risks I think it will be so much more of a comfortable classroom community.” He shared that “having discussions about effort and growth mindset” builds student motivation, persistence, and risk-taking capacity. Junior shared that in both his placements the mentor teachers modeled for students how to believe that “with effort, you will eventually [understand].”

**Teaching Morally**

This section will describe Junior’s descriptions of himself as a moral exemplar for his students. It will highlight the ways in which his interpersonal philosophies and experiences, such as how he engages with others and the expectations he has for himself socially, promote or inhibit moral instruction for students. It will also highlight how his intrapersonal values, personal beliefs, and biases, influence moral education in the classroom.

Junior described many beliefs and values that reflect his capacity to teach morally. He shared his belief that the purpose of education is to “shape the future of our country and society.” He noted, “all of us in elementary education are dealing with young fresh minds. Like sponges, they are curious about everything and they want to learn. As an educator you are really shaping how they view the world and getting them into what kinds of things they want to do with their life. Because they are so fresh and inexperienced and naive, as an educator you have a huge role in showing them how the world works and how they can go on and improve the lives of others when they are older.” He explained that open-minded teachers are better able to make meaningful
connections with students. He noted that students will say unexpected or off task things, and “good teachers make the kid feel like they are being heard and their opinion is important.” He knows that educators are “a role model” for students, and it is important that teachers behave the way they expect students to behave. He hoped that students observe his behavior and “apply it to their own behavior.”

Junior thought his students would describe him as “nice” and “positive.” He hoped they would say he is “easy to talk to and not easily frustrated.” He heard from his second mentor that the students described Junior as “relatable” and “really good at explaining.” He feels like his background as an English Language Learner is an asset for him in working with different kinds of students and explaining things in ways students of many backgrounds can understand. He hopes that he can help students “feel like they can do their best no matter what their background.”

In his interactions with students, he knows that having compassion for the student experience can make learning a meaningful experience for students. He described himself as “good at figuring out how to get to something if they are struggling.” Junior noted that most of the time students “feel comfortable talking and putting themselves out there.” He hoped his students feel known, heard, and supported in their learning process. He is intentional to “hear what they are thinking.” These efforts helped his students “see me as someone they can talk to and feel comfortable with.” Junior stated, “Having a connection as strong as it can be between a student and a teacher can do a lot for them going forward in terms of how they are going to interact with their future teachers and the comfort they might feel with teachers in their life.”
Junior noted that teaching morally involves interacting with the students’ families to know what is happening at home. He shared that if students have issues “they can’t get off of” it will be “difficult to learn how to do a math problem.” He acknowledged that teachers should “not force kids to do work” because “that’s going to make things worse.” Junior aspired to work closely with families to ensure students are having their best experience in school. He believed that parents want to connect with teachers about how they can support their children. Junior would have appreciated a “whole class dedicated to... dealing with families: how to talk to parents about what expectations and responsibilities are as a teacher.” Junior’s mentor told him that “parents can be the worst part of the job,” so he feels “nervous” about that part of the work. Junior assumed that he would “learn as it happens.”

Junior learned different ways of teaching morally from both of his mentors, and he had good relationships with them. His first mentor “was really structured.” She would talk to the students in a “specific teacher voice, not stern, but calm.” She would “be very polite all the time.” The first mentor teacher “used a lot of teacher-talk and spoke slowly.” The students seemed to “really like the classroom.” It was evident that the students “were comfortable sharing questions or whatever was on their mind.” The mentor’s “calm presence” made her “easy to talk to. His first mentor “was always positive about everything, focusing on what great work they are doing, what steps to take next.” She treated Junior similarly, “always sharing what he was doing well or offering “something to improve going forward.” Junior knew he “could ask her anything.” She “found a really good balance of like not hovering and not leaving me out to dry.”
Junior’s second mentor engaged with students more informally, “like talking to a buddy.” The mentor liked to “joke around” and be “casual.” Junior noted that “some of the students were disrespectful or stand-offish” because the mentor did not “establish expectations early.” The mentor teacher shared with Junior that he “let the culture go a little too far.” Junior noted that though his two mentor teachers had very different styles, he learned a lot from both. He believed they had faith in him, and they made sure he was learning how to participate in the teaching process.

**Reflections on the Teacher Education Program**

Junior thought the teacher education program was “excellent.” He felt the professors showed “how to answer questions” and “stimulate discussions.” He was pleased that the program format was based on student discussion with peers in the program. Junior described the program as “really busy” and “intense,” especially in second semester with practicum every day and courses three days a week. He often felt stressed being in class late and knowing he needed to plan lessons for the next day. Junior shared that it would have been helpful to have an organizational plan outlined at the beginning of the program. He emphasized sticking to a “routine that works” because the program is “crunched on time” and “time management is key.”

Junior realized that work as a substitute teacher and a tutor is much different from being a classroom teacher. Teachers have “responsibility for planning and keeping up with behavior plans.” Junior described the role of “a student teacher” as “being there to support the actual teacher while also learning how to be a classroom teacher.” Junior wished he had been told to talk about expectations for his role as a student teacher early in the semester, including “what you expect from each other how to communicate, and
when to plan together.” Junior noted that when miscommunications happen “kids suffer at the end of the day.” Junior felt lucky he “had a good experience...with mentor teachers.” He shared that some of his classmates did not have good relationships with their mentors, and their teaching suffered.

Junior also had a helpful relationship with his Program Supervisor. The Supervisors visited the classroom regularly, observed his teaching, and connected with the mentor teachers. They helped to process and generate ideas about how “things could be working better.”

He lamented that joining a class second semester was difficult because rules and routines are already established; student teachers need to “adapt and fit in.” He described feeling like he was “on a trial period” or in a “semester long interview.” Junior explained some of his classmates had difficult experiences overall with mentors. He noted how important it is that the student and mentor teachers have shared expectations and a positive relationship.

Junior described the placements as the most “helpful” part of the program. Following a mentor teacher and sharing a classroom was helpful to “see what goes into the day to day.” Junior appreciated sharing experiences with his classmates. Discussions with classmates allowed Junior to reflect on what he was seeing in his own placement and get ideas. Junior believed the program taught the importance getting to know your students well and how to provide content in a way that is “understandable for kids.” Junior remembered learning about “inquiry-based” instruction, though he noticed that there was not a lot of inquiry-based instruction in the placements.
Junior would have “liked more discussion” on how to manage values conversations in the classroom. He thinks it would have been helpful to share with other teachers “how they deal with” moral issues and to hear “what kind of and examples to use.” Junior shared that “some issues of right and wrong also have to do with opinion, personal opinion and family opinion.” He described the “delicate fine line” of knowing “when to... change a kid’s perspective.” He knew that teachers must “respect what a family believes.” For example, he noted that he would not know what to say to a student “if they started talking about Donald Trump as a great guy.” Junior wondered if “government employees are not supposed to show their political opinions.” He hesitated to “tell a kid they are wrong,” but he would want to discuss “how we treat people and how leaders are supposed to be treating people.” He emphasized that it is important to him that “their opinions are heard” so that the students do not “feel like he doesn’t understand.” Junior described an experience where his mentor teacher was having a discussion with the students about racism when one of the students described a situation he went through as “reverse racism.” Junior noted that it “was a good opportunity for a class discussion.” He acknowledged that “as a teacher it is tough to find a way to answer accurately while also changing their perspective.” Those types of topics are “so delicate.”

In his coursework, Junior enjoyed a “discussion about implicit bias.” He learned that “what teachers say and do is a model for kids that they may copy. “ Teachers “not only teach the content ...but also model right behavior ... as an adult who knows how to talk politely, how to behave, how to communicate effectively.” He recalled that many of his classmates recognized their own biases in this discussion, and they realized that “to be fair in their teaching, they need to be aware” of bias and how they might think differently
about kids with disabilities or kids of a different race.” Junior recalled that the discussion was powerful because “a lot of the student teachers realized their biases even if we think we are an open-minded person.”

**Self-Efficacy for the Moral Work of Teaching**

Junior described many beliefs and experiences that indicate strong self-efficacy for the moral work of teaching. Junior described his belief that it is the teacher’s role to guide students to understand the social world and respect each other. He emphasized connection as a guiding principle in his teaching theory, between the teacher and students, between the students themselves, and between the teacher and their professional colleagues. He explained that teachers should have solid structures and systems in place that facilitate those connections, such as a calm, safe, respectful classroom environment, and set routines for engaging. Junior described his belief in a balanced approach between an environment with lots of freedom and one with agreed upon rules. He described holding students accountable for their academic work as well as their behavior with and towards others. Junior described his belief that students need different things depending on where they are in their learning journey, both for academics and for their social guidance. He also acknowledged that students are influenced by many different variables in their abilities, including their family lives.

Most of the experiences that Junior described related to the moral work of teaching were vicarious experiences that he observed. In both of his placements he observed his mentors develop strong, respectful relationships with students and colleagues. Both mentors exhibited a calm, even demeanor that helped to develop a safe tone in the practicum placements. Both mentors taught lessons in Social Studies that
integrated moral objectives with academic objectives. Both mentors used strategies such as Turn and Talk and partner/small group work to teach collaboration and cooperation. In addition, both practicum placements were rich with resources that represented multiple perspectives.

As noted in the artifacts from Junior’s second placement, text throughout the school reinforced prosocial engagement. Messaging of inclusion and respect, as well as lists of the school rules, were posted in every hallway. Examples of some of this print can be found in Figure 18 below.

![Images of Environment Print from the School Walls](image)

**Figure 18: Images of Environment Print from the School Walls**

His second mentor showed Junior how to use strategies such as Step Out and Take a Break to hold students accountable. He also observed students receiving extra support from paraeducators to implement such strategies as sensory touch and more focused scaffolding. His mentors taught Junior that parent communication and
interventions, such as observed with behavior chart and contracts, are helpful strategies for the moral work of teaching as well.

Junior did have some direct experiences with the moral work of teaching, primarily in his program coursework. He described his experience with the Harvard Implicit Bias Test, and he was able to recognize his own bias towards students with disabilities through his reflection of his test results. He described two courses that also helped him to examine his own biases: a Social Studies course and an Inclusion course.

Junior described some beliefs that indicate lower self-efficacy for moral work of teaching. He noted that moral education is best embedded into content areas such as Social Studies and Science, but he lamented that these content areas are mostly deprioritized over content in math and literacy. He described conversations about values as delicate and claimed that sometimes values and opinions are easily confused. He would not want to get the students upset in a conversation about values, especially if the outcome of the conversation conflicts with what a student’s family believes. Junior described feeling compelled to stick with the curriculum and cover all the academic objectives before making space for moral education. He also expressed some mixed feelings about some of the strategies he described, specifically the Take a Break/Step Out strategy. He believes that some students misuse the breaks, and he described becoming frustrated when students will not follow directions as instructed.

Junior has no experience at all with moral education curriculums. He did not observe anyone teach from a moral education curriculum, nor did he have the opportunity to look at a similar curriculum ever throughout his program. He described the program as overwhelmingly busy, too busy to make explicit time to reflect. Junior also described
being nervous to work with families because he did not have direct experiences doing so in his teacher preparation. Lastly, Junior’s practicum placements were both in majority white, suburban rural schools. He did not experience teaching students with mixed identities or have conversations about how to show respect for multiple identities that exist among the students and teachers.

All told, Junior wants more direct instruction on the moral work of teaching. He knows that this is an important component of good teaching, and he wants to be able to discuss and implement moral issues in his own classroom. He described wanting more explicit practice in his placements and coursework with the language and nuances of the moral work of teaching. Despite his strong beliefs about the moral work of teaching that indicate high capacity for self-efficacy for moral education, Junior describes feeling nervous that he is unprepared for that piece of teaching.

**Summary**

Junior is a Latino, working class man in his early 20s. Junior immigrated to a small city in the United States from Columbia with his parents when he was five years old. His parents are both nursing attendants in a nursing home. They instilled in Junior a dedication to helping people, as well as a belief to seek purpose and happiness. After one year in an English only Kindergarten, his parents enrolled him in a dual language program offered in one of the local public schools. This program was small, and the 40 students who attended together continue to be close friends. Junior uses his background to connect to students who may be having similar experiences. He also prides himself in being open-minded to a diversity of experiences and perspectives, something he learned from attending his dual-language program.
Junior described many positive beliefs about self-efficacy towards the moral work of teaching that build on her background and life experiences, as well as her coursework and practica experiences. Junior shared that talking with students is his preferred method for redirections and discipline. He acknowledged that students must be taught how to engage in respectful conversations to ensure everyone feels heard and trusts their needs will be met. He described the importance of empowering students to resolve problems themselves using contracts, specific protocol language, and questioning techniques that lead students in a discussion.

Junior explained that he continues to practice balancing looseness with structure in his pedagogy. He described the need for consistency with students and the power of using overt systems for redirections and discipline. He also described the power of letting students take breaks from classroom expectations, though he struggled with how to ensure students are also putting forth their best effort and not taking too many breaks. He described the importance of being responsive to what individual students need and explained that students benefit from the support of working more closely with other teachers, such as paraeducators.

Junior was familiar with the names of moral education curricula but did not see any materials in use through his time in teach preparation. Junior did see Social Studies as a conduit for teaching moral education through required content objectives and described this as a helpful way to provide context for students. Junior noted that teachers experience pressure to cover a lot of academic content. He described his desire to balance the need to cover the required academic content with teaching students important social skills. Junior noted that he often had to stop in the middle of teaching a lesson to teach
social skills that were required for the students to be able to engage in the academic lesson.

Junior learned the most from the time in classrooms working with students and learning from teachers in action. He also appreciated the opportunity to share his experience with cohort colleagues who were going through similar experiences, especially to discuss the contradictions between what they were learning in class and what they saw in classrooms. Junior shared that he would have liked to engage more with issues of fairness, equity, and bias.

Junior’s describes himself as prepared to be a teacher. He has a sense of himself as competent to learn the things he needs to know as he develops his teaching skills. In the area of moral education, Junior knows that teaching social skills is an important part of the work. However, he has not interacted with specific curriculums for moral education. He did have experiences integrating moral education with social studies and is likely to engage with moral education in that manner in the future. His perceptions about children and the purpose of education reflect likelihood that he will aspire to affect his students’ moral development through a growth mindset lens. Junior’s experiences observing his mentors have shown him how to influence a classroom dynamic in both socially positive and socially negative ways. Junior is likely to plan ahead to develop a strong classroom community.
CHAPTER 6
CASE 3: KARYNA

Participant Biography

Participant 3 will be referred to as Karyna. Recall from Figure 7 that Karyna is a white female in her early 20’s. She entered the program directly after attending the same University for her undergraduate degree and participates in the 4 +1 pathway to licensure.

Karyna’s family is from a small city just over the state line, about a 45-minute drive from her university. Karyna’s parents are still married, though their relationship is not strong. She has a close relationship with her mom, and her mom provided the majority of her emotional support as a child. Her mother worked in Karyna’s elementary school as a paraprofessional, so they spent a lot of time together while she was growing up. Karyna’s mother has had Multiple Sclerosis since Karyna was in elementary school.

Karyna has a difficult relationship with her father. She describes her father as a heavy, distant man whom she resents for not doing enough to help her mother as the MS progressed. Karyna admitted that she may have come to blame him for things “unfairly.” He struggled to manage her mother’s MS, and in that distanced himself from the family. He would often be “disapproving” of her behavior because Karyna was the first of his children to experience things like boyfriends and sports.

Karyna has two older sisters, the younger of which has autism and deafness. Because of her sister’s deafness, Karyna grew up learning sign language. Karyna’s mother’s illness also created the need for someone to become the unofficial guardian for Karyna’s autistic sister. Karyna took on the responsibility of caring for her sister, even to the extent of being her advocate in school. Karyna describes incidents of teachers taking
her out of class to help with her sister. Karyna’s relationship with her sister shaped her approach and passion for teaching.

While Karyna is very close with her sister with autism, Karyna’s relationship with her eldest sister is not good. The eldest sister distanced herself from the family, moving to South Korea. Karyna described fights with her sister throughout her childhood and explained that her eldest sister would tease her for not having strong literacy skills. Karyna carries this experience into her teaching and uses it as a means to relate to students who are living under similar sibling conditions. When her eldest sister left, and Karyna’s father persistently tried to bring her sister back to the family, and this became a point of further disconnect between them. Despite her difficult relationship with her father and sister, she always knew that at home there were people who cared about her.

Karyna describes herself as anxious and “fixating on things that others would not.” As she aged, her anxiety manifested in regular “breakdowns.” She enrolled in the Speech Language Pathology (SLP) program offered at the university in this study, but she experienced persistent and regular anxiety attacks about going into the SLP field. The city in which she grew up houses two institutes of higher education with prominent education programs, and many of her friends and classmates became teachers as a result.

In hopes of being different rather than doing what was expected, she strongly resisted pursuing teaching. As she moved through her SLP program however, she slowly came to realize that teaching is what she wanted to do. She had nannied and worked in a local afterschool program, and she loved the work. As a teacher, Karyna hopes to help her students understand and appreciate people with disabilities, like her sister.
Teaching Morality Through Manner

This section presents Karyna’s descriptions as they relate to Teaching Morality through Manner. Descriptions here relate to Karyna’s comments about setting and upholding social rules and expectations to ensure a prosocial classroom culture. Karyna described talking to students as her primary strategy for teaching social skills, responding to conflict, and responding to student behavior. She reported that she will have to learn other ways to manage the classroom environment over time in her career as a teacher. Below are Karyna’s utterances that related to Teaching Morality Through Manner from our interviews.

Karyna reported using discussion to teach social skills and respond to social issues. She “talked with the students” about socially unexpected behaviors students in class display. She used quiet side conversations to help students understand different student needs, such special seating or tools for access. In her first-grade classroom Karyna met a student who would have many explosive tantrums. In this case she talked a lot with the other students to explain that “he just has things going on in his brain that we don’t understand” and that is why he “needed special seating or his desk was kind of away from the rest of the class because he needed that calmer, quiet environment.” She explained, “I remember talking a lot with the first graders like ‘he just has things going on in his brain that we don’t understand but you have things going on that I don’t understand.’ He always needed special seating or his desk was kind of away from the rest of the class because he needed that calmer, quiet environment, and I remember having side conversations with the others like ‘why is he over there,’ and I was like ‘he just needs help listening so it’s better for him to be over there’ or ‘he just needs to move while
he sits.’ I would always compare it like ‘well I need glasses to see but you don’t need glasses, so why would I give you glasses.’ I don’t know if they necessarily understood, but at that age they are also a lot more accepting of those things I think.” Because of her experiences with her sister, Karyna was “hyper aware” of the presence of students with disabilities, and she attributes this to her desire and ability to help other students better understand and empathize with students with challenging behaviors.

Karyna described how she shares her disapproval with students to interrupt antisocial behavior, such as teasing or other name calling. Karyna hoped to inspire and teach students about prosocial behavior through her conversations with them. Karyna described the discussion strategy as her “style.” She noted that always relying on discussion “may not be the best” strategy. In our third interview she said, “I have had them all sit and we had conversations. I think that’s more my style is to like talk it out with them, but sometimes that might not be the best thing to do.”

Karyna described her conflict mediation process as talking to the students in a separate space one at a time and then bringing them together to discuss the conflict. Karyna described the tension of having to also prioritize lessons but explained that her goal is to be sure everyone who is involved has a sense of the consequence of the conflict. She described learning specific strategies for whole class conflict mediation as something that teachers learn over time. Karyna described how she teamed up with her practicum teachers, splitting up the students for conversations, as well as taking time to cool themselves down when they were agitated. Karyna wondered how she will respond when she is the only adult in the classroom.
She offered that she would use “SSR [Silent Sustained Reading] to conference with one or two kids to ask what isn’t going well, why, and what can we do” before she implements any “new rules.” She described using these discussions as a means to “create a better dynamic” in the classroom. Karyna emphasized that using SSR time to mediate social conflicts would allow her to also maintain academic objectives. Karyna described SSR as an ideal time because it “is at the end of the day, when students have had time “to reflect on what happened. “She noted that meeting privately “also allows them to have safe space with only the teacher to share their ideas, opinions and emotions and not be judged.”

Karyna offered specific discussion strategies she practiced in her practicums that reflect teaching morality through manner. In Karyna’s second practicum, the fifth-graders had discussions about “real life situations” that came up for the students. Karyna also described discussion strategies she observed, such as turn-and-talk and add-on to what another student just said. If a student shared that they are experiencing a particular feeling, the teacher asked questions about what the feeling feels like and how to reconcile that feeling. If the students demonstrated exclusion behaviors, the teacher engaged empathy from the group and discussed how it feels to be excluded.

Karyna noted she is careful not to place blame on students. She described preventing students from feeling “they are in trouble” of becoming defensive. She said, “My go-to is always to say ‘you are not in trouble,’ that’s how I always start it, like ‘you’re not in trouble,’ ‘nothing is wrong here,’ just so that they don’t shut down instantly.” Karyna recommended talking with the most upset individual first, then later hearing the story from the other students. Karyna shared that certain students have an
easier time with acknowledging their own mistakes. She described the importance of consistent consequences for all the students.

Karyna learned to generate a set of rules with the students so that they “help one another” to follow the rules. She shared, “I was taught that it was very important… to have the children come up with a set class rules system, so having them be in charge of the rules of the classroom makes them more accountable for it. With that they work together and they kind of help out one another if something isn’t going right.” In her first placement this system worked well. The first graders referenced the rules throughout her time there. In her second placement however the rules in their “class constitution” were never referenced. The class constitution can be found in Figure 19. Karyna described that responding to rule breaking is what she is “least prepared in.”

![Image of Class Constitution](image.png)

**Figure 19: Image of Class Constitution**

She described the need for consistency among the students. In her second placement, the teacher responded differently to different students. Karyna described how the teacher ignored some negative behaviors from a student with a difficult homelife.
Karyna felt that the lack of response was “why the behaviors keep happening.” She explained that the mentor teacher also avoided confrontation with a reactive student in the class. She noted that this particular student is not treated with equal severity as the other students. Karyna felt that the inconsistency in the teacher’s responses deny the other students their sense of agency to confront antisocial behavior. Additionally she felt the child himself is denied social lessons about how to control his explosive behavior.

Karyna used discussion to teach responsibility as well. Rather than “yelling” at the students or keeping them in for recess, Karyna had conversations with her students where they explain why a responsibility didn’t happen and “what they can do next time.” She described discussion as a tool to help teach “the skills to reflect.”

Karyna shared mixed feelings about allowing students to take a break from or not follow through with the academic expectations, especially for students who are regularly disruptive or disengaged. She observed both her mentors allow students who are more behaviorally challenging do less work, and she expressed that she felt it “was deemed ok just to save him from a tantrum.” At the same time, she described that “if they needed emotional support, it’s more important than knowing how to add.”

**Teaching Morality Through Content**

This section will share Karyna’s descriptions of her experiences as they relate to Teaching Morality through Content. Descriptions here will relate to how Karyna described experiences using moral education curriculum and learning about and upholding classroom traditions that teach moral content. Karyna mentioned both the Second Step (Committee for Children, 2011) and Responsive Classroom (Center for Research in Education and Social Policy, 2023) curricula as examples of moral education
programs she has knowledge of. She also mentioned that both of her practica schools had designed curricula for teaching students about the LGBTQ+ community specifically. Karyna had mixed feelings about these types of programs, expressing that they are good for younger students, but older students might find them irrelevant. Karyna learned that games and morning routines, as well as traditions such as classroom jobs, build community and help students to understand each other. Below are specific references Karyna used to describe her reflections that relate to Teaching Morality Through Content.

In Karyna’s first-grade practicum they taught a Second Step (Committee for Children, 2011) lesson every Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. She thought it helped to mediate conflict, especially when teachers reminded the students to use the language of the lesson in the midst of their conflict. The students became accustomed to the predictable structure of the lessons as the semester went on though, and Karyna described that some students lost interest, and the program lost efficacy.

In her second practicum, Karyna did not observe regular, explicit moral education curriculum. The mentor teacher said that Second Step is not appropriate for her age group. Despite it being required in the school for all grades, the mentor teacher said that there is not enough time in the day for moral education curriculum. She also shared that she does not like being forced to use new curricula. Instead, the fifth-grade mentor teacher uses the “chatting” approach to address moral issues with the class. During Morning Meeting the class will discuss their experiences and emotions and learn “to see another point of view or empathize with each other.” The mentor shared that she prefers to use “real life, rather than a moral curriculum.”
Karyna explained that both her placement schools had designed a Kindergarten through 6th grade curriculum to teach children “proper terminology” for sexuality and gender. Some families were not supportive of this curriculum and threatened to remove their children from both of the schools. Karyna’s first mentor teacher supported the new curriculum and planned to implement it regardless. The fifth-grade mentor teacher however refused to implement the required curriculum. There was a transgender student in the class, and the mentor was awkward about talking about gender and sexuality. In fact, the mentor teacher asked a transgender student in their class what she should say to the class about puberty. Karyna reported, “We are having our puberty talk in three weeks, and so we had to conference with him and be like ‘this is what we are going to be saying.’ The mentor told them ‘you already know all these things, you could be teaching this class better than we could.’ I don’t like that we are not trying to see what he wants others to know. It’s more just like ‘if you are anxious about puberty, you don’t have to come that day.’ I feel like we can be doing so much more right now…he’s still going to be going through some kind of puberty. He has taught us things about like how we should not say girls with uteruses, we say people with uteruses, but I don’t think my teacher will implement it. So there’s such a great opportunity to make a proactive move, and no one is snatching it.” While this reference relates to teaching morality through content, the situation is also a negative example of teaching morally. The mentor has an opportunity to teach the other students about inclusivity, and instead she is allowing her own beliefs about gender and sexuality to determine what the students learn about puberty.

Karyna mentioned many different traditions to teach morality through content. Karyna used partnerships and group work to develop students’ relationships. She mixed
them up and separated certain students to ensure a “safe environment.” Sometimes she has had to explain to her students that “these are your partners for a day; you might not be best friends or like each other, but we are going to need to find a way to work together for these 45 minutes.” She acknowledged that this strategy does not “make them like each other” and admitted that there is an element missing to help the students develop respect for each other.

Karyna used student groupings to also teach persistence. She described that students can be motivated to learn from their high achieving peers. She noted that designing heterogeneous groupings can be helpful to motivate students to want to do what the others are capable of. The students know who the higher and lower performers are and compare their levels. In her fifth-grade placement Karyna changed the groupings in math to heterogenous groups. The students were previously assigned to BG meaning beginner, AP approaching, M mastery level groups. She described that she reassigned “one student who was always a BG” into a group with a Mastery level student known schoolwide for being great with math. The BG-ranked student “started being really good at math” and getting M on assignments. His ability to persist through challenging tasks grew, and his math capabilities grew in turn.

Karyna described herself as an advocate for “kids who have disabilities or have different needs” and prioritized helping students to understand people of diverse abilities. In her practicum, Karyna created a literacy circle unit with texts focused on learning differences. One group read “a book about a boy with autism.” Another read “about a boy with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).” Karyna believed that this unit
helped her students to understand each other better. After the unit she witnessed her students including a student with ADHD much more.

Karyna shared that using student-centered curriculum is another way to teach morality through content. She lamented that her second mentor teacher consistently sticks to the curriculum regardless of student understanding. Karyna described that her second mentor teacher is in competition with the other fifth grade teachers to cover all of the curriculum. Karyna also described the mentor as very MCAS-centric (referring to the annual state assessment, the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System); she always highlighted to the students when something they teach will be on the MCAS. Rather than reteaching or slowing down when students struggled, the mentor teacher pushed on and rationalized that the students were “not developmentally ready” to learn that topic. Karyna believed that “they just did not understand the way it was taught.”

Karyna explained that she feels compelled to pause when students are struggling with content. She shared that sometimes “their emotions get the best of me” and she must “back track” and “be a little bit sterner.” She expressed how she does not “want the students to feel anxious, but she also knows they will “need to be able to do” the content areas.

Though Karyna knows that class jobs can be used to teach morality through content, she noted that in her second placement, there was no structure for class jobs. Rather, the mentor teacher believed that students who want a job will ask for one, so class jobs in her fifth-grade placement were “self-selected.” Karyna noted that under this dynamic it is possible one student will have the “leader” jobs, such as line leader or door
holder, all year. Additionally, students who may not have the confidence to ask for a job will never hold one.

Morning Meeting was a tradition for teaching morality through content in both placements. Karyna’s mentor teachers led a formal greeting to ensure that every student was welcomed into the classroom. Greetings were game-like or taught social skills, such as shaking hands and making eye contact. The teachers both had a collection of greetings that they rotate, sometimes allowing the students to choose their favorites on a given day. The mentor teachers also played games in the morning meeting, which reinforced having fun and developed community. Karyna shared that games can be used to teaching social skills such as collaboration, inclusion, and respectful competition. Like greetings, Karyna noted that her mentor teachers had a collection of games that they teach to their students, and students develop favorites that they choose to play together. Karyna observed greetings and games that included multicultural awareness and diversity recognition.

**Teaching Morally**

This section will describe Karyna’s descriptions of herself as a moral exemplar for her students. It will highlight the ways in which her interpersonal philosophies and experiences, such as how she engages with others and the expectations she has for herself socially, promote or inhibit moral instruction for her students. It will also highlight how her intrapersonal values, personal beliefs, and biases, influence moral education in her classroom.

Karyna described many interpersonal skills for teaching morally. She consistently used her own experience as a struggling learner to inspire and build stamina in her students. She recognized strengths in her students and worked to build up the students’
confidence in areas the students may struggle or dislike. She has observed how her own enthusiasm for a topic influences the students’ engagement. She noted that because of her love for Math, her students are more excited to do Math. She emphasized that all students feel capable of learning, especially to those that struggle, and she stressed to her students that they “are not always going to struggle” and “are not bad person or stupid.”

Karyna described herself as sympathetic. She seeks to connect with students “who need additional help,” such as those who “have trauma or disabilities.” She likes to encourage students with words like “you can do this” and “I understand this is hard.” She acknowledged that her supportive nature reminds her of her mother’s approach when she was struggling to learn to read and write. She hoped to help her students turn off “negative voices in their heads.”

Karyna wanted to be a caring teacher. She prioritized “creating a safe space for everyone, where they can have fun but also feel loved.” She hoped the students would “come to me at any point in their lives.” She hoped to celebrate all the students’ accomplishments and progress. Karyna described her style as “both supportive and respected.” From observing other teachers, she realized that students “need authoritativeness to be confident their classroom is under control.” Karyna expressed that being authoritative is her learning curve because she “always wants them to like me.”

Karyna described how she must “keep a professional wall up” with the students. Karyna was told in her program that not to touch kids. Karyna recognized that kids want hugs, especially when they are upset. She acknowledged that it is hard to not hug the children when they come to her. Karyna shared a deep investment in the emotional well-being of her students, and she wanted to be available for them when they “needed that
squish” or “needed a hand on the back.” Karyna aims to “make students feel appreciated and accepted.” She selects her morning greetings “based on how the students are presenting in the morning, energetic or lethargic.” If there is an event in the schedule that she knows the students will have a particular response to, she will decide how to engage with the children accordingly. If it is a special day, such as a birthday, she will ask the children to choose the greeting. Similarly, she makes space for children to decide the games they will play. Karyna prioritized “including all of the students,” and she will pause the game to discuss inclusion if there are students excluded.

Karyna wanted to know her students well. She prioritized connecting with them about their lives outside of school. She attended recess with them to see who they spend time with, observe their play, and chat with them. She shared about her life with them, especially her experiences as a student. Karyna shared about two students who did not get along. Through her recess conversations, she realized they both liked to build fairy houses. At recess they started building fairy villages together. Karyna acknowledged that the fairy houses experience taught her that “finding ways outside of the classroom to connect the students is important.”

Karyna described the importance of maintaining a professional community of educators. She considered her professors, other cohort members, and mentor teachers as resources that she can rely on for good advice and will help her feel less isolated once she is in the field. These professional resources eased her anxiety about being a first-year teacher, and helped Karyna to know that she will not be alone. Her first mentor teacher emphasized the need to be friendly with all professionals in the building, “especially the
janitorial staff and the food services staff.” She noted that she “will probably have to ask other teachers what to do.”

Karyna also described the beliefs and values she holds that relate to teaching morally. She believed that good teachers are intuitive about their students’ needs. She described “something inside” that teachers “know subconsciously.” People have mentioned to her that she has the confidence of a good teacher. People have said that “they can see something; an “X factor that a lot of teachers have” that shows she will “know what to do in each situation” and “make on the spot decisions” about how to engage with students. She wished she had received more specific training in how to do so. If a student “won’t do the work because they are anxious” she wondered if she should force them to. She also described that students “need a mental break,” so she wrestled with knowing “when to let it go.”

Karyna described student behavior as purposeful, and she looks for “an explanation” when thinking about student behavior. Karyna explained that a “good student” is someone who puts forth consistent effort to push themselves. She understands that student performance varies because of “what is happening at home, on the playground, at lunch and recess,” as well as other factors that are outside of a teacher’s control. Karyna believes that a teacher’s role is to “take the time to get to know” the students and to “create a safe space that allows them to want to be their best selves.” Karyna expected her students to push themselves, academically and socially. She hoped that they will “stand up for kindness, make good choices, and be a respectful member of the community.” She modeled the behaviors that she expects from them, such as how to “handle emotions… to take a step back, reflect, then come back able to talk.” While she
has seen some students follow her model, she acknowledged that “some are not yet wanting to handle their situations differently.”

Karyna acknowledged that talking about values in the classroom is difficult, especially when values are in conflict. She recognized that there are nuances about “when it’s alright to do this sometimes but wrong other times.” She had little experience with those types of conversations. In her fifth-grade placement she observed conversations on big social issues where the students were “trying to be funny” and said “let’s pretend to riot.” The teacher intentionally avoided values conversations for fear that the students will “get riled up.” Karyna described that the mentor teacher sometimes “will talk about Trump and mention how she doesn’t like things that are happening.” The mentor quickly back tracks out of the conversation though by saying things like “we shouldn’t really get into politics right now. “ Karyna shared that “student teachers were told to let the mentor teachers handle that kind of discourse.” She wondered how to have those conversations now having not had the opportunity to practice.

Karyna described teaching as “the way to prepare the next generation to become contributing members of society.” She wanted to teach because she likes kids and wanted to help her students develop a sense of their own creativity and potential. Karyna shared that teaching is something that should be “reserved for those who really know they want to teach’ and are “willing to put in the effort and time it requires.”

**Reflections on the Teacher Education Program**

Karyna learned a “Responsive Classroom -type style” of teaching from her program coursework. She described making adjustments to the lessons to accommodate what the students need in a given moment, rather than just teaching to get through the
material. Karyna learned how to use games to teach moral skills and content skills in the same lesson. Additionally, Karyna learned to incorporate academic content into Morning Meeting and to schedule time for students to talk and be social.

Karyna’s had a strong relationship with her first mentor teacher. They had a previous relationship, and this relationship allowed a dynamic of “co-teaching” to develop during the practicum. Karyna described feeling responsibility and self-efficacy in the class as a teacher. Karyna described her first mentor as someone who was very invested in the students. She was “friendly and kind” and always “listening to the kids needs.” She spent hours researching new ways to better teach her students, especially those who demonstrated difficult behaviors. This mentor teacher also created lessons and activities around the culture and traditions of her students, bringing conversations about diversity into the classroom. Karyna learned to teach diversity from her first semester mentor teacher. The mentor teacher told Karyna that multicultural pedagogy involves “not just highlighting the one child who does have darker skin or the one child who is from a different country; it’s highlighting everyone and acknowledging the diversity.”

Karyna’s second practicum mentor teacher was a veteran teacher who had participated in the same Teacher Education program 20 years prior. The mentor teacher described to Karyna that at some point teachers have enough lessons where they can “coast.” Though she had told Karyna that she used to have more text, at the time of my visit the classroom was barren, with little text and none that was motivating. Figure 20 shows one of the few environmental influences that show any aspect of the moral work of teaching.
Karyna’s description of the mentor teacher was inconsistent. At times she described her as a “good coach” who offered helpful feedback, and other times she described her as reactive, cold, and strict.

Karyna said that the mentor teacher also had “big reactions in front of the kids” if she was disappointed with their behavior. Karyna described how the mentor teacher once told a student “people won’t want to be friends with you if you act like a little first grader.” Karyna described the mentor as getting easily upset when the students are talking, and she “had them sit completely silent” or took away a privilege. Despite her not aligning with her mentor teacher’s style, Karyna does believe that whatever is happening seems to be “working for the kids.”

With both mentor teachers Karyna appreciated the time and space to understand the teachers’ decisions in the classroom. Through their “little reflections” she was able to learn “why they handle things a certain way,” such as why the teacher would ignore certain behaviors and address others. The think aloud and reflections about the small
elements of classroom life helped Karyna to “realize that as a teacher reflecting is one of the most important things you can do.”

Karyna experienced one course session on implicit bias and one required course on Sheltered English Immersion (SEI). In the SEI class Karyna described one activity in which the teacher led the class through different scenarios of in and out circles. Students “on the outside circle knew a cultural custom that the people on the inside circle didn’t.” Karyna’s custom was to talk a lot closer than she normally would. This activity showed the student teachers what it was like for people who might not know the social norms. The class then discussed “how everyone felt in that dynamic.” Karyna appreciated these activities because they “really made you get out of your comfort zone.” In general though, Karyna wished that the program incorporated social justice and social learning more intentionally. She wanted to learn how to teach social justice because “when they go into society, those kids are going to need to know about diversity and understand others’ cultures and their perspectives.”

In her fifth-grade placement the mentor teacher claimed that “the diversity in the class” was the one child who was to be low socioeconomic status and had ADHD. The mentor did not do any work around acknowledgement or celebration of diversity. Figure 21 shows the only book to note with reference to different identities observed at the time of my interviews. The class also had three students of color: two with family connections from outside the US. The perception of the family culture of these students is that they were “white-skinned so it’s never brought up.” The mentor would wonder “if he knows because it’s not celebrated in his life.” She would say that “he doesn’t make the connection that he is part of a minority” because he “doesn’t identify it.”
Figure 21: Image of School-Wide Read

One of the students of color is also known as the “bully” of the classroom. The mentor teacher has not mentioned the impact skin color may have on the perception that this student is a “bully.” Karyna revealed that is likely a history for this student in her relationships with the other students at the school because when she is approached about her bullying, the student “breaks down into tears.” Karyna acknowledged that it is possible that “she has all this built up emotion that she lets out in her bullying behavior.” This is not addressed in the classroom.

Overall, Karyna shared that the coursework in the program was a “surface level overview of what we need to know.” Her experiences in her placements were the element that prepared her the most for teaching. She described the program is “busy, but it’s rewarding.” She loved what she was doing, so it did not feel like work.

Self-Efficacy for the Moral Work of Teaching

Karyna has many beliefs that indicate a strong self-efficacy for the moral work of teaching. She believes in growth mindset for both herself and her students in all areas. She believes that behavior is a form of communication that helps teachers to know what
students need to learn. She strives to have her students know they are never in trouble, and rather than yell at them or blame them she wants to guide them with support towards growth. Karyna believes that connections are a priority for learning, and she wants her students to consider her supportive and respectful. She knows that teachers play a large role in the social preparation of their students, and she wants to talk to her students about social situations that arise in class.

Karyna believes she has the thing that makes good teachers good. Be it intuition or confidence, Karyna describes others as noticing her capacity especially teaching younger students. She feels confident in her decision-making skills and sees herself as an advocate. Karyna believes herself to be kind, respectful, and invested in the students’ well-being. She knows that she is able to create a structure of safety in which students can learn. Karyna knows that her professional network is integral to teaching well, and she knows that all educators in the building are important members of the team that support the students in her class.

Karyna did express a few beliefs that indicate some trepidation for the moral work of teaching. She described feeling uncomfortable with older students, and thus less confident in her engagement with them. She described talk about social values as difficult. She is worried about the possibility of not being able to form a good relationship with students and how that would affect her capacity for the moral work of teaching. She also expressed feeling unprepared for the moral work of teaching and expected that it is something she will need to learn over time.

Karyna’s experiences with the moral work of teaching were mixed. She had a very positive experience in her first practicum. There the mentor teacher always modeled
calm and respectful approach to the students. She was invested in the students’ experience, and she designed culturally sustaining content that enabled the students to get to know each other and appreciate the diversity in their classmates. The first mentor used Second Step (Committee for Children, 2011) curriculum with the first graders to support their moral development, and Karyna had the opportunity to engage directly with the curriculum herself. The mentor also participated in the design of a new curriculum on LGBTQ+ identities that she shared with Karyna. Karyna described the first practicum classroom as a Responsive Classroom (Center for Research in Education and Social Policy, 2023) type of approach, with Morning Meeting, social games, and student-centered activities.

Despite Karyna’s belief structure and positive experiences, she described low self-efficacy for the moral work of teaching in upper grades. Likely this low level of self-efficacy is related to her experience in the fifth-grade class with her second mentor. This experience was so negatively powerful that Karyna described being resistant to seek employment in any position at the second placement school. She explained that just the presence of the second mentor makes her feel less confident in her teaching ability.

Karyna noted that she felt very efficacious both for general teaching, as well as teaching moral education, throughout and just after her first placement experience. Her self-efficacy for teaching the upper grades plummeted after the second practicum, and she reported that she would not consider teaching grades above fourth. Though the school was observed as welcoming and inclusive as evidenced in Figure 22, Karyna also refused to apply to teach at her second placement school for fear that her mentor would “be watching her and waiting for her to do something wrong.” Karyna felt her second
mentor was critical and cold. She talked badly about trying new curricula. She also did not intentionally connect with students. It is likely that this experience, the combination of observation and negative persuasion from the mentor, eroded Karyna’s self-efficacy.

Figure 22: Image of Hallway Text

In her second practicum, Karyna had many experiences that indicate erosion of her self-efficacy for the moral work of teaching. The mentor teacher refused to engage with a moral education curriculum, neither for social skills and community building nor for learning about diverse perspectives. The second mentor modeled a strict, unpredictable approach that distanced her from the student experience. She did not assign class jobs to hold students accountable or build common responsibility. The second mentor also stated that she had been teaching so long that she was in the place to coast through the day without much attention.

Despite her negative experience in her second placement, Karyna has a history of encouraging direct performances, vicarious observations of positive influences like her first mentor, and persuasive comments about her own ability that will help her to move forward in future attempts at moral education that will restore her self-efficacy. Additionally, her belief systems around inclusion and connection with students will motivate her to help the students build their own moral capacity.
Summary

Karyna entered the teacher education program directly after finishing her Bachelor’s degree at the same institution. She is a white, middle class woman from an academic town just outside of an hour from the university. Karyna’s family life inspired her to want to work with children with disabilities. Her mother was a paraeducator throughout Karyna’s childhood until her Multiple Sclerosis prevented her from working anymore. Her sister has down syndrome and is deaf, and Karyna acted as her sister’s advocate throughout their schooling. Karyna’s older sister inspired her as well, though it was her critique of Karyna’s slow start to reading that inspired Karyna to help others overcome the criticisms of others.

Karyna shared many positive beliefs about self-efficacy towards the moral work of teaching that build on her background and life experiences as well as her coursework and practica experiences in her preservice training program. Karyna described a reliance on talking it out with students to teach morality through manner. She described having quiet side conversations with students to engage their empathy for other people’s perspectives if another student is having a hard time. She also described sharing her approval or disapproval with students in order to teach them about different behaviors. When students are in conflict, Karyna believes it is her place to stay objective and to coach students toward a common solution. In order to ensure there is time in the day for both academics and teaching morality, Karyna describes using silent reading time and Morning Meetings to engage in this type of dialogue with students.

Karyna had experience with a moral education curriculum in her first placement. She explained that these types of curricula are better for younger students because older
students get bored and prefer real life scenarios to learn from. Karyna described teaching morality as adjusting pedagogy based on student need and embedding games and other social activities into the school day. She describes engaging partner work or small group work to teach students how to collaborate. Karyna also described class jobs to teach morality to students.

Karyna explained that the best way to teach rules is to have the students participate in the generation of the rules. Ideally, Karyna would redirect students to the rules to teach them throughout the year. Karyna also described the importance of being consistent with students’ imposition of rules for the students and across time.

The ‘it factor’ Karyna described is a perfect example of teaching morally. The ‘it factor’ is a type of intuition for the relational and dispositional work of teaching. She has been told that she has this ‘it factor’ in her own style. She explained that she is able to make quick decisions in response to student needs, both academically and socially. Karyna explained that teachers are always modelling expected behaviors, calmness, and self-control. She described kindness and respect to be an especially important aspect of this type of teaching morally. Karyna described offering kindness not only to the students, but also to the other professionals in the building that are all working towards supporting the students in their school lives.

Karyna explained many experiences and beliefs that indicated she would be likely to engage in and pursue knowledge of moral pedagogy. She believed in growth mindset for herself and her students and shared her belief that mistakes are a part of learning. She also described knowledge that she would be learning a lot through her teaching practice,
and she would likely improve over time. Taken together, these variables indicate she will continue to pursue and increase her self-efficacy for the moral work of teaching.
CHAPTER 7

CASE 4: SALOME

Participant Biography

Participant 4 will be referred to as Salome. Recall from Figure 7 that Salome is a Latina in her early 20’s. She entered the program directly after attending the same University for her undergraduate degree and is pursuing licensure through the 4 + 1 pathway.

Salome was born in Brazil. Her parents moved to the United States when she was a baby. Her mother worked cleaning floors, often until late at night. When she was a toddler, Salome’s parents separated, and she moved back to Brazil with her mother. When she was five Salome and her mother returned to the United States, remarried to an American white man, and settled in a small predominantly white town in central Massachusetts. She grew to love him and call him “Dad.” She has “a little sister from their marriage” eight years younger.

Salome is very close to her mother. She did not like being “far from home” while away at college. Her mother and stepfather promoted the idea that doing well in school would ensure a “good future” and expected her to get good grades. Her parents prioritized homework above all other activities and expected Salome to be the first in the family to go to college.

Salome described herself as a “people person.” She has a very close family and was active in many groups, including band, show choir, color guard, and a sorority. She has a “close group of friends,” both from high school and college. Salome grew up with “the same classmates up until 6th grade” and still talks to most of them. They went to
each other’s birthday parties, and “the families were close.” Though the small-town community where they lived was not as diverse as she would have liked, Salome appreciates the closeness of the community.

Growing up, Salome often visited a small city nearby with a large Puerto Rican population. She appreciated the cultural connection, and she explained that there was “always a part of me that wished there were more people to speak Portuguese with.” In college Salome studied Portuguese and Spanish because she loved studying her culture and speaking her first language. Spanish is similar to her own and “reminded her of home.” Salome noted that Spanish would be “handy” in her work as an educator.

Salome enjoyed school and did well academically. She described herself as “a huge nerd” who loves to learn and share what she has learned, which is why she was drawn to elementary school teaching. She loved the social aspects of school and participated in color guard and lacrosse. She had a close group of friends, and she took classes that she enjoyed. Salome was sad when she graduated from high school. She loved her teachers, especially in high school. They “really cared about the students” which helped her to “thrive.” Salome especially loved her band teachers, and originally wanted to be a music teacher.

Salome worked hard in college. She majored in Portuguese, with three minors: Spanish, psychology, and elementary education. She worked as a peer mentor throughout her time as an undergraduate, and she enjoyed being “a middle person between the student and connections on campus.” She appreciated “building relationships with freshmen that weren’t academically based.” The freshmen shared with her “their life
problems,” and she loved helping them “talk it out and learn from each other.” She is motivated to teach for the same reasons, to help and build relationships.

Salome imagined herself teaching in a small community similar to where she grew up, though she also hoped to work in a diverse urban community at some. She enjoys “working with kids” and has done so as a life-guard and babysitter. Additionally, on her breaks in college, Salome returned to her hometown and substitute taught in classrooms in her old elementary school. She described her these experiences helped her to become “a better me: more patient, passionate, understanding, and positive.”

**Teaching Morality Through Manner**

This section presents Salome’s descriptions that relate to Teaching Morality through Manner. Descriptions here relate to Salome’s comments about setting and upholding social rules and expectations to ensure a prosocial classroom culture. Salome thought teaching was just talking to students, and that students would always listen. She learned that the technical aspects of teaching, such as management and lesson objectives, are difficult and nuanced. Salome wanted to be patient, relaxed, and flexible, and she wanted the students to respect her authority. She described feeling unprepared in this area. Salome’s references related to Teaching Morality Through Manner are below.

Salome described classroom management as “hard” for her. Salome described herself as “a nervous-type of person” and explained that her energy sometimes will “feed off of [the students’] energy.” She wished she learned more strategies to remain calm when the students are high energy, and how to “bring herself back down.” Salome acknowledged needing more practice being flexible in her teaching. She wanted to learn to allow for unplanned times for students to talk to each other. She also wanted to learn
when to cut lessons short if they are going too long, and how to stay calm when the
students are not reacting the way she expected them to. She said, “I am still learning what
situations require me to be really strict, which situations require me to be a little bit more
passive and be like ‘oh ok, he like threw a pencil across the room,’ am I going to yell at
him, or be like ‘go pick it up,’ or am I going to be like ‘please don’t do that next time.’
Maybe it is one of those things I always hear teachers saying it takes 20 years to perfect.”
Salome had been told that if she does not follow through with what she tells the students,
then they will not respect her. She described that she would prefer to “have a
conversation” with the students, rather than to do something punitive, even if it meant she
would lose student respect.

Her second placement school utilized “Reflection notes.” The Reflection note was
a writing assignment for students to reflect on rule breaking or other transgressions.
Students must describe “what they did” and “how to make it better.” The teacher and
parents both must sign the Reflection note. Salome noted that students viewed Reflection
notes as a “punishment,” though her mentor teacher tried to use the notes to have
conversations with students about their behavior.

Salome liked to help her students resolve conflicts. She described how she will
“hear both sides” and then “be the mediator.” She recognized that this strategy requires a
lot of time, and she does not always “know how to resolve the situation.” Escalated
conflicts that involve hurt feelings, name calling, or other teasing are especially
challenging. Salome described herself as “jumping in to solve their problems” in “the
quickest way.” She wanted to learn better strategies for “conflict managing.”
She recognized that some of her students lacked the social skills required to express opinions respectfully. She struggled to help them be heard without “being really mean.” Salome noted that some students are “honest” and “not aware” of how hurtful they are. When conflict happens, Salome sometimes forced the students to work together. She had also used time in Morning Meeting to talk about expectations for working in partnerships. The students have shared ideas about to work with someone, and they knew they were supposed to “be respectful and …get our work done.”

In her first placement, she witnessed strategies she hopes not to use in her own practice related to teaching morality through manner. Even though the first mentor teacher “seemed nice,” Salome felt that the expectations and routines were “very strict and harsh for third graders.” The students got scolded for child-like behavior and had limited autonomy in the classroom. The teacher reprimanded the students if they got upset with each other, and she avoided helping them to resolve their conflicts. Salome described, “Even the kids’ silly arguments that normally would resolve itself were big problems to the students. If one student said something mean to the other one, it would be like a full-blown meltdown and it wasn’t really handled by the teacher. I was the one that, and I felt like I had to kind of do it in secret too my mentor teacher already thought that I was too caring, but if I see a child really crying, I am not going to not say anything or ignore them. I’m going to help them calm down.”

The students were reprimanded for other small reasons, such as “not saying good morning” when they entered the classroom, talking to their friends, or not having a pencil. Students had to raise their pencil in the air if it needed to be sharpened. The teacher would come and check on it before they were allowed to go to the sharpener. The
students were not allowed to have their own handheld sharpeners because “it would make a mess if they dropped it.” The mentor teacher took away recess for these students on the first day of school. Salome would “stick up” for the students, and the mentor would reprimand her also. The mentor teacher told Salome the students would “take advantage” of her for being “too caring,” and she told the program supervisor that Salome was “too caring and needed to stop.”

Salome worried that she might use punitive discipline simply because she had witnessed it happening in her first placement, even if such strategies do not align with her values. In her second placement she did once impulsively take recess away. She “wanted the students to stop and … listen “ and followed her instinct at the time to get her desired outcome. One student told their parent, and the parent contacted the mentor teacher about it. Salome reflected, and the following day “apologized” to the students and shared that “sometimes teachers make mistakes too.” Together, they agreed to “practice the quiet signal for five minutes during our Morning Meeting.”

Prior to the program, Salome had had the impression that teaching meant leading discussions “about what you know.” She expected the students to all be engaged and there to be “no issues.” Salome came to realize that this was a naive perspective. Salome wished she “spent more time on classroom management for students who lose focus and need redirection.” She felt that the program only taught “the basic outline for those topics.” She remembered learning about “brain and movement breaks” for students who “get wiggly or are not focusing” to take a break in a quiet, calm down space and come back when they are ready” to join the class. She said she is “really struggling” with the idea that she did what she said she “was never going to do,” and she is concerned she will
implement aspects of teaching morality through manner that don’t align with her values once in her own classroom. She shared, “I did what I said I was never going to do, and now I am freaked out that that says something about the type of teacher that I am going to be. So, I have been like SUPER paranoid about that.”

**Teaching Morality Through Content**

This section will share Salome’s descriptions related to Teaching Morality through Content. Descriptions here will relate to how Salome described experiences using curricula for moral education and learning about and upholding classroom traditions that teach moral content. Salome never handled specific moral curricular materials, though she described a lot of knowledge about the Responsive Classroom (Center for Research in Education and Social Policy, 2023) curriculum. She also described multiple ways she had observed Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) (Center on PBIS, 2023) model. Before the program, Salome also observed a teacher implement their own curricular materials for moral education based on the values observed through the Winter Olympics, such as courage, persistence, teamwork, respect, and “what it means to be a good sport.” Salome mentioned that three of the program courses taught her how to embed moral content in academics: the Inclusion course, Integrated Methods, and a Social Studies course. She also described that she learned to utilize traditions such as Morning Meetings, student jobs, explicit praise, and whole-class behavior systems help students build moral capacity. Salome’s references related to Teaching Morality Through Content are below.

Salome never witnessed or taught explicit lessons from a moral education curriculum in her time in the program. She did use Morning Meeting to teach the students
social skills, such as collaboration and respect. Salome situated the lesson in classroom behavior she had observed from her students, such as teaching expectations for working with other students. She described, “I noticed that a lot of them were making comments when I would pair them up, so in our morning message we go over some lessons of like things we have already learned and in the morning message that day I chose what are our expectations when we work with other students. I had the students come up with ideas about how we are supposed to act when we are working with someone that we might not necessarily know or might not necessarily like. It came from the students like ‘I want to be respectful’ and ‘we need to get our work done.’ ‘I can be nice to them,’ and ‘I can help them if they get stuck.’ So I did do one lesson with this class I guess, like a very tiny mini lesson about working with other people that aren’t your friends.” Figure 23 shows the chart for partner work as observed in Salome’s second placement.

Figure 23: Image of Class Rules for Partner Work
Salome learned to use prosocial work strategies in her teaching, such as “Turn and Talk” and greetings and games in Morning Meeting to build social skills. She learned to be flexible about seating for students who want different seating choices for their learning style. She built in collaborative group or partner work, though she often decided the partnerships to ensure the students “work with other people than just their friends.”

In her “Integrated Methods” course Salome learned a lot about the Responsive Classroom (Center for Research in Education and Social Policy, 2023) curriculum. Salome described this curriculum as “Morning Meetings where students share, Closing Meetings, and lessons that start with a mini lesson, then have a whole class discussion about what was learned.” Salome noted that “it also has to do with the teacher caring about the students and using effective strategies that help resolve classroom issues.”

She had an opportunity to witness “a Responsive School” in her second placement. This meant that the teachers met regularly to discuss Responsive Classroom (Center for Research in Education and Social Policy, 2023) techniques. Salome attended one of the meetings and felt like she knew “more about Responsive Classroom than some of the teachers.” Her mentor teacher showed her how to use explicit, positive language to teach morality through content. This strategy was powerful for Salome. She described, “I have mostly seen the ‘good job!’ but you don’t know what you are doing, but it wasn’t until my mentor teacher this semester she was like ‘they need to know not only what they are doing a good job for, they need to know why it is beneficial to them and their classmates.’ I never knew, not that it was bad to say good job, but I didn’t know how it wasn’t as helpful as it could be in this other way. Saying good job and being encouraging and stuff is great, but it could be better. Kids tune things out once they hear it over and over again,
but it can never get old if you change up your explanation for why you are giving them a praise.” Salome realized that the students then learned to recognize each other’s good deeds and made it explicit to others. Students observed prosocial acts from their classmates and would praise them aloud. Salome plans to use this strategy for teaching morality through content in her teaching.

The Second Step (Committee for Children, 2011) curriculum was also utilized at Salome’s second placement. However Salome did not have direct experience using or witnessing those materials. Salome’s second mentor teacher had many traditions for teaching morality through content. The teacher established a predictable morning routine that build student responsibility. Every morning students “entered the classroom, put away their belongings, wrote the homework on their agendas.” The students each had a job every day, including taking care of the class pet tree frog (see Figures 24 and 25 below that show pictures of classroom artifacts).

![Image of Class Pet Tree Frog](image.png)

**Figure 24: Image of Class Pet Tree Frog**
The “Morning Message Leader” called students to the rug. Next the “Leader picked the greeting...and the game.” Expectations and routines were very clear and routinized. Salome explained that the teacher was always responsive to the students’ needs. If a student was “having a hard time” the mentor would “ask them to take a break and come back when they’re ready.” The teacher also used a whole class marble jar to build a sense of collective purpose among the students. Students would earn marbles and when the jar was full the class earned a pizza party.

Both of Salome’s placement schools used Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) (Center on PBIS, 2023). Salome noted that she did not “think the first placement school did that well.” Salome remembered, “It was competitive. To earn the Paw tickets they always had to be performing to the top of expectations. They would ask on the announcement almost like trivia questions relating to the school. Then the teacher
who was saying the announcements would come into the classrooms and ask ‘what did I say on the announcements?’ If the kids remembered they would get prizes. I don’t know why they thought that was a good thing. And the announcements were always at a time when kids were trying to work too, so a lot of the kids missed that. It was always the same kids that remembered.” Salome did not observe students earn tickets for being helpful or kind, “for doing their classroom job or being a good friend.” Rather, students received tickets “if they were working really hard, staying on task.”

In her second placement Salome only saw the students receive Tiger Tickets from recess or lunch monitors. As Figure 26 shows, the mentor had an envelope in the classroom for the Tiger Tickets, but the mentor teacher did not hand the tickets out. Students who got Tiger Tickets purchased items at the school store, but Salome never saw students go to the store.

Figure 26: Image of PBIS Tickets Envelope
Teaching Morally

This section will report Salome’s descriptions of herself as a moral exemplar for her students. It will highlight the ways in which her interpersonal philosophies and experiences, such as how she engages with others and the expectations she has for herself, promote or inhibit moral instruction for her students. It will also highlight how her intrapersonal values, personal beliefs, and biases, influence moral education in her classroom.

Salome believes teaching is a giving experience. She is always first concerned about the student experience rather than what she might need as a teacher. She shared, “I want students to love school, not just the learning aspect of it but everything, being in the classroom, making new friends, having a good time, knowing that they are loved and cared for and expected to succeed. Those are my goals. I want them to see that I care about them in all aspects of their life. I expect a lot from the students because I want them to do well. I know sometimes I can be stern, but I would never get mean. I hope they would never feel that I didn’t care about them. I think they would describe me as a caring teacher, and fun hopefully.

She noted how students watch how teachers engage with students and colleagues and use it as a model for how they should behave. She noted the importance of modelling “that it’s ok to make mistakes” as well as the importance of “modelling good interactions with people.” Additionally, she explained that students learn to be responsible from observing the teacher “be prepared” and “accept feedback” the students offer. She described how she manages her own emotions to show the students how to manage
theirs. Instead of getting upset with a student, Salome will “quietly talk to them.” She tries to model “rational and level-headed” behavior.

Salome shows teaching morally through her continuous reflection on her practice. She shared that she likes to talk to people about how she can improve as a teacher. She described her learning curve as developing patience and checking for understanding. She said, “I tend to move on, and completely don’t realize until much later that I didn’t even wait to see if they got it before I moved on. Patience and not panicking when something doesn’t go the way that I expect it to.” She also noted that balancing classroom management with academic objectives is an area of growth for her. She described, “I feel like I don’t get to do the stuff that I want to do because of time. My mentor in the fall, and now too, is like ‘pacing needs improvement.’ If I keep them on the rug too long they’ll get all wiggly and stuff, and I want to make sure I get through everything. But sometimes I focus on classroom management over academics. I am trying to put them together but it’s hard. I am still learning how to do both well.”

Over the course of the program, Salome changed her beliefs about what it means to be a “good” and “bad” student. She previously thought that “bad kids don’t pay attention in school” and “great students are always watching and doing what you are supposed to be doing.” She noted that now she realizes this type of thinking is dangerous “for the kids who can’t meet expectations.” She learned that “there might be other things going on.” She “never wants to make a kid feel like they are a bad person because they can’t do school.” Rather, she tries to be reflective about her own behavior and the impact of the things she says on her students. Salome thought that teachers “should talk to their students about right and wrong, good and bad.” She is “still learning how to do
that in a way that kids understand.” Salome said she “sometimes go on tangents” or “becomes emotionally involved in moral issues” among her students. For example, if a student is being teased, she finds it difficult not to get emotional and yell at the kids.

Salome believes children learn best when they are interested, confident, and have a lot of practice to try things on their own. Salome seeks to connect the learning objectives student interests to motivate students. She says that teachers should help build students’ awareness of and appreciation for their own progress. She described, “They need to be able to appreciate themselves and give themselves credit because they may not have people in their life that congratulate them and give them confidence. They need to be able to do that and give that to themselves too. I feel if teachers focused more on that type of teaching style maybe depression or anxiety in children would go down.”

Salome stated that the relationships with the teachers, the principal, the school staff, and their classmates will be what students will remember when they look back on their school experiences. Salome believes that teachers should know their students, “get to know their interests, what makes them happy, sad, or frustrated,” and “observe the way they interact with others.” Salome feels that “once students start to realize that you are noticing them and what they are doing, they are more willing to open up to you.” She noted, “If you constantly only notice the negative things that they are doing, that’s going to make a negative relationship. Salome believes that “all good relationships come out of effort, noticing, response, and responsible caring.” She acknowledged that “when students and teachers have good relationships, students are more willing to participate.” She stated that if the students “trust the teacher, students will open up more and allow themselves to have more fun in school.”
If her students “reach out years later” and say she was big part of their life she will feel successful. Salome describes her desire to be like the teachers she had growing up, “the teacher that makes learning engaging.” She wants her students to want to come to her class. She wants to be the kind of teacher who can “incorporate learning but make it fun and memorable.” Salome explained that she wants “to make sure that EVERY student in my classroom will experience the best teacher I can be.”

**Reflections on the Teacher Education Program**

In the program, Salome often felt an assumption that she “should already know” things, rather than need to be explicitly discussing different aspects of being a teacher. She wished the “logistical aspects” of teaching, such as Unions, pay scale, and pensions were taught in the program. The program taught that “teachers should not be late or dress in revealing clothes,” and they should conduct themselves professionally. She did not learn how to engage with paraprofessionals, administrators, co-teachers, or families. She wished she had more instruction on “tools” for moral education and teaching in general, rather than the “focus on teaching certain subjects.” When asked what the best part of her program was, Salome described “great relationships with her cohort members and professors.”

Salome explained that the program philosophy has been that “you learn through your practice.” She perceived a contradiction in that philosophy, and Salome used the analogy of learning to play instrument to explain its faults. She explained, “If you are learning an instrument and you keep practicing it the wrong way, practicing the wrong notes, you are never going to learn how to play the instrument effectively. You think you might sound lovely, but you do not.” Similarly, teachers may not realize that they are
practicing poor strategies if they are not explicitly taught better ways to teach. Salome described that “some people have natural ability” for teaching. For example, some people can easily help students through arguments. Salome felt like she gets “tongue-tied” in these situations. She said she compares herself to her colleagues and sometimes will “start putting myself down” because she believes they “will be a better teacher.” She is unable to articulate what it is about the person makes her believe they are more equipped.

Salome stated that she learned most from being in the practica. Sometimes she wished there were no classes because she was “learning so much being in a school,” and she wished she could have “spent these two hours catching up for next day” in the classroom. Salome tried to have a positive relationship with her mentors. She described her first mentor as initially unavailable and distant. In late summer, while her classmates were talking about their plans to help set up their practicum classrooms and meet their mentors, Salome received an email from her mentor that said, “this is my summer vacation.” The students in her first placement told Salome that they “don’t like being in this classroom and don’t want to be in school.” On her last day, Salome “cried for the kids.” She believed they “weren’t getting the attention that they needed” and felt she had become the “person they would come to, especially if they had a little disagreement with a classmate, or if they were excited about something.” She “really cared about them.” The first mentor would often refer to the students as “bad” if they were not able to accomplish the required tasks. Her first mentor teacher isolated herself from the other teachers in the building and mostly stayed in her classroom with her paraprofessional.

Alternatively, she had a strong relationship with her second mentor teacher. The mentor communicated regularly with all the support educators, including the “ELL
teacher, the student services teacher, the special curriculum teachers like art and gym.”

She acted as if they are all working together for a shared purpose. The mentor was eager to help. Salome described how she could “feel” the difference between how her first and second mentors believed in her. Salome felt like she could talk to her second mentor, “not only about student teaching but also about personal life.” Salome felt her mentor “knows the type of person that I am and the type of teacher that I want to be.” Her second mentor is the type of teacher who inspired her to go into teaching.

Salome noted that both of her mentor teachers set high expectations for the students. The difference between them was “the way that they went about accomplishing those expectations.” She described her first placement as a “why aren’t you getting this type of mentality: I have been doing it for you, I have been modelling, you should know this, did your other teachers not do this?” Whereas her second mentor was supportive and growth-minded, saying things like “it takes more time sometimes, you’ll get there eventually, what can I help you with in order for you to accomplish that goal or that task or that assignment?” Salome stated, “Both mentors wanted their students to succeed but the ways that they were supporting and driving their students were completely different.”

Salome wanted to work in an urban setting. She had heard a lot of teachers say that “urban kids have challenging behavioral issues because they come from low-income families.” She learned in the teacher education program that students’ behavior might have to do with their homelives. The program taught her to be compassionate towards students’ family lives while still helping students academically. Salome wanted to experience for herself “how bad it was” in urban schools. Salome wished she could bring the resources from her second placement to the urban school in her first placement. She
noted “If every school was able to have as many resources, public schools would be doing so much better.” She wished that more people would “give urban schools a chance,” and she believes that teachers have bias towards communities of color and poor communities.

Salome described the coursework as “tailored to suburban schools and the white experience.” Salome wished that program coursework included more multicultural coursework. Salome recognized that teachers need to “know about...students other than just white students.” Though the program did provide “a couple class sessions around implicit bias” she noted that the majority-white student teachers in her program would benefit from more multicultural content. Salome said, “We had a couple of days where we did talk about multicultural pedagogy and that was a topic of class, but I wanted more of that. We are going to be teachers of the United States, it’s diversifying and there’s a lot more students other than just white students. It would be nice to know more about that, like how to be a teacher in that type of school and type of classroom. I feel like a lot of the classes were tailored to suburban schools and white experience.”

As a Brazilian woman, she felt that the program did not recognize her culture. She said, “Some of my teachers knew after getting to know me that I am Brazilian and I know how to speak more than one language, but a lot of the times that stigma of in in schools it’s mostly white teachers that only know how to speak one language got put on me. Like my experience, my culture was ignored. I was kind of put in with my other classmates and not I guess celebrated. I don’t think they did it in a malicious way, it’s just I don’t think they noticed me. Obviously I am white skin colored, but I feel like that’s not all that I am. I know what it’s like to be in a bicultural family. Like I know that. I can’t complain
about it too much. I can’t expect my professors to know everything about me or everything about my classmates, but sometimes I feel like I was thrown into the mix and that annoyed me.” Salome lamented that there are not many safe places to discuss the ways that race, class, gender, and other identity markers play out in classrooms, and the program courses would have been an ideal place to do so.

**Self-Efficacy for the Moral Work of Teaching**

Salome felt “nervous” about graduating. She said she won’t know if she is ready until she is actually in her own classroom. Salome acknowledged that pacing lessons is hard for her. She over plans and does not finish what she planned “because of time.” She described teaching as “really stressful” and “a lot of work.” She expected to have to “stay at school late preparing.” She heard negative things about the first years of being a teacher and believed She heard that is common “to cry a lot and drink a lot of wine” in the first years of teaching and that it will take “years to get the hang of it.” She has been advised to “be patient with students but also with yourself.” She shared that reflecting on her emotions will help her to know if she is successful or not. She stated that one of her strengths is her determination and dedication to doing better. She noted that she loves teaching because “no day is the same.;” each day “has its own challenges, accomplishments, and achievements.” She described that she will “never get bored teaching because teaching brings new children every year.”

Salome holds many beliefs that would incline her to have high self-efficacy for the moral work of teaching. She values the relationships with students and colleagues as integral to the work. Her second practicum mentor modeled many positive behaviors for her to learn from, including positive redirection and praise, flexible approaches to student
learning needs, reparation strategies through the Reflection notes and conversations with students, and advocacy for students with special needs. She also was able to have conversations about students’ identities, cultural, racial, ability, gender, that was helpful for her to really learn about how the students experience the world. In her first practicum, Salome developed strong and important relationships with her students, in spite of push back from her mentor teacher. All of these experiences imply that Salome has high self-efficacy for the moral work of teaching.

Salome is dedicated to the students’ personal growth, both academically and socially. She believes it is a teacher’s job to help students to grow, and she expects them to make mistakes as they do. She believes that reflecting and seeking to improve are an integral element of teaching. Salome described that teachers should model the behaviors they want to see in their students, and she understands how her tone and decisions set the tone for the culture in the classroom.

In her lived experience, Salome has had many experiences that indicate high self-efficacy for the moral work of teaching as well. Her background and family life guide her to understand and teach about having empathy for various perspectives. In her teacher preparation program Salome had experience observing and using many different types of moral education curriculum, both packaged and teacher designed.

Salome’s second mentor teacher modelled use of many strategies for the moral work of teaching, such as daily Morning Meeting, student jobs, class marble jar, explicit praise, and close relationships with students. The second mentor also had a strong relationship with colleagues, and with Salome herself, in which she modelled respect, collaboration, and caring. In addition, the second mentor discussed with Salome the
diverse racial and cultural identities of the students, and they considered how their identities impact their classroom experience.

Salome participated in workshops and courses that focused on elements of the moral work of teaching, such as Inclusion. Lastly, she built strong personal and professional relationships with her cohort colleagues in which she received positive persuasion for her capacity for the moral work of teaching. All these beliefs and experiences indicate that Salome would have a high level of self-efficacy for the moral work of teaching.

Some of Salome’s comments do indicate she may have lower self-efficacy in this area. She noted her habit of getting caught up in the nervous energy of her students and unable to make choices that align with her values. This occurred in the example in which she took recess from the students when they would not quiet down for her lesson. This experience eroded Salome’s self-efficacy for making the behavioral choices that foster the types of relationships and relational environment that she aspires to have in her own classroom. Salome also described that she does not think she has the natural ability for teaching, and thus that she feels she will have to work harder than her colleagues. This indicates lower self-efficacy as well.

Salome’s first mentor was cold and distant. She was harsh with the students, strictly focused on academics, and refused to help students work through their social conflicts. The mentor told Salome that she was too caring and that the students would not respect her if she cared so much. The mentor modeled punitive consequences such as taking away recess and silent eating periods.
Salome described teaching as unexpectedly difficult, especially behavior management. She described feeling like there are things she does not know about, such as the technicalities of working with colleagues in a Union. She lamented her difficulty finding balance between being the kind of teacher she wants to be and ensuring she covers the required academic content. She also described that some teachers seem to have a natural ability that she does not feel she has. Salome described herself as getting emotional and anxious when the student energy gets high, and she sees this as a challenge when trying to do the moral work of teaching, especially teaching morality.

Overall, Salome’s descriptions of her self-efficacy for the moral work of teaching indicate that she is invested in learning more about the elements of this aspect of the work and how they impact her students’ experience. She describes some nervousness, but she can describe what she needs to learn to control that nervousness. She indicated needing more support and opportunities to learn about the moral work of teaching to build her capacity and confidence in that area.

**Summary**

Salome is a working-class Latina woman in her early 20s. She is the first in her family to have attended college. She entered the teacher education program directly after receiving her bachelor’s degree at the same university. Salome was born in Brazil and came with her mother to a small New England town when she was four. Salome’s mother married a white local man, and Salome was raised bicultural and bilingual. Salome is a reflective, compassionate, energetic, and dedicated teacher. She wants to ensure she is always able to be the best teacher she can be for all of her students. She hopes that the students will have fun in school and look back with fondness at her class.
Salome shared many positive beliefs about self-efficacy towards the moral work of teaching that build on her background and life experiences as well as her coursework and practica experiences in her preservice training program. Salome described herself as anxious about teaching morality aspects such as managing student behaviors and social issues. Though she likes to support students to negotiate their conflicts, she did not feel like she had enough strategies to utilize to get students to behave appropriately or participate consistently in her lessons. She had observed her first mentor use strict and punitive responses, and she used those types of strategies in her second placement despite not wanting to. Salome knows that student need support to build social skills, but she has been told she is too caring and gets too involved in the students’ personal issues. When her students get into conflicts, Salome described her desire to solve the conflict quickly, though she is not sure how to do that well. Salome knows this part of teaching morality is an area of growth for her. Salome’s preferred approach to teaching morality is to stay calm and talk through issues, rather than imposing punitive consequences or getting angry, but she reflected that she needs support knowing how to do so.

Salome described a lot of experience with different moral education curricula. Despite her experience witnessing programs in use, she has not personally taught using programmatic materials. Rather, lessons with specific moral objectives have been self-created and embedded into Morning Meetings.

Salome has many beliefs that relate to teaching morally. She wants her students to feel cared for, valued, and seen, as well as to have fun in their learning. She believes that teachers are responsible to model best behaviors for students. She noted that teachers should continuously reflect on how to best include student interests into the required
learning objectives. She noted that she does not believe that any student is inherently bad or unable to learn and change. She recognized that she has a lot of learning to do in her own practice to get to where she wants to be, especially learning to balance academics with relational aspects of teaching.

Salome wished that her preparation focused more on understanding variety in culture and how to honor students’ identities in the classroom. She felt the teacher education program centered the white, middle-class experience, and she wished her cohort members were able to learn how to talk about issues like race and gender more fluently. As a Latina, she felt that her own identity was underplayed, and she hopes to learn how to ensure her own students do not ever feel the same way.

Overall, Salome has many natural inclinations and beliefs that offer her as having solid self-efficacy for the moral work of teaching, but she has also had some experiences in the program that may hold her back. It is likely that Salome will continue to require coaching and support for growth in the moral work of teaching to continue to pursue moral work of teaching as an area worth focusing on in her teaching.
CHAPTER 8

CASE 5: SOFIA

Participant Biography

For the purposes of this paper, participant 5 will be referred to as Sofia. Recall that Sofia is a white female in her late 20’s. She graduated with her undergraduate degree five years before entering the program at the same University from which she received her undergraduate degree, though she is receiving her teaching licensure on the Career Pathways track for individuals who have spent time working since undergraduate school.

Sofia is an only child of a mother and father who have always been and are still “happily married.” Sofia grew up in a small city local to the university. Sofia has a close relationship with her parents, and they all continue to live together in a small town near the city where she grew up. Sofia’s parents have both always worked full-time, her mother in a doctor’s office and her father at the Department of Public Works. While her parents worked, Sofia attended a home daycare on a farm with many other, different age kids. There she was surrounded by animals. She learned to “cut wood with an ax,” have hands-on farming experiences, and “walk to the river and swim.”

As a child Sofia needed tubes in her ears and had a difficult time learning to read and write because of her hearing loss. Sofia would have tantrums and throw books because being read to sounded “muffled like being underwater.” She enjoyed puzzles and demonstrated good spatial skills at an early age. Sofia loves math, riddles, and problem solving. She describes mathematics as a tool that helps people solve problems.

She attended the local public elementary and middle school. In 8th grade, Sofia transferred to a charter school that specialized in performing arts for middle and high
school students. Sofia felt “lost” in that environment though, so she transferred back to the public middle school after two months. Sofia went on to attend the local public high school that her father also had attended.

Throughout childhood, Sofia took dance and acting classes at a local family-owned company. In 8th grade, she began working with the company as a teacher. The family ran multiple organizations, including the acting school, a driving school, and a day care center. Over time, Sofia worked for the family in each of their different organizations. Sofia loved acting. She participated in “performance camps” where about 100 students “put on musicals” for their parents. Sofia met many local teachers at her acting school. These teachers inspire her, and she considers them resources for her own teaching practice.

After high school, Sofia enrolled as a theater major at the university. As a formal theater student, Sofia recognized that her relationship to theater was much different than her classmates’. While the other students considered performing art a “craft,” Sofia enjoyed performing “for fun.” She decided she wanted to “keep theater fun,” so she changed majors. First she switched to psychology, but she ultimately chose English as a major. She liked reading and writing, and she liked to analyze texts. She felt that an English major would allow her to “branch into many things.”

After graduation, Sofia got a job and worked as the middle school theater teacher at her old middle school. After two years in the position, she was required to take the state teacher licensure exam to maintain her position. She paid for and failed the required licensure test four times. Although she “was great” at her job, putting on a musical that
filled the house and making great relationships with students, colleagues, and families, the school had to let her go because she was not licensed.

Sofia got a day job as a substitute preschool teacher in the day care where she taught acting classes. At night she would return to the school to teach her acting classes. Over time she worked her way up from substitute to lead preschool teacher. Throughout this time Sofia came to realize that she most enjoyed teaching students aged five - eight. When deciding to return to school, Sofia wanted to “teach elementary school” because she “loved that age so much.”

She decided to pursue teaching licensure more formally. She began taking classes in a part-time teacher education program. The part-time structure allowed her to continue to teach acting while taking her own classes. Overwhelmed by the idea of how long the part time program would take to complete, she decided to apply to the 10-month CTEP Career Pathways program. Sofia took the three required exams for the elementary teacher education program and passed them all on the first try. Sofia is one of only two Career Pathways students in her cohort. She is about five years older than most of the students in the program.

Sofia does not remember deciding “to become a teacher.” Since she first entered school in Kindergarten Sofia loved being in front of the class, as star student or being the student “in charge” when the teacher left the room. She has won numerous “leadership awards.” She described that teaching has always been part of her identity.

**Teaching Morality Through Manner**

As described throughout our interviews, as well as observed in her practicum placement, Sofia’s approach is patient and calm. She redirects students with discrete
conversations, and maintains a mindset that students are always trying their best. She models humility for making mistakes and responds to her own and student errors most often with humor. She notes that she feels most comfortable “talking it out” with her students when conflict arises. Sofia noted that she uses “instinct,” though she is concerned that her instinct will not align with what is expected of her as a teacher. Specific references from Sofia’s interviews relative to Teaching Morality through Manner are to follow.

Sofia feels discussion is a good way to respond to student conflict, facilitate relationship building, and develop moral skills among students. Sofia likes to hold space at the beginning and end of every day for conflict resolution and moral engagement, so that the students learn “how to talk to each other and work together.” Sofia observed her second mentor teacher use discussion to foster moral and social awareness in students. The mentor called on students “to add to the conversation” and paraphrase what other students said, which Sofia feels fosters careful listening skills. She acknowledged that kids have an easier time “saying what they are thinking rather than writing it down.”

She offers her students many opportunities to make mistakes and works to model and coach them on best ways to respond when they say or do things that negatively affect others. Sofia thinks aloud with students. She talks through her mistakes and models forgiving herself. She hopes this kind of self-talk shows the students to be empathetic with themselves and each other. She wants them to know that it’s ok to be confused and to try something again. Sofia empathized with her students, and repeatedly shared her own stories as a student with the students in her class. If the students make a mistake, she will try to alleviate the stress around the mistake. If her students call out during
instruction, she will “go with it” or say “hang on, wait, remember that in three minutes” or “maybe we can talk about that later.”

Sofia learned in the program that including opportunities for students to talk to each other throughout instruction builds engagement. She strives for the students to “do most of the talking.” If she notices that a student is disengaged, Sofia uses what she knows about the student to decide whether or not to redirect them. If the student is “talking about something off topic” she may guide the conversation back to the topic of instruction. She may pull the student aside to ask them to change their behavior. She strongly believes that talking to her students is the best way to build relationships and manage behavior. She “really tries to stay objective and empathetic.”

Sofia has a casual attitude towards rules and issues that come up in the classroom. The rules in her second placement (Figure 27) were centered on cooperation and showing empathy for each other. She believes that students should be seen and heard in class. If there are problems in the class, Sofia responds calmly with understanding. For example, she described an incident when one of the ball seats popped in the middle of a lesson while a student was sitting on it. She said, “One of the balls popped; it just hit the leg of the table the right way on the seam and slowly was sinking down. It was like ‘well let’s get another one.’ And he’s like ‘it’s okay if I get another one?’, and I was like ya it’s not your fault that it exploded. Please don’t think that’s because of you. That could’ve happened to anyone else.’ It was funny and everyone was laughing.”
Figure 27: Image of Class Rules Chart

Sofia reflected on a student from her first placement who needed extra behavioral support. She described, “He had been held back twice so I feel like he was just mad about that, which I don’t blame him. There would be a lot of times where we would have to like coax him into sitting with us at the carpet to launch the lesson. My mentor teacher tried to tell me ‘you should not start until he’s ready.’ There were some days were I was waiting and some days where I was not. I tried whenever she was lead teaching to be one on one with him and make more of a connection with him so he would maybe want to attempt to listen to me some days. I don’t blame him. If you want to be over there when I talk about this, sure. You’ve been sitting this whole day. Sure, do jump and jacks, I love that. But my mentor teacher would be like ‘absolutely not. he needs to be sitting.’

Sofia disagreed with her mentor teacher’s expectation that he sit on the rug, and she would often give this student leniency while she was teaching.

Sofia’s second placement had a room called the Learning Student Center (LSC). Sofia described, “Students who have behavior needs can go for a walk or they can go jump on the trampoline for ten minutes. If they need help making social connections they
can invite a friend from their grade to go in there and they can chat and bond about something.” The room is a small, shared space and intended for short visits from students across the grade levels. Figure 28 shows an activity that students completed in the LSC that helped them to identify their feelings. Sofia described one student who visited the LSC often. This student was frequently disruptive and “acted out to be funny.”. Though Sofia described her instinct to separate the student from the class when he is disruptive, instead she redirected him to more productive behavior. Though she knows that this strategy is not always successful, she maintains that the best approach is to be empathetic with the students and give them more break time, check ins, and opportunities to “talk about their feelings and interests.” Sofia emphasized the need to check in with students who separate themselves from group activities, to ensure they are ok physically and emotionally and demonstrate that she cares about their well-being. Sofia is adamant that she will not “ever yell,” and she tries to be continuously aware that “sometimes people just need a break.” She is willing to “give students something else in the moment,” such as to read or draw. She noted that even if students do not want to do what she wants them to do in any given moment, they can still be doing “good learning” doing other things.
Figure 28: Image of Student Created Feelings Ring in the LSC

Sofia explained that she sometimes fears “going with her instinct” to respond to student misbehavior. She is concerned that “[her instinct] is different for different school policies.” For example, in her fall placement there was a “no touch policy” that countered her instinct to display connection with the students through physical touch, like putting her hand on a student’s shoulder. She tries to be tender and connect with students and wants to be sure they don’t feel like they are in trouble when she has to talk to them. The no-touch policy created a barrier for her to feel natural in making connections with students. Another example relates to an article she read about sending students to “time out.” The article highlighted that sending students to “time out” may send the message to students that they are “only welcome in the classroom community when they are at their best.” Sofia does not want her students to receive that message. She noticed that she has used the time out strategy “out of instinct” and then after wondered “how many times have [used] it with the same child.”
Sofia tries to be proactive in her approach to teaching morality through manner. She designs student-centered activities, which she believes helps students stay engaged. She encourages her students to look to their classmates first before asking their questions to teachers. She thinks that students demonstrate their level of interest and engagement through their body language. She described engaged students as “leaning towards you, looking at you, interested, asking questions,” making connections to prior learning, and “contributing.” Sofia repeatedly mentioned that the school day is long and intense. She expects students to “zone out” sometimes, and she is patient and empathetic when they do. She encourages students to pay closer attention by moving her body around the room while she is teaching. She tries to keep her instruction succinct and intentional, and includes movement-based activities often. Sofia emphasized that students should show they care about what they are learning and about each other’s well-being. She noted that some students have trouble being interested in school,” but she hesitated to label any student as a “bad student.” She believes that all students can learn to care and to be a “good student.” Sofia believes that teachers can help students become “good” if they “make school a fun, comfortable atmosphere” where students can share their thoughts.

**Teaching Morality Through Content**

Sofia had some previous experience with the Second Step (Committee for Children, 2011) curriculum for moral development, but did not experience moral education curricula through her placements. Sofia thinks that social learning best happens in community and engagement with each other. She prefers to plan integrated lessons, with multiple overlapping subject objectives, because she thinks they better orient the students toward the connectedness of subjects. Through this method, Sofia builds her
students’ empathy and understanding for interconnectedness and multiple perspectives. Sofia shared about traditions that conflicted with her orientations to teaching. Sofia’s references related to Teaching Morality through Content can be found below.

Sofia used the Second Step (Committee for Children, 2011) program in the preschool program where she worked previous to the program. She enjoyed the curriculum and found the pictures and discussions useful for students. She said, “It showed photos of peoples’ emotions and discussed it. There were different animals, which is nice because at that young age, but I guess at any age, you are really into yourself and it’s hard to see what your actions look like to other people. In preschool they are running all the time and it’s like ‘when you ran you knocked over this person,’ and they really had no idea. When they are older they could probably at least somewhat tell that they ran over someone, but it’s still nice to see, to take time to be like here’s how your actions are affecting other people. Because if no one points it out to you, you probably don’t really know.” Sofia did not observe social emotional curriculum being taught in either of her program placements. Though Sofia had been told that her second placement school uses the Second Step program in the “younger grades,” her fifth-grade practicum class did not. In her coursework, Sofia did read a book with strategies and games to teach students to listen to each other. The book also provided a structure for facilitating debates in the classroom.

Sofia used math to teach morality through content. She strives to make math fun for her students, presenting multiple perspectives on why different strategies are important or helpful. She tries to present content to students in multiple ways. She encourages her students to tell her if they are confused so she can teach the concept a new
way. Sofia understands that some students get stressed and emotional about math. She credits her professors for teaching her different approaches to teaching math and ways to make mathematics more accessible. For example, in the mornings, the students in Sofia’s second placement have a time they call “Math in the Morning.” This time is an opportunity to play math games with friends and make math choices, to practice collaboration and accountability. Additionally, the time allows the students to have positive, fun math experiences with their friends. This time has showed Sofia that math can be enjoyable for kids if “they have had a fun experience with it.”

In her first placement, Sofia witnessed a lot of content block instruction. The students had two hours of mathematics, and they were required to sit most of the time. The students also did not have art or music instruction, and science and gym were “special” classes they only experienced every few weeks. The mentor teacher in her first placement was required to follow the curriculum pacing even if students were not understanding the content. All teachers in the grade were required to be on the same page of the curriculum book on the same day. Sofia was not allowed to teach new activities that were outside of the curriculum. Sofia would often argue with her mentor teacher about trying new things and giving the students opportunities to do activities outside of the curriculum.

Sofia aims to integrate Science and Social Studies objectives into math and English Language Arts lessons. She believes that learning best happens when relationships between subjects are made explicit, rather than in the content block presentation of one subject at a time. Sofia believes that it is imperative to design curriculum around the students’ interests and needs, rather than to follow the book. She
hopes to develop relationships with family and community members that support and enhance the curriculum. In her second placement a local police officer came to discuss internet safety with the students. Sofia described this experience as a meaningful time when the students were taught the skills and “content they need to be kind online.” She wants her students’ schooling experience “make sense” so that they remember what will be important in their future. Sofia believes that the underlying purpose of teaching is to “prepare students … to be good, contributing adults.” While she knows that the curriculum is important, she cares most about helping students to contribute to society. Sofia wants her students to know that they can learn and improve in many ways, including socially. Sofia wants her students to believe that they all can be a good student, be interested, and be valuable in the classroom experience. She aims to help the students solve their problems, understand varying perspectives, and feel connected to their school life.

Sofia acknowledged that different schools have different policies, and traditions for teaching morality through content. Sofia described two traditions she observed that align with her own perspectives. One tradition is using flexible seating. In this environment, teachers “set up for flexible learning styles with flexible seating and systems that encourage students to be “independent in the classroom.” Another tradition she read about is when “classes are assigned a different part of the school to keep clean.” The goal of this tradition was to foster a sense of “ownership of the space.” Figure 29 shows text from Sofia’s second placement that supports students’ sense of autonomy with flexible seating.
Figure 29: Image of Charts for Flexible Seating and Partner Work

In her first placement Sofia observed many concerning classroom traditions that conflicted with her values. Though the teachers would not, the students were encouraged to drink the tap water. Additionally, the students would sit together for lessons for extended periods of time, yet they did not have time to get to know each other personally. Sofia described, “The kids had math for two hours, they had to sit all day, they barely knew each other’s names so they didn’t talk to each other. There was no art or music. Science was a special every three weeks. Gym was a special. Sometimes they didn’t have gym for two weeks. So all of that was making me sad. She had a routine that she would stick to where she would sit and start a smart board presentation, the kids would be at the rug, and then after they would talk about whatever about 15 or 20 minutes, then they would go back to their seats and maybe work on writing in a journal while she had a small group. I feel like she had good ideas, but as a mentor teacher I don’t think she taught me anything about teaching morality.” Though the teacher would “check in” with some of the students, she held them to very strict expectations. The teacher enforced a quiet lunch and snack, and students were rarely “able to talk to each other.”
Alternatively, in Sofia’s second placement she witnessed traditions that fostered belonging and safety. Students were greeted outside the classroom in the morning and given reminders about homework and morning tasks. Students could use flexible seating arrangements during academic instruction, using ball chairs, standing desks, regular desks, floor seating, or low stools. Students could change their seating throughout the day as they need. Teachers checked in with students many times throughout the day to see how they are feeling and set incremental goals. She reported, “Many students leave class to talk to different adults throughout the building to help them.” Students were allowed to work alone or in partners or groups (see Figure 29). The water was safe to drink, and the teachers got breaks. Sofia introduced many “acting games” and other games where students can move around. She taught games that challenged the students to be quiet while active and to take risks when sharing with each other. Sofia also used games to teach social skills such as teambuilding, helping, trust building, and risk taking. They also had rotating class jobs (Figure 30) and a class fish to care for (Figure 31).

![Figure 30: Image of Class Job Charts](image-url)
Sofia shared many beliefs and values that are related to teaching morally. Sofia is “compassionate,” likable, and easy to talk to. She “works well with any age group.” Sofia wants to create a safe environment where the students “feel comfortable” talking to her. She values making learning “fun and relevant.” She wants the freedom to be creative and does not want to have to “stick to the script” of a curriculum. In her second placement, she was able to creatively integrate social studies and science throughout the day, and she noticed that the students “were so engaged.”

Sofia tries to put herself in her students’ shoes to understand what will be fun for them. To keep her instruction engaging, Sofia teaches her objectives “in various ways,” such as “partner work, modelling, independent work, using books, using movies…” She believes that experiencing the “same thing in different ways” helps students deeply learn the material. Sofia is “super adaptable” and “thinks quickly” which allows her to adjust her instruction in the moment if need be. She reiterates to students that she is learning...
along with them. Sofia told the students that she is “learning how to teach” and that she is required to try some things and then talk about how it went. The students love to be “really tall Guinea pigs” for Sofia’s schoolwork. She reflected with the students throughout her lessons about their experience, and she adapted her instruction if the students did not understand what she was trying to teach. She consistently communicated with her students about the social element of learning and “tried to show them ... how to help each other learn.” She models activities with the students, asking students “focus on their friend up at the front.” Then Sofia will “ask the friend questions” to guide the activity where she wants it to go.

Sofia is intentional when she calls for the students’ attention. She stated, “I know from past experience teaching that if I’m trying to hold someone’s attention, I better know what I’m going to say because I only have so long and I don’t blame them if they’re like ‘call me again when you know what you’re saying’. So when I call their attention I’m like ‘ok this is something I definitely want all their eyes on me for.’ But I try to have a calmer voice because I feel like there may be other voices who yell at them, so I just want them to feel comfortable.” She was told at parent conferences that the students appreciate her calm demeanor.

One of the primary goals in Sofia’s instruction is for her students to recognize their own growth. Sofia shared, “Classrooms can feel very routine quickly. Like I sit here, I learn this, lunch, recess, I do this... Whereas if you kept thinking about how are you getting better, that’s kind of nice, even if it’s something small it’s like ‘look you have accomplished this, you are better when you leave here, that’s awesome’ which is nice to hear. Because it’s true, we are going to grow and be better. But they don’t think of it that
They are just like ‘oh this is hard.’ Everything is hard to learn at first. Once they know something I feel like they forget that they didn’t know it. So it’s nice to see how you are getting better and have students remember that constantly throughout the year. And better doesn’t just mean like in math. Maybe it’s how you can sit next to everyone now. Before you were like ‘I am only going to sit next to these people’ and you hated sitting next to so and so but now you can sit next to them and work. That’s awesome.”

She wants to teach students to recognize and appreciate their own progress.

Sofia also values goal setting with her students. She likes “when teachers and students at the beginning of the year say I want to learn this” so that every member of the class can “realize you are going to grow” and “be better at the end than who you were when you walked in.”

To Sofia, “empathy” is the most important thing students learn at school. She considers a good student as someone who is “thinking of others.” She “talks to students” to help them understand other perspectives. She spends time with them at recess to “see who they are playing with and what they are doing” and “to chat with them.” She wants students to know that she is “interested in them as people not just students.” Sofia tries to be lighthearted with the students and assume positive intentions. If a student” does something that is rude to someone else” she coaches them to recognize their impact and consider a different way to behave or repair. Sofia seeks to develop strong relationships with her students and have their interests and personalities “available in the classroom in some way.” Sofia also values strong relationships with the families of her students. Sofia “want[s] to do home visits to meet families and children on their own turf.” She hopes that home visits will allow her to support her students and develop lasting connections.
Sofia wants her students to have a “consistently good feeling” in her classroom. She wants them to feel important, represented, valued, and “part of our community.” She believes this good feeling will help them to care and be responsible for their learning and community. Because classrooms can feel very routine, Sofia hopes to show students that “school doesn’t have to feel like school all the time.” Sofia believes classrooms should be “a Zen environment” where there are “different areas” and “flexible seating” that allow the students to be “comfortable and contribute to the classroom.” She appreciated the Calm Down corner in her second placement (see Figure 32).

Figure 32: Image of Calm Down Center

The experience in her first placement helped Sofia realize the importance of aligning her own values with the values of the community she will work in. She describes the community in her urban placement as a place “where I would just cry every day.” Whereas her school in the fall was very isolationist and achievement-driven, her spring school was very collaborative and people-centered. She knows now that schools have different values. She hopes to find a school that has a philosophy and values that aligns
with her own, on in which students get a substantial recess and can move and touch things in their environment. She would not want to work at a place that does not share those values.

Sofia values the importance of having difficult conversations with her students, but she also thinks that parents should be included in those conversations. Newsletters are one way she will keep families informed about what students are talking about. Sofia knows that it is “better to talk about big issues than not,” and she hopes to “stay objective” in those conversations. Sofia recognized that there is a lot she does not know about negotiating difficult conversations with her students. If a values conversation came up between students, Sofia anticipates that she would “listen first and then chime in.” Sofia recognized the need to have responses to value-driven behavior ready to use at the time that the incidents occur. She admits that she “would want to avoid issues like that if they popped up.”

Sofia wants her students to be “contributing” members of society and shared that teaching moral engagement skills is essential in order to equip her students to contribute. She suggested using audio and video clips to present different perspectives on issues would be a helpful way to “tie it in to curriculum” she already using. Sofia emphasized that she wants to “let students know that there are big issues and multiple perspectives to those big issues.” Sofia noted the potential for conflict among her students when having values-based discussions, and she is nervous about how to manage that conflict if it comes up. She described that she “wants more... practice and experience about how to actually direct the conversation to go in a place of understanding instead of a place of this side and this side.” She also wondered when it is appropriate to bring issues to the larger
group, and when it would be appropriate to keep things private or among a small number of students.

In her placements, Sofia mostly just “let the mentor deal with” such issues. She did have one experience where she had to talk with students a students who called a costume for the school play “gay.” She described, “He called the socks gay. My ears perked up because I was waiting to see what the other kids would do before I was like ‘what do you mean by that?’ and then like after they tried to talk for a bit about it, two of the fifth graders looked at me, so then I stepped in. In the moment I said something like ‘I don’t think you meant that word. Do you think they are stupid looking? Then say stupid don’t say gay.’ But I feel like I haven’t had much of that student teaching. I just need more. I would want to talk about it, I would be more practiced and experienced about how to actually direct the conversation to go in a place of understanding instead of a place of this side and this side, pick one.” In the moment Sofia was not sure how to respond, but she knew she wanted to say something that would enlighten this student around using language that is hurtful to others. She recalled that the incident stayed with her, and she questioned what else she should have said, knowing that what she said was insufficient to make any kind of statement or affect any change in the student’s thinking.

Sofia recalled that a guest speaker that came to one of her courses discuss “different ways to talk about diversity with students, especially if you are in school where there is not much diversity.” The speaker shared how to use literature in the classroom to provide different cultural perspectives for students. Sofia remembered that the speaker noted the importance of more than “one book of each kind” to not “reinforce stereotypes.” The speaker gave each student a pamphlet to take with them, as well as one
for their mentor teacher. The cohort members then all took the “Harvard Implicit Bias test.” While they were asked to share if they’d like to, Sofia did not feel that there was much reflection on the results that was helpful in thinking about teaching morally in her practice.

**Reflections on the Teacher Education Program**

Sofia described that the program prepared her more for “lesson planning than actually teaching in the classroom.” Most of the course assignments were to write lesson plans. Sofia practiced some lesson planning practice integrating two subjects at a time. Overall, the program taught that “curriculum is a tool” to use to “do what’s best for the kids.” The program coursework taught the philosophy of teaching the whole student, academically and socially. Courses emphasized ensuring “students are socially well and using a friendlier tone.” Sofia wished she was taught about how to integrate the standards to make lessons fun and meaningful for herself and the students.

Sofia wished the program coursework offered “more training on how to facilitate positive relationships with paraprofessionals.” She worked with paraprofessionals in both of her placements. In the first placement she struggled to help the paraprofessionals “know what’s happening” when she was teaching. She wanted them to “feel like they can jump in or help out,” but did not know how to communicate that. In her second placement, Sofia was able to participate in meetings between the mentor teacher and the paraprofessionals to facilitate collaboration.

Sofia did not recall learning to respond to student behavior in the program. She remembered discussing the behaviors she and her classmates saw in the field, but not that the professors offered any specific strategies for classroom management. Sofia debriefed
a lot with her cohort about the behavior they saw in their practicum schools. Especially in her first semester, Sofia appreciated the times where her cohort would share what it was like to teach in urban settings. Though it “was just so sad,” it was “nice to hear that other people also had a challenging experience.” The Director mentioned that they “should keep a journal,” but Sofia felt she “didn’t have time.” She also noted that there was “so much to think about” that she was not sure “exactly what to reflect on” in a journal that would help her become a better teacher. From her two very different practicum experiences Sofia learned that schools can be very different. She explained that “it was nice to get different perspectives and see that schools are not all the same. Sofia knows that she will learn a lot in her first years in the field. She is grateful she “made good connections” in the program that she can “reach out to at any time for support.”

Sofia felt the culture of her first placement was unfriendly. Few “adults smiled in the hallways” or “stopped to have a conversation.” She was not invited to professional development or collaborative meetings. The mentor teacher did not “co-plan or offer positive feedback.” Rather she “handed the curriculum” to Sofia with no coaching. The mentor was rigidly wedded to teaching the curriculum “with fidelity” and did not allow Sofia any opportunity to try new approaches or activities. After a couple weeks with no feedback, Sofia requested her mentor’s opinion, to which her mentor responded with only negative and critical remarks. Her mentor teacher even went as far as to say, “Well you’re probably not a great teacher.”

A few times Sofia argued with the mentor teacher about what to teach. Once, she wanted to teach the second graders a math game she had learned in her coursework. The mentor teacher said it was not “best for the kids” and told Sofia that she “couldn’t do that
in my classroom.” Sofia tried multiple times to practice skills she learned in the program coursework in the practicum classroom, but each time caused a new argument with her mentor teacher.

In her first placement Sofia “felt sad a lot” and doubted her teaching. She had a difficult relationship with her mentor teacher because they had very different values and philosophies. Sofia felt like she was “walking on eggshells all day.” She “eventually just shut down” and would “to teach what she wanted me to teach, just to get through the day” even though she did not agree with her mentor’s style.

Despite their difficult relationship, Sofia maintained that her first mentor teacher is “probably a good person” and “seemed to be a good teacher.” Sofia did appreciate how the mentor teacher “would try really hard to connect with the students” and “knew a lot of their families and their interests.” She acknowledged that the mentor used “teaching strategies such as Turn and Talk and small groups.” The mentor allowed students to choose books from the classroom library, and the students had flexible seating options during reading time. The mentor did not use “a mean tone.” She also allowed them to talk sometimes during snack and lunch.

Thankfully during this time Sofia had a strong relationship with her Program Supervisor. The Program Supervisor gave her good feedback and defended Sofia in meetings with the mentor teacher. The Supervisor “tried very diplomatically” to highlight Sofia’s growth for both Sofia and the mentor. She worked hard to “keep the conversation positive” when the mentor would try to be negative and demeaning. When the mentor teacher tried to give Sofia a ‘Needs Improvement’ rating, the Program Supervisor
defended Sofia and wrote in the report that she “did not agree with any of the mentor teacher’s statements.”

Sofia had residual stress from her first placement. She was nervous for the first few weeks of her second placement that she would upset her second mentor. She “was terrified that the second practicum mentor would say horrible things” to her. Sofia explained that when she received positive feedback in her second placement, it was difficult to process because she was not expecting “to hear all these nice things.”

In her second placement, Sofia noticed the cultural difference right away. “Everyone in the hallway … said hello.” Her mentor teacher was nurturing and welcoming, offered snacks and introduced Sofia to everyone in the building, especially pointing out the people they would likely collaborate with. The educators collaborated with each other and had meetings to be on the same page as much as possible. Sofia was invited to every meeting, and her mentor teacher would debrief the meetings with Sofia afterward. Her second mentor enabled Sofia to be creative with her lesson planning and consistently told Sofia her lessons “are so cool.” She posted pictures of Sofia’s lessons to the class website.

**Self-Efficacy for the Moral Work of Teaching**

Sofia began the teacher education program with mixed emotions about her self-efficacy for the moral work of teaching. She had had many great experiences teaching prior, students from preschool to middle school. She had always built strong relationships with her students and colleagues, and she had considered herself successful as a teacher. Then her experiences taking the MTEL teaching exams eroded her self-efficacy tremendously for teaching in general. Her positive experiences in the classroom had built
her self-efficacy to the degree that she continued to attempt avenues towards becoming a teacher, which led her to pursue the teacher education program.

Once in the program, Sofia’s self-efficacy was further eroded in her first practicum. She was not able to engage with students to the degree that she had hoped, to ensure a student-centered learning experience based on creativity and active engagement. Instead, she was in a position where she felt she was walking on eggshells with her mentor teacher and failing at all aspects of teaching. Sofia’s self-efficacy for the moral work of teaching plummeted alongside her general efficacy for teaching. She knew that her perspectives conflicted with the policies in the public-school classroom, and she was in dissonance about how to engage in that type of environment. Despite her positive beliefs about relationships, positive engagement, empathy for students and colleagues, learning multiple ways, and regular student engagement, she was unable to enact the moral work of teaching in her second placement.

When Sofia’s second placement began, she described herself as having “post traumatic stress.” Despite the kindness of the colleagues at her new placement, she was unable to relax and truly be herself until a few weeks had passed. She was constantly waiting for her mentor to say mean and erosive things about her teaching. By the middle of the semester, Sofia described herself as finally feeling as if she could trust that the new placement was in fact a place that was aligned with her teaching orientations, and she felt she could teach morality and morally in the ways that feel most appropriate to her style.

At the end of the program, Sofia described her self-efficacy as strong but shaky. She had learned most that, for her to be confident, she needs to teach in a school in which she is aligned in perspectives and orientations to the school community. She learned that
among like-minded colleagues in a collaborative, student-centered, flexible environment she can have high self-efficacy for the moral work of teaching, but in a different type of environment her self-efficacy is low.

**Summary**

Sofia is a white, working-class woman in her upper 20s. She is a non-traditional student with teaching experience prior to the teacher education program. She is calm, casual, empathetic, funny, and friendly. Sofia wants to be the kind of teacher who makes long lasting connections with her students and their families. She aims to make learning active and fun, and she appreciates when she can be creative and integrate multiple subjects into one lesson.

Sofia shared many positive beliefs about self-efficacy towards the moral work of teaching that build on her background and life experiences as well as her coursework and practica experiences in her preservice training program. Sofia described teaching morality through student-centered discussions and classroom activities. She described the importance of making time throughout the day for the students to engage socially, from morning and afternoon community meetings to collaborative games embedded throughout the daily schedule. Casual, regular discussions centered around positive engagement are how Sofia mostly addresses teaching morality. She noted objectivity, humor, and growth mindset in responding to student misbehavior or mistakes. She maintained that teaching morality requires being empathetic to the student experience, and she described the need to model humility, confusion, and self-kindness in her own mistake-making. Sofia emphasized that having strong relationships with students are the best way to teach morality effectively. Regular check-ins with students about their goals
and breaks in the academic time to socialize or relax are ways that Sofia described making space for teaching morality throughout the school day.

Sofia described experience teaching morality with the Second Step (Committee for Children, 2011) curriculum prior to her time in the teacher education program. She enjoyed using the pictures and stories to emphasize certain behaviors with her students; she appreciated the objective means to look at how behavior affects others. Sofia did not observe or engage with moral education curriculum at either of her practica. Sofia described that her second practicum instead had a Learning Student Commons (LSC) for students to receive extra moral coaching and scaffolding for engaging in the classroom.

Sofia described a strong understanding of herself as a model for her students. She noted that they are always watching how she engages with other adults and students. The students have taken notice of her calm demeanor and forgiving approach to mistake making. She noted the importance of communication and teamwork with other teachers in the classroom, and hoped to improve in her ability to do so amid the business of class. Sofia noted that she would benefit from more structured conversations and reflective protocols to help her to identify ways in which her own biases show up in her teaching. Sofia described the importance of getting to know the students personally by spending time with them at recess and asking them questions about their lives out of school. She explained that teaching morally requires remembering things about the students, their interests and goals, and helping them to recognize their own growth both academically and socially. Additionally, teaching morally requires students to feel like they are a valuable element of the classroom experience.
Sofia described deep investment in her students’ ability to be contributing, thoughtful adults. She understood her own impact on them and their self-perception. In her time in the practicum, she had experiences that both depleted and promoted her self-efficacy for living out the teacher she sees herself to be. The experience and connections she had prior to entering the program built for her a foundation that stabilized her when she was in her vulnerable first placement. Without that foundation, Sofia admitted that she would not have had the self-efficacy to move forward in the field.
CHAPTER 9
CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS

Overview

This chapter will present a review of major themes from the Moral Work of Teaching (Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2009) theory that were observed across the five case studies of this research. While the case studies above intend to provide a full picture of each teacher and orientation to moral education, this cross-case analysis seeks to identity commonalities in such themes. First Teaching Morality will be presented through the two subthemes, Content and Manner, identified by Sanger and Osguthorpe (2009). Next Teaching Morally will be presented. This chapter will end with a summary of the major observations.

This research relied upon Sanger and Osguthorpe’s (2009) Moral Work of Teaching framework to examine the experiences of five pre-service teachers. The Moral Work of Teaching (Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2009) framework puts forth that teaching is an inherently moral act, the nuances of which can be defined. Sanger and Osguthorpe (2009) divide the Moral Work of Teaching into two components, Teaching Morality and Teaching Morally. Teaching Morality was defined into two further categories, Content and Manner. The present analysis suggests sub-themes to further identity aspects within the themes Sanger & Osguthorpe (2009) identified. Specifically, this includes three sub-themes for Teaching Morality with Content, Curriculum, Academics, and Traditions; two sub-themes for teaching Morality with Manner, Rule Negotiation and Discussion; and two sub-themes for teaching Morally, Interpersonal and Intrapersonal. These two sub-themes were further differentiated as well. Specifically Teaching Morally Interpersonally
includes three sub-themes, Disposition, Ways of Engaging, and Relationship; and three sub-themes for Intrapersonal Teaching Morally, Beliefs, Values, and Biases. Descriptions of each of these components follow.

**Teaching Morality through Content and Manner**

Osguthorpe and Sanger (2009) describe Teaching Morality as the explicit and overt ways in which teachers instruct their students toward moral objectives. The Moral Work of Teaching (Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2009) theory delineates the act of Teaching Morality into two themes: Content and Manner. Descriptions of each of these themes, as well as sub-themes identified by this research, is presented below alongside participants’ references to these themes throughout this research.

**Teaching Morality through Content**

According to Osguthorpe and Sanger (2009), Teaching Morality through Content refers to the teaching of moral objectives as done through planned, structured lessons or activities. Three sub-themes were identified through this research that allow for further examination of the nuances of each theme. The first sub-theme is referred to as Curriculum. Curriculum in Teaching Morality through Content was used to identify utterances that refer to instances when a teacher utilizes a specific moral education curriculum, such as Second Step (Committee for Children, 2011), to teach moral objectives. The second sub-theme presented is Academics. Teaching Morality through Content in Academics was used to identify references to instances when a teacher focuses on a moral objective in a lesson which the moral objective is secondary to an alternate academic objective. This may occur when a teacher notes the behaviors of a specific character in a literacy lesson. Lastly, Teaching Morality through Content may also occur
through frequent embedded practices, which I refer to as Traditions for the sake of this paper. The sub-theme Traditions identifies references to instances when teachers use group work or student collaboration to teach and practice social skills. Participant references related to Teaching Morality through Content in each of the sub-themes follow.

**Curriculum**

Recall that Curriculum in Teaching Morality through Content was used to identify utterances that refer to instances when a teacher utilizes a specific moral education curriculum to teach moral objectives. Four out of five participants were able to name specific moral education curricula. Sofia was the only participant who described direct teaching experience with a moral education curriculum. She had experience with Second Step (Committee for Children, 2011) as preschool teacher before she entered the teacher preparation program. Salome had the most experience with moral education curricula in the time of the program. In both placements she observed PBIS (Center for PBIS, 2023) in practice, as well as Responsive Classroom (Center for Research in Education and Social Policy, 2023) in her second placement. Salome also described co-planning a short unit on how to be a good sport with a veteran teacher prior to entering the program.

Sofia and Karyna both described Second Step as a program that was used in their practica with younger students, though the program was not used in the fifth-grade classroom of either of their placements. Karyna observed her first mentor teach Second Step (Committee for Children, 2011) in the first-grade classroom of her first placement. She noted that this type of boxed moral education curriculum was likely boring to older students. She said, “They just kind of drained it out at that point and the kids hate it and
don’t want to do it. They are finding other ways to go around it and still teach it but not so explicitly and not necessarily every day.” Honey saw the Speech Language Pathologist in her first placement teach the Social Thinking curriculum to the first graders, though Honey was unable to name the curriculum itself. Rather, she specified the lessons taught the language of “expected and unexpected behaviors.” Honey admitted that she did not believe she would be able to recognize a lesson from a moral education curriculum should she observe one. Junior was the only participant who never mentioned a moral education curriculum by name, though he did mention “the First Six Weeks” element of the Responsive Classroom (Center for Research in Education and Social Policy, 2023) curriculum. Participants’ experiences reflected a variety of exposure and use of formal curriculum.

**Academics**

Teaching Morality through Content in Academics describes references participants made to instances when there was a moral objective in a lesson which the moral objective is secondary to an alternate academic objective. All five participants described including moral objectives was within an academic objective, albeit in different ways. Junior most explicitly described the way in which his mentor teachers embedded moral objectives of empathy and perspective taking within History and Social Studies lessons on the Stonewall Riots and the First Thanksgiving. He shared, “At one point earlier this year we also had a Black Lives Matter very short unit that was related to the Harlem Renaissance unit. They got to learn about what it is, but they connected it to Black Lives Matter. The focus on them was, besides all the bad things that black people have dealt with in the past, some of the good things they have done like creating art and
music. How that unit worked was they got in little groups and then they got one person to 
research. Then based on that they gave a presentation to the class. Then they got to see 
some artwork based on Harlem Renaissance artists. Then there was a big school meeting 
in which every grade painted art influenced by whatever artists that class was looking at.” 
Karyna, Junior, and Honey all described using the classroom and school library as a place 
to teach respect for different identities.

**Traditions**

The sub-theme Traditions identifies participants’ references to the use of group 
work or student collaboration to teach and practice social skills. Four out of five 
participants described differentiation and inclusion in academic content to Teach 
Morality through Content. The participants described training in inclusion they received 
in their coursework, as well as both positive and negative examples of inclusion from 
their practica. Overall, adapting curricula content objectives to meet the needs of students 
was described as a strategy for teaching persistence, flexibility, and compassion, as well 
to show students that their experiences are valued. The participants described adapting 
curriculum as a tradition that must be supported by the larger culture of the school, rather 
than strict fidelity to the academic curricula.

All five participants described frequent group and partner work as a tradition to 
teach collaborative skills, active listening, and respectful behaviors. For example, ‘Turn 
and Talk’ is a tradition that teaches active listening and turn taking. This tradition was 
mentioned by all participants. Honey shared, “I have tried to do turn and talk a lot where 
they are sharing with each other, but then I don’t get to know it so that’s hard for me. So I 
will try to bounce around conversations and try to hear what they are saying to each
other, which is helpful. Then I let the turn and talk go on too long because I am in the middle of a conversation with two kids.” Honey, Karina, and Salome noted Class Jobs for students as a tradition that teaches responsibility and accountability. Salome learned from her second mentor to give students frequent explicit praise to teach moral objectives throughout the day. All participants also mentioned allowing students to take breaks to teach them empathy and respect, though Junior and Karyna both wondered how to at once teach persistence while also allowing frequent breaks from the classroom experience. Importantly, all participants described wanting to receive more guidance and strategies for Teaching Morality.

**Teaching Morality through Manner**

Teaching Morality through Manner (Sanger and Osguthorpe, 2009) refers to the spontaneous and responsive, though explicit and overt, instances when moral objectives are taught, or moral guidance is offered. Two sub-themes were identified in order to further differentiate instances related to Teaching Morality through Manner. The first sub-theme is referred to as Discussions. This sub-theme is used to describe instances when participants relied on discussions or talking it out to help students make moral developments. In this regard, “just talking to them” was a phrase frequently used by all of the participants. Salome went as far as to say she thought teaching was “just talking about things” before learned the nuances of pedagogy in the program.

The second sub-theme identified here is referred to as Rules. This sub-theme is used to describe instances where participants prepare for or respond to student infractions or misbehavior. For example, responding to rule breaking or pausing instruction to focus on a moral redirection with the whole class can be categorized as Teaching Morality.
through Manner through the sub-theme Rule Negotiation. Participant references related to Teaching Morality through Manner in each of the sub-themes follow.

**Discussion**

Recall that the sub-theme Discussions refers to utterances about instances participants relied on discussions or talking it out to help students make moral developments. Sofia, Karyna, and Junior all describe the need for teachers to teach students how to talk to each other in order to have productive discussions in pairs and groups, as well as to problem solve and negotiate conflict. Junior refers to this method as the Socrative method where teachers act as the facilitator of the discussion. Karyna mentioned the importance of the teacher remaining objective and hearing all sides in a problem-solving discussion. She also mentioned that making space for talking is a challenge while following an academic schedule. Sofia described holding space at the beginning and the end of each day to have conversations about what went well and what problems need to be addressed. Honey and Salome both mentioned that, though they want the kind of classroom environment with open and respectful discourse, they are not prepared for a proactive approach for creating it. They all noted needing to be taught how to teach students these skills.

**Rule Negotiation**

This sub-theme is used to describe instances where participants refer to a response to student infractions or misbehavior. Sofia, Honey, and Karyna all described generating a list of rules with the students and using this list to respond to students who break a class rule. Karyna described, “In the first six weeks they sat down and were like ‘so what has gone well, or what went well in Kindergarten, what didn’t go well,’ and they set rules.
They came up with things like ‘we didn’t use the classroom scissors the right way so they got taken away from us’ or something like that, so they learn to use classroom materials appropriately. And if they didn’t do that they knew it was a rule and that if someone had disobeyed that rule they could be like ‘you are not doing that right’ because they wanted to keep those things. It worked really well there. In this classroom they had the class constitution, which no one really references, but I know that they created it themselves I think in their first six weeks.” All five participants described the need to stay calm and not yell or be punitive when responding to students who break rules. Salome, Junior, and Karyna described consistency as a key element in responding to student transgression. Interestingly Junior goes on to describe the need to hold students accountable in accessible ways and his desire to manage wrongdoing on a case-by-case basis. Honey and Salome both describe their approach as trying to help students understand their impact on others. Sofia emphasized making her own mistakes visible, both social and academic, and thinking aloud as she made reparations.

All participants expressed trepidation about responding to student misbehavior in their own classrooms. Sofia feared her instinct would conflict with school policy. Junior described having frustration with students when they do not follow agreements or instructions. Karyna described feeling unprepared in this area. Salome described needing to learn more strategies for staying calm in response to student infractions. Honey described needing support from other professionals in the building, such as administrators or guidance counselors, when she was not sure how to respond to student behavior or when her responses were ineffective.
**Teaching Morally**

Sanger and Osguthorpe (2009) describe Teaching Morally as the implicit and covert ways in which teachers teach about right and good ways of being. Teaching Morally is centered around a teacher’s way of being and is related to their internal processes as they are subconsciously enacted in the classroom. Teaching Morally is undefined and nuanced, and thus often goes unexamined. In order to identify Teaching Morally in the statements of my participants, I considered the internal processes that work to develop a teacher’s frame of reference.

Teaching Morally was further analyzed using two new themes in this area of the Moral Work of Teaching. I named these themes Intrapersonal and Interpersonal. Intrapersonal refers to the within person variables that affect a teacher’s perceptions and lead to certain behavior. Three sub-themes further enabled analysis of the theme Intrapersonal Teaching Morally. First the sub-theme Beliefs was helpful to find instances where participants referred to ideas and perceptions they hold that affect their behavior while teaching. The second sub-theme is Values, referring to the participants’ priorities in the way they live and work and how their lived experiences measure against those priorities. The last sub-theme used to differentiate elements of Intrapersonal Teaching Morally is Biases. This sub-theme is used to highlight instances where participants share about issues relating to diversity and equity in regard to race, class, gender, or other identity categories.

Interpersonal Teaching Morally refers to statements made that indicate a particular way that participants interact with others. Three sub-themes further illustrate the nuances of Interpersonal Teaching Morally. The first sub-theme is called Disposition.
This refers to the ways in which participants interact with their professional lives. The sub-theme Ways of Engaging helps to illuminate how participants are observed as behaving with others. The last sub-theme, Relationships, refers to references made by participants about their generalized approaches toward interactions with particular groups, such as students or families. While the language of these new themes and sub-themes is interrelated and often overlapping, these new categories are helpful in beginning to describe and unpack the various ways of Teaching Morally. Participant references related to Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Teaching Morally in each of the sub-themes follow.

**Interpersonal Teaching Morally**

Recall that Interpersonal Teaching Morally refers to statements made by participants that indicate a particular way that participants interact with others. Interpersonal Teaching Morally was further delineated into three sub-themes in order to better describe the findings.

**Disposition**

Disposition refers to the ways in which participants interact with their professional lives. All five participants referred to dispositional characteristics towards the teaching profession, such as the importance of maintaining a professional network of colleagues. They described the strong relationships they made with their fellow cohort members, as well as those with professors, mentors, and other colleagues from their practica. The participants all shared that their professional network will be a helpful place to seek support in their early career. Sofia and Salome both described wishing they
received more instruction on how to engage with the other professionals in their practica, such as paraeducators and student support educators.

Salome and Honey both described their knowledge of the field in general as having been learned through inference. They both described feeling like they should have known things about the teaching profession that they did not know, such as the role of Unions, pensions, and other technicalities unique to the profession. Salome and Karyna both referred to a “natural” teaching ability that is evident in some people they know. Both felt they did not have that natural ability, despite Karyna having received some feedback that she did. When describing success markers in the field, all participants described a non-specific, emotional response that would determine their level of success in any given year. Honey stated that success was a combination of the students’ feelings and academic success. Salome and Junior both described relying on internal emotions and reflection to determine their success.

**Ways of Engaging**

The Ways of Engaging sub-theme illuminates how participants are observed as behaving with others. All of the study participants described their aspirant teaching style as compassionate, easy to talk to, calm, firm, and holding students to high expectations. They all described creating safe, comfortable learning environments where students have fun and are excited about their learning. Honey said, “The job of the teacher is to make it so their students want to take in all the information that they are providing and they are comfortable in the space that they are in to learn and to be able to take in that information. We have talked about in our classes if you are not feeling safe in your environment you can’t learn, so I guess one of the great priorities of the teacher is to
create a safe environment so that their students can learn.” Salome said, “I want to do fun things where you incorporate learning but you also make it fun and memorable.” All the participants were themselves strong students who received good grades and enjoyed being in school, though Sofia and Karyna both shared their own difficulty learning to read. Honey, Salome, and Karyna have known they wanted to teach or work with children for much of their lives, and all but Junior mentioned that being a teacher is “part of their identity.”

**Relationships**

Relationships refers to references made by participants about their generalized approaches toward interactions with particular groups, such as students or families. For all the participants, their relationships with the mentors suggested their descriptions of self-efficacy for the Moral Work of Teaching and for teaching in general. Only two of the participants, Honey and Junior, had strong, supportive relationships with both mentors. Honey had two similar mentors, both with styles much like her own. Junior had mentors who were very different, and he described his own style as centered somewhere between them. Both of Junior’s and Honey’s mentors included them in the life of the classroom and school, gave feedback in a positive and encouraging way, and engaged with the students in respectful and caring ways.

Karyna, Salome, and Sofia all had one mentor who they described as unsupportive, harsh, or critical, and one who was very supportive. For both Salome and Sofia, the difficult mentor relationship was with their first mentor and occurred in urban schools with tightly controlled environments and rigid expectations for following packaged curricula. Salome was told to be less caring, and Sofia was told she likely
would not be a good teacher. Karyna was given too much responsibility for the class too quickly in her second placement and was told that once she is veteran, she will be “able to coast.”

The mentor relationship also made the relationships with students either easier or more difficult. While all participants described having and wanting good relationships with the students, participants with difficult mentor relationships reported having to engage with students differently. Salome described having to hide her support for students for fear the mentor would scold her or them. Sofia described having to force a student to sit with the group upon the mentor teacher’s direction, even when she did not agree with this request. Karyna described anxiety over the possibility of not liking one of her students because her second mentor complained about one student throughout the placement. Though Junior had a positive relationship with his second mentor, he lamented that the mentor had established a loose environment where students were often disrespectful and would not follow directions.

Junior, Sofia, and Karyna all mentioned the impact of the Program Supervisor from the teacher education program. While Junior and Sofia were glad to have the Program Supervisor visit the classroom and meet with the mentors, Karyna was disappointed in her Program Supervisor and described the relationship as unhelpful.

Sofia, Junior, and Salome described developing positive relationships with families as integral to Teaching Morally as well. Sofia described her desire to offer home visits to each of her students at the start of the year. Salome described being invited to one of her students’ family wedding in her first placement. Junior explained that he
learned from his mentors that maintaining relationships with families is imperative because parents are often the hardest part of the work.

**Intrapersonal Teaching Morally**

Intrapersonal refers to the within person variables that affect an individual’s perceptions and lead to certain behavior. Three sub-themes further enabled analysis of the theme Intrapersonal Teaching Morally, Beliefs, Values, and Biases.

**Beliefs**

The sub-theme Beliefs refers to instances where participants referred to ideas and perceptions they hold that affect their behavior while teaching. All five participants of this study described education as the means to shape the future. They described a teacher’s job as preparing students to be adults who contribute positively to society and spread knowledge. Every participant described a good student as one who is engaged in the activity of the classroom with literal leaning in, asking questions, setting learning goals. Every participant stated that it is the teacher’s responsibility to create an environment where every student is able and motivated to be a good student. Karyna and Honey both mentioned that offering choices to students is one way to motivate them. Sofia and Junior described validating students’ ideas and opinions, no matter how off base or unexpected they may be. Karyna described behavior as purposeful communication, and Sofia explained that teachers must be aware of their students’ needs and respond appropriately to keep them on task. All participants refused to use the word “bad” in reference to students.
Values

The sub-theme is Values refers to the participants’ priorities in the way they live and work and how their lived experiences measure against those priorities. The five participants all noted that talking about big social issues or values is inevitable in the classroom. They all expressed that conversations about values are difficult and have potential for conflict. All expressed anxiety about how to manage those types of conversations in their classrooms. Sofia shared, “I want them to learn from different perspectives, but I feel like it depends. I want them to talk about it, I just don’t want them to get like upset with each other.” Sofia mentioned the importance of informing parents about incidents when values are discussed in the classroom, and Honey described her fear of tarnishing relationships with families if she were to share her own values. As student teachers, all the participants described avoiding conversations with students about values. Karyna relayed that she was told to avoid those types of incidents by the Program Director, and her mentor teacher told her the same. All participants expressed a desire for more practice engaging in conversations about big social issues and values so that they have language to use when those topics inevitably arise in their classroom.

Biases

The sub- Biases is used to highlight instances where participants share about issues relating to diversity and equity in regard to race, class, gender, or other identity categories. Every participant in this study mentioned their experience taking the Harvard Implicit Bias Test in their coursework. Every one of them reported that the reflection afterward was minimal and unhelpful for their work as teachers. Junior admitted that he realized his bias for students with disabilities after taking the test, which he would have
liked to talk more about with his cohort. Sofia mentioned a guest speaker that came to one course and shared about how to talk about diverse identities with students.

The Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) course was a place where the participants described having to reflect on biases, values, and conventions. Honey and Karyna both described activities in the course that required students to experience what it is like to be unfamiliar with local customs and conventions. Karyna described, “Sometimes we would come into class and she would be completely silent and just start acting things out, or she would play a video of something in a different language and be like alright tell me what you learned. Or she would have us do different scenarios of in and out circles, so the people on the outside circle knew something that the people on the inside circle didn’t know. I had to talk a lot closer than I normally would to simulate people who might not know the social norms and how it made me feel but also how it made them feel. It really made you think and get out of your comfort zone because I hate being near people. She pushed us to do those things, and I loved it.” Junior, Karyna, and Honey noted that both of their program placements were in predominantly white schools and they were unable to practice the skills they learned in the SEI course. Additionally, Karyna and Honey both mentioned that one of their mentor teachers in a predominantly white classroom insisted that the few students of color were not affected by their racial difference.

Importantly, Salome described the program coursework as prioritizing the white experience, designed to teach mostly white students in rural suburban classrooms. She went on to share that she did not feel that the program professors or staff even recognized her as a non-white, culturally marginalized person. Rather, she felt that because she was light-skinned the people in the program assumed that she was a white woman and thus
experienced the program just like most of the other program participants. Salome noted that her cohort colleagues need to spend more time considering their own whiteness and their biases, and the program did not provide time for that.

**Overview of Major Cross-Case Findings**

The participants in this research described themes as identified by Sanger and Osguthorpe (2009) in their Moral Work of Teaching theory. All five participants described beliefs and experiences using both explicit and overt teaching about morality, as well as implicit and more covert demonstrations of moral expectations. Overt descriptions included mention of the preplanned structure found in the Teaching Morality through Content theme, as well as the spontaneous moral guidance found in the Teaching Morality through Manner theme. The participants in this research described Teaching Morality through Content in further detail in subthemes I refer as Curricula, Academics, and Traditions. The participants also enhanced detail on Teaching Morality through Manner in subthemes I call Discussions and Rules Negotiation.

Participants in this research further described two types of Teaching Morally. I refer to these two types as Interpersonally and Intrapersonally. Teaching Morally Interpersonally has been differentiated into three subthemes I refer to as Disposition, Ways of Engaging, and Relationships. Teaching Morally Intrapersonally has been differentiated into three further subthemes which I call Beliefs, Values, Biases. It should be noted that, just as the differences between Teaching Morality and Teaching Morally are nuanced, the differences in the new themes and subthemes are equally nuanced and often overlapping. These new themes provide a lens from which the multiple layered experience of the Moral Work of Teaching can be examined, but they are in no way
exhaustive or perfect. Further research is required to articulate the nuanced differences of
the identified themes and subthemes.
CHAPTER 10
DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research study was to examine the descriptions of five pre-service teachers regarding their understandings of the Moral Work of Teaching as described by Osguthorpe and Sanders (2009). This theory states that teaching is an inherently moral act, the nuances of which can be defined and examined to build a teacher’s capacity for affecting their students’ moral development. Through a three-interview series, a focus group, and documented classroom artifacts, this qualitative case-study analysis aimed to explore the following research questions:

- How do pre-service teachers describe the moral work of teaching?
- How do pre-service teachers in elementary teacher education programs describe their self-efficacy to influence moral development for children in their classrooms?

Prior to engaging in this research study, I hypothesized that pre-service teachers would be able to describe the different elements of the Moral Work of Teaching (Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2009) theory and how they manifest in the classroom. However, I also hypothesized that these pre-service teachers would not have had sufficient training or exposure to moral education resources and professional development as to have self-efficacy to prioritize this element of the work in their early careers.

This chapter will first present a summary of the study results and links to previous research. Next, I will describe how I interpret the results of the present study fit into the broader picture of teacher education and the Moral Work of Teaching (Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2009) theory. Here I will also present the findings I find most interesting and
how this study contributes to the field of educational research and teacher preparation, as well as explore other explanations for my findings from this research. Lastly, I will review possible limitations of this research study and offer suggestions for future research in this topic.

**Summary of Results**

The results of the present study support the hypothesis that pre-service understand teaching as an inherently moral exercise, as described in the Moral Work of Teaching (Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2009) theory. There are three key findings of the present research. First, pre-service teachers are able to reflect upon and describe the various ways that teaching is inherently a moral act. Their descriptions of each of the outlined elements of the moral work of teaching address Research Question 1 and provide a rich description of the moral work of teaching through the lens of the pre-service teacher. Second, pre-service teachers indicate that they would have benefited from more formal preparation in the nuanced elements of the moral work of teaching, which has implications for their self-efficacy in this area. The participants of this study shared that this topic did not receive enough emphasis in their preparation to provide them with high levels of self-efficacy in this area. Lastly, there are nuances to the moral work of teaching that have been so far unidentified in the framework, specifically regarding Teaching Morally. More focus on this area to name the complex variables that influence a teacher’s skill and self-efficacy for Teaching Morally would likely improve outcomes from teacher preparation.

The findings of this research are consistent with the previous literature that showed that most educators agree that teaching is an act that relies on social negotiation and thus is inherently moral (Brookhart & Freeman, 1992; Buzzelli & Johnston, 2001;
Farkas, Johnson, & Foleno, 2000; Fenstermacher, Osguthorpe, & Sanger, 2009; Goodlad, 1990). The participants of this research were able to articulate the ideas of the Moral Work of Teaching and prioritize their importance. Similar to prior research, the pre-service teachers in this study had a lack of conceptual knowledge and moral language due to their lack of training in this area (Boulton-Lewis, Brownlee, Walker, Cobb-Moore, & Johansson, 2011; Sanger 2012). Participation in this study replicated results found by Campbell (2004) and Ledford (20011) where increased awareness of the moral nature of the work showed increased enthusiasm and interest in learning more. This follows Bandura (1997) and Milson (2004) theory that claims increased self-efficacy builds motivation.

In addition, this research is consistent with authors (Sanger, 2012) who have found that educators lack the professional language required to reflect on their own practice in the moral work of teaching and are reliant upon reactive instinct when responding to issues of a moral nature in schools. The pre-service teachers in this study were able to answer questions presented to them using the Moral Work of Teaching (Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2009) framework to articulate their thoughts and experiences. Whereas past researchers have found the Moral Work of Teaching (Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2009) framework to provide clarity and common language for the examination of the moral elements of teaching, there are elements of the framework that require further articulation. These results represent the first direct demonstration of the categorization of elements within the themes Content and Manner in the Teaching Morality component of the Moral Work of Teaching (Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2009)
framework. Additionally, these results represent the first attempt to further categorize Teaching Morally.

This research describes three subthemes from which specific moral objectives with Teaching Morality through Content can arise. First, and most evident, moral objectives can be planned using specific moral education Curriculum. This subtheme can be used to identify situations in which participants refer to their experience or lack of experience with a specific, predesigned moral education curriculum. All participants mentioned strategies from the Responsive Classroom (Center for Research in Education and Social Policy, 2023) curriculum, for example. Salome mentioned observing two different ways to implement Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (Center for PBIS, 2023) in each of her placements. Karyna, Salome and Sofia all mentioned the use of the Second Step (Committee for Children, 2011) curriculum. Honey and Junior’s report of their lack of experience with specific curriculum would also fit within this subtheme.

The second subtheme that arose out of this research is Teaching Morality through Content using Academics. This subtheme refers to the embedding of specific moral objectives within the lessons in other content areas. Therefore, this refers to incidents where the moral objective is secondary to an academic objective. The participants’ descriptions of diverse classroom libraries are an example of this subtheme. As is the participants’ descriptions of inclusion and differentiation. Junior’s description of his observation of moral objectives being embedded in Social Studies lessons would also fit here.
Lastly, participants identified that moral objectives are explicitly planned for and taught through Traditions that a teacher engages. These Traditions may be celebrations, or they may be everyday practices that facilitate moral learning. Examples of this subtheme include references to the regular use of the Turn and Talk strategy, Morning Meeting and Closing Meeting, flexible seating opportunities or approaches. Class jobs, organization strategies and routines for earning community rewards could be described as Traditions to Teach Morality through Content.

Through this research I noticed two subthemes within the larger theme Teaching Morality through Manner as determined by Sanger and Osguthorpe (2009). The first subtheme identified through this research I refer to as Discussion. This subtheme describes the overreliance of the five participants on the discussion technique to teach morality to students. Incidents in which participants mention talking to kids as a means to teach them a moral objective are included in this theme. These incidents may refer to a way to resolve social conflict between students, as well as the participants’ descriptions for how to ensure students are able to have discussions respectfully and honestly.

All participants noted the ways in which rules play a role in the development of common behavioral expectations in classrooms. Rule Negotiation refers to references to teaching morality through setting up systems for social expectations or responses to social infractions. Karyna’s mention of designing a list of rules with the class would fit this subtheme, as would Junior and Sofia’s descriptions of the Step Out or Time Out systems for response to student transgression. Descriptions of ways to redirect students would also fall under this subtheme.
Based on this research, I further identified two themes within Teaching Morally beyond that which has been described in the Moral Work of Teaching (Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2009) theory. Participants described Teaching Morally as related to both Interpersonal beliefs and experiences and Intrapersonal beliefs and experiences. Teaching Morally Interpersonally refers to the ways in which teachers behave in relationship to others. It describes the internal mechanisms, such as personality and approaches to the work and relating to others, that influence their social behavior. Subthemes identified for Teaching Morally Interpersonally include Disposition, Ways of Engaging, and Relationships.

Disposition describes a teacher’s approach to the field of teaching. It includes their professional knowledge and behavior, as well as their understanding of how to be successful in the field. Participants’ references to their professional network or support system fall under this subtheme, as do their desire to learn more about how to engage with the other professionals in the school, such as paraeducators. Salome’s desire to learn about Unions, pay scale, and pensions also fits under this subtheme. References to natural teaching ability or intuition would also apply here. Professional purpose would fall under the Disposition subtheme as well.

Ways of Engaging describes personality traits, teaching style or aspirations for teaching style, and expectations for their future classroom environment. Participants’ references to wanting to be calm and caring would fit here. Additionally, references to wanting the students to love school and be excited or feel safe and comfortable would fit in this subtheme. Any references to particular age group populations that are preferred, such as observed from Karyna and Honey, would also apply to this subtheme.
Relationships refers to descriptions of important relationships student teachers had throughout the teacher education program from which they were influenced in their understanding of the MWT. Descriptions of the relationships participants had with their mentors, students, families, and school community would fall under this subtheme. Junior’s reference to working with families as the most difficult part of the work would fit here. Mentions of the relationships that are aspired would also go here, such as the reference by Sofia of wanting to develop lasting relationships with community members. These three overlapping subthemes describe the ways in which teachers process and think about their engagement with others.

Teaching Morally Intrapersonally refers to the internal mechanisms that drive the way teachers think about the world. Subthemes within this newly identified theme include Beliefs, Values, and Biases. Further descriptions of the subthemes are to follow. These themes and subthemes are separated by blurry distinctions; there is much overlap between the different themes and subthemes. More research should focus on defining these boundaries more clearly.

Beliefs includes references to the participants’ ideas about teaching and learning and about the schooling more broadly. References about the purpose of teaching and learning, as well as the teacher’s role would fit here. References to what makes a good student would also apply here.

Values describes references to beliefs about schooling specifically as they relate to virtues or values and how values show up in classroom life. Any references to situations the participants experienced having values-laden conversations or witnessing them from mentors are appropriate for the Values subtheme. One example would be
Sofia’s experience negotiating when a student called his costume “gay.” Additionally, references to participants concerns about such incidents and how they may play out would fit within the Values subtheme.

Lastly, the subtheme Biases describes ideas that are related to perceptions of identity and diversity as might influence engagement with students. References to participants’ examination of their own biases and the impact of their biases to their teaching practice would go here. References to the Implicit Bias Test and experiences with elements such as race, class, culture, gender, or language would apply to this subtheme. Salome’s reference to the program’s white-centered approach would be an example of a reference that would fit in the Bias subtheme. Further research is needed to define the boundaries of the categories as described within this work.

**Discussion of Results**

The findings of this research support previous research that teachers are not being trained to identify and consider the moral and social nature of classrooms. Thus, pre-service teachers are unable to plan for and reflect on the ways in which they can control the moral environment. In that morality is embedded in every moment of the school day, teachers without training in this area are vulnerable to anxiety and dissonance that may erode their self-efficacy for teaching more generally. These findings suggest that teacher education programs must include increased focus on social and moral elements of teaching in order to best prepare pre-service teachers for the work and reduce attrition from the field. As arose in participants’ descriptions, placements with a focus on standardized testing, which correspond to test-related emphasis on rigor and academic achievement, underscore the need for this increased focus on social and moral elements.
This idea is further supported by the finding that participants who were placed in highly rigorous urban schools with emphasis on lock-step pacing of the curricular materials were more likely to have difficult relationships with mentors and feel misalignment with the school culture. This finding may be explained by the idea that urban schools are more likely to be “left behind,” thus the academic environment needs to be tightly controlled.

Two other results from this study merit comment. First is that the participants noted their lack of exposure to and instruction in diversity training as evidenced through the comments referenced in the Biases sub-theme. Though they all mentioned the Implicit Bias Test requirement, each of the participants reported wishing for more explicit reflection on the implications of their own biases in their work as teachers. Additionally, while the teacher training included a course on working with English Language Learners, only two of the five participants participated in an environment in which they could practice the skills taught in that course. The two that did have practicum with English Language Learners were also not able to practice SEI skills due to the tightly controlled nature of the curricular program in those schools.

A second related but separate finding can be found in Case 4, Salome. Though this was not a theme found across participants, it is important to consider Salome’s report of her experience as a person of color in the program. She noted that she felt her own diverse identity was ignored or white-washed by most individuals in the program. She also noted that she would have appreciated her non-white, bilingual identity be more spotlighted in order to facilitate discussions of race and class among her cohort colleagues.
Taken together, the findings of this research, as well as the above-mentioned results, indicate a real need for teacher education programs to increase the focus on the social nature of teaching, including exploration of social identities. Without this integral topic of exploration, teachers are more likely to enter the field with philosophies of teaching that reinforce the dominant narrative and status quo systems of power. Whereas these participants, like many teachers, enter the field with hopes to improve the world, lack of this type of discourse increases teachers will flee the work entirely.

**Implications**

These results suggest several theoretical and practical implications. Major findings from this research imply that the Moral Work of Teaching (Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2009) framework can be expanded to express further nuances to describe the classroom experience. The themes and subthemes outlined above begin to unpack the many layers of the moral work of teaching; those provided by Sanger and Osguthorpe (2009), as well as those provided through this research are only the beginning of the exploration of the moral work of teaching. Examining the moral work of teaching through the multilayered lens of the themes and subthemes presented above offers a much more detailed perspective on the overt and covert elements of the moral work of teaching.

In that this research supports other research (Sanger, 2012) that suggests that the Moral Work of Teaching (Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2009) is a useful tool in considering this important element of the teaching practice, it would further that flushing out the Moral Work of Teaching framework would facilitate deeper understandings from which to design strategic instruction. The extensions to the framework presented here offer
language to contribute to the support of moral aspects of teaching. The sub-themes presented here to extend Teaching Morality --Curriculum, Academics, Traditions, Rule Negotiation, and Discussion-- along with those that expand Teaching Morally -- Interpersonal Dispositions, Ways of Engaging, and Relationships along with Intrapersonal Beliefs, Values, and Biases-- work to distill the moral work of teaching to a tangible concept that can be taught and implemented.

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This research implies that pre-service teachers have a desire to discuss and learn about the specifics of the moral work of teaching. They believe that the elements of the moral work of teaching are integral to the teaching practice, and therefore examination of the moral work of teaching must be included in their professional preparation. Teacher education programs must acknowledge the moral work of teaching as foundational to the development of quality teachers. Coursework in the Moral Work of Teaching (Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2009) would be helpful in a program, either through a standalone course or
explicitly and intentionally woven throughout multiple courses. While at this stage it may not be possible to completely overhaul a teaching program to incorporate the MWT, a full course alongside Child Development or to replace Classroom Management is at least in order.

Additionally, opportunities to explicitly observe the moral work of teaching in classrooms should be a programmatic requirement, such as in the practica placements. The Moral Work of Teaching (Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2009) framework can be used as a tool to begin these conversations, to develop the requisite language that will foster reflection about how the moral work of teaching influences classroom experiences. Further research is needed to enhance the specificity of the Moral Work of Teaching (Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2009) framework and improve its use as an effective teaching tool.

**Limitations**

This research has several limitations. Most obviously, because this research relies on the lived experiences of only five participants from one teacher education program, this research has limited generalizability. The teacher education program understudy is situated in a particular geographic area where the political orientations likely have bearing on the experiences and perspectives of participants. A similar study conducted in a different place may yield different descriptions of the moral work of teaching. Additionally, because the programmatic nature of teacher education programs changes, the major findings of this research are limited to the time frame in which the interview series were performed. Since the time of this research similar areas of focus, such as social emotional pedagogy, trauma-informed pedagogy, and culturally relevant
pedagogy, have increased in popularity. Done today, in the post-pandemic era, largely different results may occur.

Participants from this program were in a specialized 10-month preparation course with intense hours of practicum and coursework. The participants reported having little time for reflection due to the requirements of lesson planning and coursework assignments. It is possible that similar research from a less intensive program would yield different results.

It is also possible that the participants of this study were drawn to participation due to their predisposition for consideration of the moral elements of teaching, thus they may not represent a generalizable population. These participants volunteered to participate in this research study after a recruitment speech and email. If the participation was more enticing to a larger population, such that gifts were offered or the like, different results may have been found.

These limitations lend to the idea that further research is needed to examine how pre-service teachers from other programs experience the moral work of teaching and the degree to which their self-efficacy for the moral work of teaching is influenced by their teacher preparation and the educational ethos in which they enter the field.

**Directions for Future Research**

The current findings could be extended in many ways. Further research is needed to examine how pre-service teachers from other teacher preparation programs experience the moral work of teaching and the degree to which their self-efficacy for the moral work of teaching is influenced by their teacher preparation program. Additionally, future studies should seek to articulate the boundaries of the Moral Work of Teaching (Sanger
& Osguthorpe, 2009) framework more clearly between the themes and subthemes offered in this paper. Research to examine the impact of further developing the Moral Work of Teaching (Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2009) framework would then be appropriate.

In addition to those already mentioned, several other avenues of research may be helpful. Longitudinal studies that measure the self-efficacy for the moral work of teaching preparation to early professional would be an interesting addition to current research. Important research could consider the extent to which facilitation in the moral work of teaching affects teachers in moral development of their students, potentially with control groups that examine outcomes for students between teachers who have training and those who do not. Lastly, examination of the relationship between moral work of teaching and important pedagogical concepts such as social emotional learning, trauma-informed pedagogy, and culturally relevant/sustaining pedagogy would push the boundaries of all approaches into new avenues.

**Closing**

The present research contributes to a growing body of evidence that suggests that teachers are thirsty to explore the moral nature of their chosen profession. Although the generality of the current results must be established by future research, the present study has provided clear support for increasing exposure and facilitated conversations about the ways in which teachers replicate their own morality and foster moral development in their students. Despite limitations, this study enhanced understanding of the relationship between pre-service teacher training and moral development. I hope that the current research will stimulate further investigation of this important area.
APPENDIX A: RECRUITMENT EMAIL DRAFT

Dear Student Teacher,

You are receiving this email because you are participating in an elementary practicum placement in the Fall 2018 semester. I am requesting your participation in a research study to better understand student teacher’s perspectives on their training and experiences in practicum placements.

Participation will include three one-on-one interviews with the researcher, and one group interview with other student teachers from your program. Individual and group interviews should last no longer than one hour. You will not need to prepare anything to participate in this research, but your ideas will contribute valuable information to teacher education.

Please consider participating in this important research. Your ideas and experiences are important, and your participation will help us improve teacher education and better support students for generations to come.

If you are willing to participate in this research please respond to this email with your name and phone number. Please note that not all who are willing will be selected to participate. The researcher will select four teacher candidates who represent diverse perspectives (racial, gender, and age as available) and placement location (i.e. urban, suburban, rural). Should you decide to participate, I will send you a short questionnaire enlisting information about your personal demographics and your upcoming placement. This information will better allow me to make appropriate participant selections.

You may also respond with any questions about this research that would enable you to make a better-informed decision regarding participation and how this research will improve teacher education.

Thank you for your consideration!

Best,

Annie Foley Ruiz
Doctoral Candidate, Teacher Education and Curriculum Studies
College of Education
University of MA Amherst
APPENDIX B: RESPONSE QUESTIONNAIRE TO RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Thank you for your interest in participating in the research study ‘Pre-service Teachers’ Experiences of Moral Education.’ Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. Answers will allow the researcher to ensure a diverse body of participants.

**How would you describe your gender? Please check all that apply.**

☐ Transgender
☐ Gender Fluid/Gender Queer
☐ Male
☐ Female
☐ Other _______________________________________________________________

**How would you describe your race? Please check all that apply.**

☐ Black
☐ African American
☐ Latino
☐ Hispanic
☐ Pacific Islander
☐ Native American
☐ White
☐ Asian
☐ Other _______________________________________________________________

**How would you describe your upcoming placement? Please check all that apply.**

☐ Public school
☐ Private school
☐ Charter school
☐ Rural
☐ Suburban
☐ Urban
☐ Other _______________________________________________________________

**Why are you interested in working in the field of education? Please check all that apply.**

☐ One or more of my parents are educators.
☐ I like to work with children.
☐ I want to have summers off.
☐ I want to help improve the education system.
☐ Other _______________________________________________________________

**How long have you been interested in the field of education?**

☐ Less than one year
☐ 1-3 years
☐ 3-5 years
☐ More than 5 years
☐ All my life
☐ Other _______________________________________________________________
APPENDIX C: PROTOTYPE OF A FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

Focus groups will consist of all participants. Focus group will be one-hour, in-depth, informal, and open-ended group conversations. Below are questions that will guide each of the interviews.

1. Describe the program.
2. What do you like about your program?
3. What are some things you have thought you’d like to change about your program?
4. What have you learned about moral education? How did you learn that?
5. What have you learned about classroom management? How did you learn that?
6. What have you learned about development? How did you learn that?
7. What have you learned about social justice? How did you learn that?
8. What have you learned about creating classroom community? How did you learn that?
9. What do you think is the role of the teacher in a classroom?
10. What have you noticed about your school placement that was surprising?
APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interviews will be approximately one hour and will occur in a series of three progressively in-depth informal and open-ended conversations. Below are questions that will guide each of the interviews.

Interview 1

Demographic Information
1. Where are you from?
2. Can you describe your hometown?
3. How would you describe your childhood?
4. How would you describe your school experiences?

Teacher Education Program Information
1. How would you describe your teacher education program?
2. What kinds of topics were you taught in your teacher education program?
3. What kinds of topics do you wish you were taught, but weren’t?
4. How do you feel your training prepared you to enter the field of education?

Practicum Placement Information
1. How would you describe your practicum placement?
2. Would you say your placement is similar to your own schooling experiences? How or how is it different?
3. What are you looking forward to in your practicum placement?
4. What are some of your fears about your practicum placement?

Beliefs about Education
1. Why did you decide to become a teacher?
2. What do you believe is the purpose of education?
3. Do you think there is a difference between learning and education?
4. What do you think teachers should strive for with their students?

Interview 2

Classroom Environment
1. How would you describe your mentor teacher’s style?
2. What do you think is positive about your placement classroom environment?
3. What would you change/do you think could be improved?
4. What are some challenging student behaviors that you see in your placement?
5. How does the teacher manage those behaviors? How would you manage those behaviors?
6. How do you think the students feel about the classroom experience?
Supervision

1. Describe your relationship with your mentor teacher.
2. What kinds of feedback has your mentor teacher given you?
3. How do you feel about that feedback?
4. Describe your relationship with anyone from the College that sees you in your placement.
5. What kinds of feedback have you gotten from that person?
6. How do you feel about that feedback?
7. Has anyone else ever given you any feedback on your teaching?
8. What have you done with the feedback you have received?

Beliefs about Self as Teacher

1. Why did you decide to become a teacher?
2. What are your goals when working with your students?
3. How do you think your students would describe you as a teacher?
4. What are your strengths as a teacher?
5. What are some areas for growth for you in your teaching?

Interview 3

Beliefs about Teaching

1. Who do you think should develop the curriculum?
2. When are prescriptive curricula appropriate and when are they not?
3. What does it mean for students to be engaged in learning?
4. How do you know if and what students learn through their engagement with content?
5. Where do you believe a student finds motivation?
6. What factors contribute to a student’s performance?
7. What would you do if a student was unmotivated to participate or learn? How can you teach a student to be more responsible?
8. How do you model “good” behaviors for your students?
9. How do you feel about discussing issues of right and wrong with your students?
10. How do you manage conflict among your students?
11. What do you assume will benefit your students most?
12. How do you know if you have done a “good job” as a teacher?
13. What should you do if you have done a “bad job” as a teacher?
14. What would you tell a student just entering your teacher education program?
15. What is the purpose of education?
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Example/Quote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beliefs</strong></td>
<td>Learning is personal/I can’t force them…</td>
<td>“Doing school”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>I want to be/make it fun.</td>
<td>“give them purpose”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Pushing students</td>
<td>“give them a destination”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Learning happens through taking risks</td>
<td>“Kids give themselves in to being a learner.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Accessibility and differentiation</td>
<td>“Making it so that kids actually want to be learning.”</td>
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<td>Making sure I am relatable</td>
<td>“Creating individualized high expectations.”</td>
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<td>Creating a high level of engagement</td>
<td>“Getting each kid to reach their highest potential.”</td>
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<td>Academic partnerships are not social relationships</td>
<td>“School doesn’t have to be school all of the time. They are there forever.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Taking too many hands</td>
<td>“They don’t need to be engaged all the time.”</td>
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<td>Allowing students to be creative</td>
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<td>Making mistakes is OK.</td>
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<td><strong>Relationships</strong></td>
<td>Mattering in community</td>
<td>“Education is the battle against ignorance and hate.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Creating a safe/comfortable space</td>
<td>“Education is the community where the learning happens.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Being nice</td>
<td>“Treating us like we are people even if we are kids.”</td>
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<td>I am/want to be caring/supportive</td>
<td>“It’s easy for me to connect with kids.”</td>
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<td>They can talk to me about whatever I engage in their lives</td>
<td>“Expected v. unexpected behavior”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Learning to take a step back/babying students</td>
<td>“Let them be their own person.”</td>
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<td>No model for teaching students to develop their own social relationships</td>
<td>“You have to put in the effort and put in the work.”</td>
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<td>Helping students “work through” things</td>
<td>“A lot of people don’t focus on relationships.”</td>
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<td>Recognizing students’ humanity</td>
<td>“Meeting the kids where they are.”</td>
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<td>Recognizing students’ vulnerability</td>
<td>“jumping in.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Developing own moral curriculum – knowing the components and purposes</td>
<td>“Students are people too.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Knowing how relationships work</td>
<td>“Ask them questions about their lives.”</td>
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<td>Gradual release in MWT</td>
<td>“I want to hear their thoughts.”</td>
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<td>Developmentally appropriate conflict resolution</td>
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<td>Resolving the situation v. helping the students to resolve</td>
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<td>Absence of social studies content</td>
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<td>Using content as a tool</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Talking about NOT school things</td>
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<tr>
<td>**Rule Setting/</td>
<td>Discussion as a general philosophy</td>
<td>“How do I fit in time for dynamic classroom discussions?”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Breaking**</td>
<td>Importance of discussion routines (all voices heard, no calling out)</td>
<td>“I would use my SSR time.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Importance of starting with and keeping an open mind</td>
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<td>Importance of asking, probing, questioning vs. telling</td>
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<td>Family involvement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ways of Engaging</td>
<td>Worries</td>
<td>“I don’t like conflict” “law suits” “What if I don’t like a student?” “How do I fit it in?” “How do I do this when I am alone?” “Keeping cool in the moment” “Keeping calm about issues we feel very strongly about.” “bullying.”</td>
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<td>Ways of Engaging</td>
<td>Feeling overwhelmed</td>
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<td>Ways of Engaging</td>
<td>Willingness for reflection and flexible thinking</td>
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<td>Ways of Engaging</td>
<td>Working with adults</td>
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<td>Ways of Engaging</td>
<td>Comfort in conflict</td>
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<td>Ways of Engaging</td>
<td>Emotional pacing</td>
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<td>Ways of Engaging</td>
<td>Bullying – what is it?</td>
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<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Mentor relationship</td>
<td>“authoritative v. passive” “I can consult people I have met.”</td>
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<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Self-efficacy from mentor relationship</td>
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<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Concern for mentor selection process and training</td>
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<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Good mentors do things “in good faith”</td>
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<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Difference between “my own classroom” and student in mentor space</td>
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<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Teaching style – how to find the true self in teaching style; how to use personal teaching style as a compass to make decisions and shape impulses and habits</td>
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<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Networks as resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disposition</td>
<td>It Factor</td>
<td>“Teachers are incredible.” “It feels like walking to me because I have wanted it and talked about it forever.” “I am following my instincts.” “I have general philosophies, but nothing specific.” “I will need to reinvent my philosophy if what I am doing isn’t working.” “Bettering” “student betterment”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disposition</td>
<td>Evidence of a good teacher exists in the students, not in the teacher’s growth or behavior.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disposition</td>
<td>Mentor teacher’s perspective has influence on perception of internal It Factor/confidence to teach</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disposition</td>
<td>So many people controlling what happens in the classroom creates a muddled sense of what is successful teaching.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biases</td>
<td>Learning through inference “Hidden Curriculum”</td>
<td>“I think a formal class on this would be awesome and very helpful.” “I learned through my experiences in the program.” “I don’t have that language in my toolbox of teaching.” “You have given me no tools; you have given me no practice” “If you feel bad, you aren’t going to act better.” “In Springfield you will obviously learn.” “I don’t know how to word it.” “They just did it; I didn’t teach them, but they helped me learn/realize.” “That might not be something that I did, but…” INSTRUMENT METAPHOR (SD) “If no one points it out to you, you probably don’t really know.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biases</td>
<td>Learning to teach through practice (expectation)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biases</td>
<td>Learning to teach through practice (experience of)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biases</td>
<td>I never questioned it</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biases</td>
<td>I need more information/strategies/direct instruction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biases</td>
<td>Need for diversity training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biases</td>
<td>I have no idea how to talk about it</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biases</td>
<td>Desire for strategies for logical consequences and restorative justice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biases</td>
<td>White, normative perspective</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biases</td>
<td>Knowing a concept but not the jargon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biases</td>
<td>Teaching strategies vs. teaching teaching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biases</td>
<td>Need for explicitness in practice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td>Sharing/teaching about values</td>
<td>“hopefully they will see me and apply it to their own experience”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Role of government employee vs. social activist</td>
<td>“I get nervous to be strong about my own opinions.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No experience w/ Moral curriculum</td>
<td>Telling kids “hey can you just be nice?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Had experience with mentors who practice social justice</td>
<td>“Nothing is always wrong so it’s tricky to teach kids what is wrong sometimes.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assumption of inference</td>
<td>“We were always told don’t get into the tricky situations.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching social justice vs. allowing the students to do social justice</td>
<td>“I let the mentor teacher handle it.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not allowing/wanting kids to get riled up or upset</td>
<td>“How do I do that if I have had no practice?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Avoiding values conversations</td>
<td>“We let the students do it, knowing it wouldn’t happen.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strategies for teaching values like responsibility</td>
<td>Praise – “good job” or explicit positive reinforcement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Prompting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Class jobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Modelling with gradual release</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“I would want to talk about it but I wouldn’t want to push anything on them.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are not bad.</td>
<td>“Bad is just not being your best self at that point.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“I don’t like the word bad.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“I don’t want to call a kid a bad student.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX F: CATEGORY DESCRIPTION TABLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category Name</th>
<th>Definition of Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching Morally</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interpersonal</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disposition</td>
<td>Description of professionalism in dress or behavior such as prioritizing school systems and rules (schedule, lines, etc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ways of Engaging</td>
<td>Behaviors that show relational engagement, such as greeting, celebrating birthdays, and maximizing student voice, as well as talking about others, sharing resources, and teaching style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Types of relationships developed with key stakeholders in the school life, such as students, families, coteachers, school staff, administration, and community members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intrapersonal</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs</td>
<td>Descriptions of PT ideas about themselves, schooling, learning, children, families, curriculum, moral education identified with “I think that” or “I believe”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td>Descriptions of PT ideas about larger ideas of what is right and wrong or good and bad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biases</td>
<td>Descriptions of PT ideas about diversity issues such as race, class, gender, ethnicity, age, or ability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching Morality</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academics</td>
<td>Examples of or reference to teaching values such as Point of View, Empathy, Collaboration, or Responsibility within the content areas of Literacy, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Art, Physical Education, Music, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>Examples or reference to using a Moral Education curriculum to teach moral values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rule Setting/Breaking</td>
<td>Examples or reference to incidents of consequences of non-compliance in school expected behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Discussion</td>
<td>Examples or reference to using discussion as a means to mediate social interactions and develop skills such as sharing, turn-taking, listening, respectful disagreement, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditions</td>
<td>Examples of or reference to school experiences that emphasize and/or teach some moral belief or behavior, such as through assemblies, holiday celebrations, Morning, Lunch, or Closing Meetings, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REFERENCES


*Teachers and Teaching, 21*(6), 624-640. doi: 10.1080/13540602.2015.1044325


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