Professional ethics education for future teachers: A narrative review of the scholarly writings

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Professional ethics education for future teachers: A narrative review of the scholarly writings

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ABSTRACT

This article provides a narrative review of the scholarly writings on professional ethics education for future teachers. Against the background of a widespread belief among scholars working in this area that longstanding and sustained research and reflection on the ethics of teaching have had little impact on the teacher education curriculum, the article takes stock of the field by synthesizing viewpoints on key aspects of teaching ethics to teacher candidates— the role ethics plays in teacher education, the primary objectives of ethics education for teachers, recommended teaching and learning strategies, and challenges to introducing ethics curriculum—and maps out how opinions on these matters have evolved over the three decades since the initial publication of Strike and Soltis' seminal book, *The Ethics of Teaching*. In light of the review's results, the article identifies critical deficits in this literature and proposes a set of recommendations for future inquiry.

As any historian of teacher education can readily confirm, preparing future teachers to assume the role of moral models for their students was a primary concern of teacher education in Europe and North America from the beginning of formalized teacher education. Traditionally, teacher educators were very much preoccupied with impressing on prospective teachers the need to adhere to strict moral standards for their behavior as much in their private lives as in their work with children and young people in schools. This aspect of teacher education began to recede into the background as teacher education was brought under the auspices of the university through the middle decades of the twentieth century (Labaree, 2008). In the 1980s, however, two discourses in teacher education appeared to converge, making it clear to many that a renewed prioritization of the ethical and moral dimensions of teaching in teacher education was urgent, if not a forgone conclusion.

The first discourse, widely associated with Alan Tom's (1984) book *Teaching as a Moral Craft*, centered on the idea that 'the act of teaching is moral' in the sense that education inevitably involves attempting to transform people in ways that are considered to be good or worthwhile (cf. Peters, 1966). What incited Tom (1984) and subsequent scholars (e.g., Fenstermacher, 2001; Goodlad, Soder, & Sirotnik, 1990; Hansen, 2001) to explore in this

direction was a concern about the future of teacher education. In a critique that still seems fresh today, Tom (1980) argued that the increasingly dominant 'applied-science metaphor' of teaching highlighted the technical and analytic aspects of teaching while rendering obscure to those involved in teacher education that teaching is necessarily as much about transmitting values and social ideals as it is about transmitting knowledge and skills.

The second discourse, which emanated from the reform movement in teacher education launched by *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), was concerned with aligning teacher education with broader trends in ethics education in the professions. In the wake of *A Nation at Risk*, two major commissions on teacher education were struck in 1986, the Holmes Group initiative and the Carnegie Task Force. Both groups' analyses of the state of teacher education in the United States, as well as their recommendations about how to improve teacher education, took as a touchstone the model of professional education that had emerged in medicine over the course of the twentieth century (Wiggins, 1986). The reports of both groups, for instance, advocated the abolition of undergraduate degrees in education to be replaced by 'clinical schools' under the auspices of local school districts and both reports urged trustee institutions responsible for overseeing teacher education to work towards a field-wide consensus on the 'knowledge base of teacher professionalism'. In the short term, the impact of these reports was to lend a great deal of credence to the idea that teacher education in the future would look more and more like medical education. In the teacher education literature, a new idea began to be taken very seriously by a number of high-profile educationalists: that the basic conception of professional ethics education that had emerged with the modernization of medical education—focusing on familiarizing students with codes of ethics, the ethical concepts embedded in practice, the inherent ethical complexity of professionals' work (and the attendant ethical dilemmas)—now had a place in teacher education.

It is of no small significance that one publication more than any other epitomizes this new-found interest in the ethics of teaching: a course book, destined for use in initial teacher education (ITE), by Strike and Soltis (1985) titled *The Ethics of Teaching*. To mark the thirtieth anniversary of the publication of the first edition of this seminal book, this article proposes a narrative review of the scholarly writings on professional ethics education for future teachers. More precisely, the review is a targeted investigation of a particular strand of scholarly writing which, like Strike and Soltis's work, is characterized by a concern with preparing future teachers to assume the role of the educational professional who is accountable to a more or less explicit set of collective norms that define ethical practice. On such an occasion, it seems right in and of itself to take stock of this specific field in order to acquire a general sense of where it has come since the emergence of a sustained discourse on the topic of professional ethics education for teachers in the middle of the 1980s. At this juncture, however, a review of the scholarly writings on this theme is particularly urgent, we believe, since it has become increasingly apparent that the intervening decades of sustained research and scholarly reflection on the ethics of teaching, and the intimate link between teacher professionalism and the cultivation of ethical practice (for a review, see Campbell, 2008a), have yielded little in terms of an impact on teacher education. Judging on the basis of repeated affirmations in the literature (see Bergem, 1993; Boon, 2011; Bradley, 1998; Bruneau, 1998; Bull, 1993; Campbell, 2008b; Coombs, 1998; Glanzer & Ream, 2007; Maruyama & Ueno, 2010; Nash, 1991; Oser, 1994; Ungaretti, Dorsey, Freeman, & Bologna, 1997), mandatory ethics-related courses are vanishingly rare in programs of study in teaching, and the hopes

once invested in the idea of teaching ethics as integrated curriculum in the early days of the professionalization of teaching (see Goodlad et al., 1990) have largely been disappointed. We conduct this review, therefore, with an eye to providing readers—most of whom will undoubtedly be teacher educators who, like ourselves, may be wondering what, if anything, can be done to narrow this gap—with a guide to the scholarly writings. Our aim is to stake out the major positions expressed in the literature on a set of issues that are of central interest to anyone involved in ethics education for future teachers, namely:

- How does professional ethics education contribute to teacher professionalism?
- Which professional skills, qualities or characteristics should be developed?
- What content should be included in a course on ethics for future teachers?
- What teaching and learning approaches have been tried and with what success?
- Is ethics best taught in a dedicated course or as integrated curriculum?

The intent of this article, however, is not merely informative. What makes this review of the literature a narrative review is that, in addition to synthesizing viewpoints on these and other aspects of teaching professional ethics to teacher candidates, we map out how opinions have evolved over time and identify, in light of the results of the review, the most critical deficits in this literature in order to draft a set of recommendations for future inquiry (cf. Baumeister & Leary, 1997).

Method, theoretical perspective and sources

A search was conducted for peer-reviewed articles and book chapters on Google Scholar and in three abstract databases (i.e., PSYCHINFO, ERIC and the Philosopher's Index) using the following search terms: professional ethics in teaching, teacher professionalism, teacher/ teaching ethics, moral/ethical dimensions of teaching, ethics curriculum, and educational ethics. The results obtained using these search terms were further filtered through the theoretical perspective on ethics education for future teachers that we elected to adopt for this review—i.e., the 'professional ethics' perspective.

As we understand it, the professional ethics perspective, which represents one of at least three ethical dimensions of teaching treated extensively in research and writing on ethics in education, views teachers as being subject to a set of common norms of professional conduct that exist primarily to ensure that teachers provide the highest quality of public service and exercise the authority granted to them by society responsibly. Typically articulated in a code of professional ethics or cognate document, the norms of ethical professionalism are meant to guide practitioners' conduct for a specific social purpose: that of maintaining public trust in the profession (Abbott, 1988; Banks, 2003; Sockett, 1990). In teacher preparation, the professional ethics perspective entails that the focus of ethics education is to initiate future professionals into a community of practice defined by a shared conception of what it means to act ethically and responsibly in the provision of educational services. The professional- ism agenda in ethics education for future teachers, then, is distinguishable from the moral education agenda, on one hand, and the social justice agenda, on the other. Whereas the moral education agenda centers on preparing teachers to foster character, virtues or values in young people, the social justice agenda centers on raising future teachers' awareness about social exclusion and the public school as a potential motor of social justice, and preparing them to act as agents of social justice and equality. Admittedly, the distinctions here are

somewhat artificial in the sense that it is difficult to separate them neatly in practice. To give a simplistic example, when teachers treat their pupils fairly, they are respecting norms of ethical professionalism *and* promoting equality as a moral and social value through modeling *and* acting to ensure that their school is free from discrimination. Furthermore, because each of the three agendas prioritizes a particular ideal of the teacher's role in society, they are bound to generate normative friction. The professionalism agenda in ethics education, for example, is routinely critiqued for obscuring crucial macro-ethical issues in professional practice because it focuses narrowly on teachers as individual actors responsible for their own conduct and the immediate well-being of their clients (cf. Ladd, 1998; MacKay, Sutherland, & Pochini, 2013). Without wishing to take sides on the question of whether one should establish a hierarchical ordering of these agendas in teacher education, we would nevertheless insist, following Campbell (2011), that preparing ethically accountable practitioners versed in the collective standards of teacher professionalism, supporting new teachers' capacity to act effectively as moral educators, and raising teachers' awareness about how the school systems can reinforce deep seeded social injustices constitute three distinct objectives of pre-service teacher education.

Our focus on works aligned with the professional ethics perspective on teacher education meant that we had to exclude important and insightful work relying on other perspectives, such as that pursued by feminist scholars on the 'ethics of care' (esp. Noddings, 1984), work by critical theorists in the area of social justice (e.g., Darling-Hammond, 2002) and work by poststructuralist scholars interested in the 'ethics of the Other' (e.g., Ruitenberg, 2015).

After an initial scan to determine the main emergent themes, the selected publications were classified according to their degree of relevance to the following four analytic categories: why ethics should be part of teacher education; the objectives of professional ethics education in teaching; teaching and learning about ethics in pre-service teacher education; and challenges to introducing ethics curriculum. The results section that follows reviews the literature according to this schema.

In all, 26 primary sources were identified that met our inclusion and exclusion criteria. These works represent a variety of methodological perspectives on the subject of ethics education for future teachers. Some scholars work from a theoretical perspective and reflect on the goals or content of ethics education for teachers (Bull, 1993; Coombs, 1998; Nash, 1991; Watras, 1986). Others frame their work on qualitative research, examining, for example, teachers' or future teachers' perceptions of their ethical education (Boon, 2011; Campbell, 2008b). Many also work from a phenomenological perspective and describe their previous experiences with initiatives of teaching ethics to prospective teachers (Blumenfeld-Jones, Senneville, & Crawford, 2013; Fallona & Canniff, 2013; Johnson, Vare, & Evers, 2013; Stengel, 2013; Strike, 1993; Ungaretti et al., 1997) From a theoretical perspective, some scholars are concerned with principles and duties (Strike, 1990) or the central importance of developing ethical skills (e.g., 2011; Boon, 2011; Campbell, 2008b; Howe, 1986; Nash, 1991; Soltis, 1986; Stengel, 2013), while some invoke the language of virtue ethics (Blumenfeld-Jones et al., 2013; Carr, 2000; Watras, 1986).

Although efforts were made to conduct a comprehensive review, given our search parameters and theoretical perspective, the possibility remains that some publications that clearly fit our selection criteria did not come to our attention. In conducting the initial search, we discovered a considerable number of works that provided occasional insights into the

themes and questions guiding our analysis or dealt with these themes piecemeal. To reduce the number of sources to a manageable quantity, and to increase the efficiency of the review process, we retained only articles and book chapters whose primary focus was the issue of teaching and learning about professional ethics in initial teacher education. Notwithstanding these limitations, we are confident that the body of writings reviewed for this article is representative of the academic writings on professional ethics education for future teachers over the last 30 years.

Results

Why ethics should be part of teacher education

Both converging strands of research and reflection that led to a new-found appreciation for making ethics an integral part of the university-based education of teachers, referred to above in the introduction, have been put to work by scholars to justify including ethics training in programs of initial teacher education.

With respect to the discourse on the professionalization of teachers and teachings, a number of scholars take as a key premise in the argument that ITE should include the explicit teaching of ethics content that knowledge of the profession's ethical norms is a basic requirement of professionalism and professional practice (e.g., Bruneau, 1998; Campbell, 2011, 2013; Soltis, 1986; Strike, 1990; Watras, 1986). As Soltis (1986, p. 3) points out, 'when a person becomes a member of a profession, he or she joins a historical community of practice with a *telos*, a general purpose, that one must be committed to in order to be a professional'. Belonging to a historical community of practice with its own body of practical and theoretical knowledge and its own set of collective norms is what allows professionals to go beyond their subjective intuitions and make 'professional' judgments. That is to say, professionals have a basic obligation to judge and act in reference to *collective* standards, rather than their own individual and subjective ideas about what is right, necessary and effective in a work situation. For this reason, a number of authors come back repeatedly to the idea that the profession's fundamental ethical principles must be explicitly taught in initial teacher education as a means of promoting teacher professionalism. From this point of view, the education of teachers should necessarily include (though not of course be limited to) the teaching and learning of ethical principles as they are articulated in the profession's code of ethical conduct (Campbell, 2013; Soltis, 1986; Ungaretti et al., 1997). Ungaretti et al. (1997, p. 278), for example, stated that 'the development of cognitive strategies and dialogic competence to identify ethical dilemmas and reflect upon behavior through a commonly held code enhances the professionalism of all in the field'. This passage underlines the fact that learning about collective codes of professional conduct, while important for raising the professional status of a community of practice, only has value if pursued in tandem with the development of certain cognitive and dialogical competencies. Because it aims to develop the knowledge and competencies necessary to reflect on one's actions and publicly justify one's professional choices, training in ethics can be seen as lying at the heart of the professional education of teachers.

However, with Strike (1990), let us note that quite aside from the professionalism perspective on the ethics education of teachers, there is now little doubt that teaching, because it affects people's development in such a profound way, is a fundamentally moral enterprise.

Ethical considerations are to be found in teachers' work at every turn: in pedagogical practices, in curricular content, in relations with pupil, parents and colleagues, in evaluation and so on. Much of this moral dimension of teaching is hidden in the day-to-day routines of teaching and is rarely the subject of conscious reflection on the part of teachers (Blumenfeld-Jones et al., 2013; Bruneau, 1998; Mahony, 2009; Strike, 1990). Nevertheless, there is unanimous agreement in the scholarly writings that it is important to make certain key ethical principles explicit in the formation of morally responsible practitioners, such as fairness, empathy, honesty and patience, by dealing with them in formal teaching and guided reflection (see Campbell, 2013).

Research on teacher candidates' moral judgment development. A number of authors have also argued that making ethics content more central to pre-service teacher preparation could help rectify a potentially worrisome trend revealed by empirical research on students' cognitive moral judgment development. Several decades of work in this area has consistently found that pre-service teaching students obtain lower scores than their peers enrolled in other programs of study on the Defining Issues Test (DIT),[1] a standardized test of moral reasoning (Bloom, 1976; Chang, 1994; Cummings, Dyas, Maddux, & Kochman, 2001; McNeel, 1994; Yeazell & Johnson, 1988). Moreover, cohort studies have found that the cognitive moral judgment development of education students plateaus over the course of their programs of study, a trend that runs counter to the typical trajectory of moral judgment development among college and university students. In DIT studies of undergraduates, age and education level are frequently singled out as being the two factors most strongly associated with an increase in moral reasoning competency (Bakken & Ellsworth, 1990; Boom & Molenaar, 1989; Rest, Narvaez, Bebeau, & Thoma, 1999; Thoma, 1986). In their review of the DIT research on moral judgment development in the teaching profession, Cummings, Harlow, and Maddux (2007) attribute this phenomenon to, among other things, a curriculum that provides few opportunities for critical thinking (cf. Cummings, Wiest, Lamitina, & Maddux, 2003). Cummings et al. (2007, p. 72) also reported that the small number of intervention studies, most of which were published several decades ago, indicates that 'direct instruction in moral judgment development theory and dilemma discussion advance moral reasoning of education students' (see also Cummings, Maddux, & Cladianos, 2010).

The objectives of professional ethics education for teachers

There is a general consensus in the literature that the aim of professional ethics education should be to equip students with the knowledge, skills and dispositions to make ethically responsible decisions in professional practice. Differences of opinion exist, however, over the specifics of exactly what knowledge, skills and dispositions are most important to develop to achieve the goal of responsible decision making and which ones are most amenable to being taught in the typical didactic context of university-based teacher education. Furthermore, we can see a gradual but fairly marked attitude shift in relation to promoting personal ethical qualities such as fairness, caring and honesty as an aim of ethics education for teachers. Whereas the earlier writings tended to dismiss 'making students ethically better people' as an inappropriate or unrealistic aim, more recent writings display a much greater openness to the idea of cultivating ethical character traits or virtues.

Kenneth Strike's 1990 paper, 'Teaching Ethics to Teachers', put forward a view on the aims of ethics education for teachers that clearly resonated with teacher educators insofar as it represents a standard view that, in broad outline and with few dissenters, is endorsed consistently in the literature (e.g., Bruneau, 1998; Coombs, 1998; Freeman, 1999; Howe, 1986; Nash, 1991; Oser & Althof, 1993; Soltis, 1986; Vokey, 2005; Watras, 1986). The starting point is that teaching, like other professions, has a specific set of ethical concepts that define and frame ethically responsible conduct: fairness, due process, respect for privacy and dignity, intellectual honesty and so on. The primary aim of ethics education for teachers, according to Strike (1990), should be to familiarize students with what Coombs (1998, p. 564) calls the 'public moral language' of their future profession. However, the fact that knowing when these concepts apply and what concrete actions they require—in particular in circumstances that give rise to conflicting obligations—requires careful discernment. This gives rise to the second main aim of ethics education: it should provide instruction in the application of ethical concepts to cases.

One of the main reasons Strike (1990) is drawn to the idea that ethics education for teachers should concentrate on promoting an understanding of key ethical concepts and helping pre-service teachers develop skills in applying concepts to cases is because he considers that these aims can be realistically achieved. For similarly pragmatic reasons, he rejects 'the development of character' as 'naïve' (1990, p. 47) and 'inappropriate' (1990, p. 50). Strike's reservations here are in part due to his skepticism about the power of ethics curriculum to 'make prospective teachers better people' (1990, p. 52), but clearly Strike is also aware that there is a deeper issue at stake, which links to the complex relationship between ethical dispositions and professionalism. Namely, good character and good will are insufficient for ethically responsible professional conduct.

This basic observation has informed the emergence of a nuanced version of Strike's standard view of the aims of ethics education for teachers, which emphasizes challenging students' intuitive sense of what it means to be an 'ethical teacher' (Boon, 2011; Campbell, 2008b; Nash, 1991; Stengel, 2013). Boon (2011) and Campbell (2011) found that education students are on the whole keenly aware of the teacher's role as a model of morality and responsible citizenship, and accept that society imposes on them moral standards that are higher than average. This 'need for teachers to be particular kinds of persons' (Carr, 2006, p. 177), which stems from the responsibility society places on teachers to contribute to young people's holistic development, tends to muddy the distinction between standards of professional conduct and personal notions about being a nice person (Campbell, 2008a; Nash, 1991). Hence, a crucial objective of introducing students to the concepts of educational ethics, and helping them learn to judiciously apply these concepts, should be to sharpen this distinction in student teachers' minds by showing that teachers' personal moral intuitions are not necessarily a reliable guide to what society and the profession expect of them in their professional role. One noteworthy and recurrent objection to the Strikean 'cognitive' view (Strike, 1990, p. 52) and its attendant skepticism about cultivating moral character traits as a legitimate aim of ethics instruction for teachers is that it fails to take into account that ethical reasoning, including the application of ethical concepts to cases, presupposes at least one moral disposition: moral perception (Bricker, 1993; Coombs, 1998; Stengel, 2013; Vokey, 2005). In essence, the argument is that, if deliberating about ethical issues in professional practice requires the disposition 'to attend carefully to the details of the particular problematic situation in which appropriate moral judgment and action need

to be determined' (Coombs, 1998, p. 569), then it is incumbent on ethics education to make sure that students possess some basic capacities in this area.

A paradigm shift has occurred in recent years about the cultivation of personal dispositions as a legitimate aim of ethics education for teachers. Recent writings have all but abandoned the reticence about the difficulties associated with fostering virtue in a short program of formal study, which was such a dominant theme in the literature up to about 2000. Without feeling compelled in any way to justify what would have earlier been seen as a controversial personological orientation, Johnson et al. (2013, p. 92) state confidently that 'teacher education programs must decide how to best cultivate the development of [fairness and the belief that all children can learn] and other dispositions in their candidates, and how to assess the demonstration of dispositions in daily classroom activities'. Similarly, in describing the theoretical framework of a program-based approach to integrating ethics curriculum, Fallona and Canniff (2013, p. 76) tell us, 'we ground the definitions and practices articulated in the Equity Framework in moral and intellectual virtue. Virtue ethics serves as our moral base because the best human life requires the exercise of virtue'. Reading these authors' accounts, however, it is clear that they too have realistic goals about what can be achieved in ITE with regard to the development of dispositions. Again, what appears to have enabled this greater receptivity to dispositions is a change in perspective on the criteria of what constitutes a reasonable aim of ethics education.

Teaching and learning about ethics in pre-service teacher education

There is a clear consensus on the interest of using case studies or, more specifically, the study of moral dilemmas as an approach to teaching and learning about ethics in pre-service teacher education. However, certain transformations can be observed in connection with the way in which this approach has been understood in the scholarly writings over time. In the previous section, we saw how scholars' perspectives on the primary objectives of ethics education of future teachers gradually became more open to the idea of educating for the development of moral dispositions or character traits. Unsurprisingly, this change is reflected in the teaching methods favored and recommended by teacher educators writing on ethics education. Research conducted in the 1980s and 1990s tended to produce rather general, descriptive accounts of how to use moral dilemmas to foster the development of cognitive ethical skills (especially moral reasoning and reflection) and to provide practice on how to apply ethical concepts to difficult cases (see Howe, 1986; Hostelter, 1996; Schrader, 1993; Soltis, 1986; Strike, 1993; Watras, 1986). More recent work, by contrast, tends instead to provide personal and highly particular accounts of educational practices and broader teaching-unit-level initiatives aimed at getting student teachers engaged with the ethical dimensions of teaching (see Blumenfeld-Jones et al., 2013; Fallona & Canniff, 2013; Johnson et al., 2013; Stengel, 2013; Warnick & Silverman, 2011).

Howe (1986) put forward one of the earliest articulations of a general approach to the study and resolution of moral dilemmas in professional formation that seems to have exercised much influence on subsequent thinking in this area. Inspired by Wilson's (1967) research on moral functioning, Howe's (1986) approach distinguishes six characteristics at the base of 'critical reflection': appreciation for moral deliberation, empathy, interpersonal skills, knowledge, reasoning and courage. In general terms, it involves repeatedly introducing students to increasingly complex but realistic cases and having them work together to

find solutions to the problem and identify the underlying ethical principles and concepts apparent in the situations.

Over the course of the ensuing decades, dilemma discussions around cases—and several authors repeatedly underscore the effectiveness of using realistic dilemmas derived from real cases—remain a pivotal aspect of accounts of professional ethics education for teachers. This does not mean, however, that their treatment is entirely static. On the contrary, the particular way in which case studies are used, as well as the justification of their use, seems to have evolved. Increasingly concerned with how to influence students' 'inner world' and moral sensitivity, several commentators go to great lengths to describe in detail their personal experiences teaching ethics to future teachers in order to illustrate the techniques they have developed for 'sensitizing' their students (e.g., Blumenfeld-Jones et al., 2013; Johnson et al., 2013; Strike, 1993; Warnick & Silverman, 2011). Some authors recommend focusing on stimulating students' engagement by inviting them to reflect on their personal experiences as a pupil, student or educator (Campbell, 2013; Coombs, 1998). Others, like Bruneau (1998), recommend placing students in simulated but realistic moral dilemma situations. In order to engage students in ethical issues in teaching, she uses in her teaching 'cooperative learning strategies including real-life stories, pictures and role-playing games' (Bruneau, 1998, p. 259).

Furthermore, some writers underline how important it is for future teachers to reflect on and identify their own values (Nash, 1991), personal intuitions (Vokey, 2005) as well as the social values that implicitly structure the school and the curriculum (Blumenfeld-Jones et al., 2013; Stengel, 2013). The idea is to lead students to develop an awareness of the moral systems that guide their actions as a means of encouraging them to call those moral systems into question and, if necessary, work towards change. A clear example of an educational intervention is Blumenfeld-Jones et al's (2013) program, 'Building an Ethical Self'. These authors propose an approach that, in addition to helping students develop the rational aspects of ethical deliberation, aims to promote a kind of inner sensitivity they refer to as 'the felt life'. In their view, much of ethical experience takes place in the course of authentic contact with others and cannot be reduced to the mastery of a mere ethical vocabulary.

Commentators generally agree that, considering the fundamentally moral nature of teaching, ethics would, in an ideal world at least, be taught as integrated curriculum. But the majority of them nevertheless acknowledge that it is preferable for teacher candidates to take courses that are specifically dedicated to professional ethics (see Bruneau, 1998; Campbell, 2008b, 2013; Howe, 1986; Watras, 1986). Unless they do, these authors argue, there is a danger that the topic of ethics will become diluted within teacher education programs or taught by instructors who lack the necessary familiarity with professional ethics in teaching.

Individual differences between pedagogical strategies and instructional aims notwithstanding, there is a tendency among scholars, then, to prioritize independent courses, taught by specialists in ethics, and focused on the analysis and resolution of moral dilemmas. While all agree that it is necessary to juxtapose various kinds of curricular content in order to enrich the process of ethical reflection, views about what content to emphasize in an ethics course for future teachers vary considerably. As mentioned above, some insist on the importance of including the analysis of ethical codes or similar relevant public documents (Bruneau, 1998; Campbell, 2013; Soltis, 1986; Warnick & Silverman, 2011) and introducing students to a common ethical language of the teaching profession (Strike, 1993). Others

consider it important to familiarize students with the main theories of normative ethics (Bull, 1993; Campbell, 2013; Soltis, 1986; Warnick & Silverman, 2011), like consequentialism, deontologism, pragmatism, care ethics, virtue ethics or Levinas's humility ethics (Blumenfeld-Jones et al., 2013; Campbell, 2013). Finally, a more limited number of authors elaborate analytic frameworks made up of a series of specific steps that students are invited to apply when confronted with an ethical dilemma (Campbell, 2013; Warnick & Silverman, 2011).

Breaking with the general pattern of favoring a stand-alone ethics course in the literature, a few papers explore avenues to more integrated forms of ethics education for future teachers (i.e., Fallona & Canniff, 2013; Johnson et al., 2013; Stengel, 2013). For example, through a five-year action research project, Johnson et al. (2013) report having transformed their department's curriculum so that it became centered on the development of two professional dispositions considered essential by their local accreditation body: fairness and the belief that all children can learn. The strength of their approach is its sharp focus on evaluating the acquisition of these key dispositions. In this way, the moral dimensions of teaching run through the whole curriculum. A more modest approach to integrated ethics education is that of Stengel (2013), who describes how she introduces her students to the moral dimensions of their work in a course on the 'Foundations of Modern Education'. The course moves back and forth between articulating ethical considerations, describing real practices and reflecting on the moral responsibilities of teachers. In light of this experience, Stengel (2013, p. 59) concludes that 'any course can enable teachers to attend and respond to this ineluctably moral practice if designed to do so'.

In sum, the scholarly writings on teaching and learning about ethical issues in pre-service teacher education indicate that, while approaches to the teaching and learning of professional ethics in pre-service teacher education have gradually become more diversified and refined, professional ethics education for teachers is, across the board, characterized by a considerable degree of variability: variability in form (is it taught as integrated curriculum or in a stand-alone course?), variability in method (how is it taught?) and variability in content (what topics, themes and concepts are students likely to encounter?).

Challenges to introducing ethics curriculum

Expressed recurrently in the scholarly writings is a concern that teacher education has resisted the ethics movement in higher education (Bergem, 1993; Boon, 2011; Bradley, 1998; Bruneau, 1998; Bull, 1993; Campbell, 2008b; Coombs, 1998; Glanzer & Ream, 2007; Maruyama & Ueno, 2010; Nash, 1991; Oser, 1994; Ungaretti et al., 1997). Following the introduction of the National Education Association's code of ethics in 1975, and against the background of the major drive, discussed above, to professionalize teaching and teacher education, there was, in the 1980s, a period of apparent confidence that it was only a matter of time before ethics in teaching would have a central place in teacher education programs, either in the form of a dedicated course or as integrated curriculum (Goodlad, 1990; Howe, 1986; Soltis, 1986; Strike, 1990; Strike & Soltis, 1985; Watras, 1986). By the early 1990s, teacher educators had already begun to raise doubts about the progress being made in this direction and attempt to account for why teacher education, as Glanzer and Ream (2007) put it, had 'missed the ethics boom'.

Hypothetical explanations for the perceived neglect of ethics curriculum in pre-service teacher education are scattered throughout the literature but the most detailed treatments of the question are to be found in papers by Bull (1993) and Coombs (1998). The most common explanation, perhaps, is that direct instruction in ethics runs counter to a cherished notion, as widespread among teacher candidates as teacher educators, that there is little more to being an ethical professional than simply being a 'nice person'. The explanation takes multiple forms, but the essence of it seems to be that teacher educators are reluctant to include required courses in ethics in teacher education programs because they feel that doing so would send a message to students that they are 'immoral' and untrustworthy and suggest education programs admit candidates who are at risk of behaving unethically in professional settings (Bruneau, 1998; Campbell, 2008a; Maruyama & Ueno, 2010; Nash, 1991). As we saw above, several commentators consider the *raison d'être* of ethics education for teachers as being precisely to counter this misconception—namely, that good will and good character are sufficient to guarantee ethical practice. As these authors point out, it is of course entirely possible to be a very good person yet misunderstand or be unaware of the ethical standards that one is expected to meet when one occupies a particular professional role. Other explanations put forward in the literature are: compared with medicine, ethical challenges emerging from rapid technological advances are rare in education (Coombs, 1998); unlike in business, it is uncommon for ethical scandals in education to reach the national public stage (Coombs, 1998); offering a mandatory ethics course would require a faculty-wide agreement about the ethical obligations and responsibilities of teachers, but it is unrealistic to think that such an agreement could be reached (Bull, 1993); and ethical issues are routinely dealt with as integrated curriculum in mandatory courses on social foundations of education, so an ethics course would simply be redundant (Bruneau, 1998).

Survey studies and qualitative research. Two survey studies provide a point of comparison—albeit a limited one—with the recurring anecdotal claims that initial teacher preparation has lagged behind other fields of professional formation with respect to ethics instruction. In a survey of early childhood educators' teaching practices, Freeman and Brown (1996) found that, even though teacher educators commonly named teaching and learning about professional ethics as a course objective, they actually dedicated very few class hours to the ethics component of their courses. Addressing the question of where teacher education stands in relation to other disciplines, Glanzer and Ream (2007) conducted a comparative survey of dedicated ethics courses in various professional programs. Their results indicated that, as a general rule, whereas one third to one half of the professional majors surveyed included at least one course concerned primarily with ethics, an ethics-related course was mandatory in only 6% of teacher education programs (Glanzer & Ream, 2007). The fields of comparison were nursing, business, social work, journalism, engineering and computer science. When considering this finding, it is important to bear in mind the significant methodological limitations of Glanzer and Ream's (2007) study. The sample was composed exclusively of religiously affiliated colleges and universities in the United States and their definition of 'ethics course' was broad enough to encompass not only courses dealing with professional ethics but also those focusing on the moral and character education of children in schools.

The only directly relevant qualitative research to have been conducted on ethics content in ITE was that by Campbell (2008b, 2011) and Boon (2011), who in parallel studies sought to better understand how ethics curriculum and content is handled in teacher education.

On the basis of an analysis of documentary evidence describing courses and programs in teacher education at several Canadian universities, and interviewing over 60 teaching students and teacher educators, Campbell (2008, 2011) concluded that when ethics is taught as integrated curriculum, its delivery is patchy and unequal across programs. Her findings indicated, furthermore, that courses dedicated to ethics in teaching are exceedingly rare. In a similar study involving approximately 100 participants enrolled in a pre-service teaching degree at one Australian university, Boon (2011) found that pre-service teachers felt a need for training in ethics that was not being adequately met by their program and, like Campbell (2011), Boon (2011) concluded that courses dedicated to ethics in teaching are not the dominant mode of delivering ethics content.

Discussion

Looking back over a 30-year literature, this review has revealed a surprising level of consistency among authors on the key themes that framed the review: the arguments for why ethics content should be part of the teacher education curriculum, the main objective of professional ethics education for teachers, and recommended teaching strategies. Multiple challenges to formal teaching and learning about ethical issues in teacher education are reported anecdotally in the literature and pervasive in the literature is a sense that required ethics-related courses are generally absent from ITE programs and ethics tends to be a neglected topic. The limited empirical research on ethics education in pre-service teacher preparation complements and provides some confirmation of the anecdotal reports, suggesting that despite the several decades of scholarly work documented in this review that argues for why a more central place needs to be assigned to ethics content in ITE, presents models of the objectives of professional ethics education for teachers, describes approaches to teaching and learning about professional ethics in teaching, and attempts to uncover the challenges facing ethics curriculum in ITE, ethics education for teachers, in actual practice, is still in its infancy. As we expected, our overview of the recent evolution of the field has also brought to light certain deficits in the literature. This concluding section briefly outlines what strike us as two of the most apparent and urgent of these deficits and comments on the directions for future inquiry that they suggest.

Survey work

One direction for future research clearly signposted by this review is to undertake appropriately designed survey work on how common mandatory ethics-related courses are in ITE. It was observed above that, since about 2000, a received idea has emerged among authors writing on professional ethics in teaching that ITE has not kept up with other professional fields in requiring that ethics be a core part of the teacher education curriculum. The contrast between the confidence with which authors make this assertion and the limited nature of the evidence for it is striking. It was not until 2007, we saw, that a multi-site survey on ethics education for future teachers was conducted (i.e., Glanzer & Ream, 2007). Further, and as suggested above, methodological issues linked to sampling and the study's definition of its core concept, 'ethics course', would lead one to believe that there are even fewer opportunities for formal teaching and learning about ethics in the large non-denominational state and regional public colleges and universities where the majority of teachers are trained

(see Bull, 1993; Goodlad et al., 1990; Lanier & Little, 1986) than there are in the religiously affiliated institutions of higher education surveyed by Glanzer and Ream (2007). Given the current state of the research, then, reliable, generalizable knowledge about how common mandatory ethics-related courses are in teacher education is in short supply.

Educational researchers wishing to explore in this direction do not have to start from scratch. Fortunately, there exists a considerable body of similar survey work on ethics curriculum in other professions,[2] which could be drawn on as both a source of methodological insights and to provide a crucial point of comparison to determine where ITE stands in relation to other professional fields in making an introductory ethics course a requirement of graduation and a condition of professional certification.

The importance of acquiring this knowledge resides not only in confirming or, as the case may by, giving the lie to the anecdotal reports recurrent in the literature. More significantly, it would provide scholars committed to the potential contribution of learning about professional ethics in teaching to the formation of the next generation of teachers with a grounded sense of where to concentrate their efforts. For example, if Glanzer and Ream's (2007) rather dismal findings are reproduced, it might signal a need to find new and innovative ways to advance the cause of ethics content and the promotion of ethical capacities in ITE. If not, then a judicious response may be to focus on opening lines of communication between teacher educators, in-service teachers and school leaders, and trustee institutions to work towards better understanding of how professional ethics education can be designed and delivered so as to best serve the interests of teacher professionalism.

Assessment and outcome studies

Research looking at the assessment and outcomes of ethics education initiatives for future teachers is another area with huge potential for growth. Conspicuously absent from the literature on teaching and learning about ethics in ITE are works that speak directly to the question of the success of the teaching and learning approaches that have been experimented with. The results of our synthesis and interpretation of the arguments for why ethics should be part of teacher education identified three considerations that authors found most salient. According to the work we surveyed, ethics education enhances quality teaching because: (1) familiarity with the collective norms of the profession and their practical application is conducive, if not essential, to professionalism; (2) reflecting on the ethical dimensions of teaching increases teachers' sensitivity to the ethical issues that arise in professional practice; and (3) grappling with ethical problems intellectually promotes students' cognitive moral judgment development, making them more likely to find the most rationally defensible solutions to the ethical dilemmas encountered at work. Though mostly predating this review, a substantial body of literature exists with respect to the third argument and, as mentioned above, has been the subject of a thorough review by Cummings et al. (2007). With respect to the first and second arguments, however, a few exceptions notwithstanding (i.e., Blumenfeld-Jones et al., 2013; Boon, 2011; Campbell, 2008b), there is a remarkable lack of outcome research that looks at the link between ethics education and teacher professionalism or ethical sensitivity in practice.

Here, again, the potential use value of such outcomes research for both the theory and practice of professional ethics education in ITE is great. To name just a few applications, comparative methods research could provide valuable information for teacher educators on

the advantages of various pedagogical approaches for achieving their teaching and learning objectives. Descriptive work on the outcomes of existing dedicated courses or other initiatives would, by building on the contributions in Sanger and Osguthorpe's (2013) volume, increase the resources available to educators seeking guidance on how to design or refine curricula and teaching strategies. Finally, observational case studies, following the lead of Colby and Sullivan's (2008) work in engineering, which involved site visits to document the strengths and weaknesses of different professional schools' attempts to take up the challenge of ethics education for future teachers, would provide access to a greater range of models for strengthening the teaching of ethics and promoting professional responsibility in ITE.

As in the case of future survey studies, outcomes research in ethics education for teachers can get a leg up by consulting empirical studies on the impact of professional ethics instruction beyond the field of teaching.[3] Even where findings are not readily transferable out of the professional field of origin into teaching, they can play a crucial role in informing methodological choices about study design and measures to adopt and helping to generate hypotheses.

The last 30 years of scholarship on ethics education for future teachers should give us confidence in the potential of ethics education to make an essential contribution to the formation of highly professional and ethically responsible teachers. In the next 30 years, we hope, efforts to consolidate the field and make a greater impact on the university-based education of teachers will be strengthened and enriched by an increased appreciation for the value of empirical methods and cross-disciplinary dialog.

Notes

1. Some continue to regard the theoretical framework on which the Defining Issues Test is based—Kohlberg's theory of cognitive moral judgment development—as controversial but the DIT remains the most widely used and well-validated standardized assessments of moral judgment development (Thoma, 2006). Since its inception, the Kohlbergian paradigm has been dogged by criticisms, most notably for being biased against women (Gilligan, 1982) and for mistaking an ideal of morality that is particular to Western, liberal, well-educated people for a universal standard (Haidt & Kesebir, 2010; Liebert, 1984). Both of these claims have been the object of extensive and rigorous empirical investigation. Research findings suggest that the claim to gender bias cannot be sustained (Walker, 2006) and have provided confirmation of the cross-cultural validity of Kohlberg's six-stage scheme (Snarey, 1985; Snarey & Samuelson, 2008).
2. See, for example, the survey research on the state of ethics education previously conducted in medicine (Lehmann, Kasoff, Koch, & Federman, 2004), business (Christensen, Peirce, Hartman, Hoffman, & Carrier, 2007), dentistry (Berk, 2001; Lantz, Bebeau, & Zarkowski, 2011), occupational therapy and physiotherapy (Hudon et al., 2013), neuroscience (Walther, 2013) and engineering (Stephan, 1999).
3. See especially Winston's (2007) cross-disciplinary meta-analysis of research on the effects of ethics education on ethical leadership and decision making and Warnick and Silverman's (2011, pp. 273–274) discussion of this issue as it applies to teaching.

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