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Review of

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Moral Education, Social Justice, and Professional Ethics for Teachers in a Complementary Triptych

It's no secret that professional ethics is an imperative in teacher education whilst also being rarely dedicated a full course of study in either undergraduate or postgraduate programs (Maxwell et al., 2016). Sometimes teacher educators consider professional ethics and the law nearly interchangeable, assuming that what is legal is ethical and that following school policies will fill the obvious gaps; or that perhaps knowledge of the relevant code of ethics alongside teacher professional standards provides the parameters for good teacher judgement. On the other hand are theoretical approaches to applied ethics, assumed to provide transferable applications which transform teachers' ethical character and inoculate them from unethical behaviour. Fortunately, Bruce Maxwell, Dianne Gereluk, and Christopher Martin are all too aware of the limits and challenges of these approaches and offer an excellent solution for even the most thoughtful teacher educators in professional and educational ethics, based in their collective, and considerable, contributions to the field in Canada and worldwide. Maxwell is known for his contributions to educational ethics, having authored in moral psychology, moral emotions, philosophy of education, and ethics education, as well as empirical and theoretical works focusing on the professions and teacher education particularly (Maxwell & Hirsch, 2020; Maxwell & Schwimmer, 2016; Forster & Maxwell, 2022). Gereluk is a political philosopher and policy analyst whose contributions to theory and practice in the field have addressed educational inequities, citizenship, radicalization, and human rights (Gereluk, 2012; Gereluk, 2023), as well as mentoring and teacher education in rural settings (Corbett & Gereluk, 2020). Martin's work has contributed significantly to philosophy of education and addresses questions in educational aims of higher education, issues of indoctrination, ethics, justice, and education for democracy (Cuypers & Martin, 2011; Martin, 2022; Martin, 2023).

These authors represent a wide area of Canadian jurisdictions and seamlessly integrate practical legal examples alongside philosophical tools designed to enhance, and challenge, beginning teachers' professional judgement. Conceptually, the text does not shy from careful theoretical discussion and offers distilled ethical provocations whilst also being highly accessible for those new to professional ethics in teaching. In an engaging tone, the authors speak directly to their readers, urging modes of inquiry which centre around care for philosophical ideas and commitment to meaningful, good work as a teacher within the Canadian context. They encourage critical inquiry around core ethical principles that teachers may take for granted or assume is something that they understand as common sense – for example, trust, respect, justice, duty of care, authority, autonomy, fairness, consent, and care, to name a few. The book canvases issues such as the power dynamics between teachers and students, social media use, cyberbullying, ability grouping, responsibilities to parents and guardians, gender and religious diversity and equity in schooling, discrimination and reasonable accommodation, dissent, and

discipline. Where necessary, the authors pose dilemmas and ill-structured problems requiring consideration of multiple solution pathways that help the reader consider their underlying values and knowledge gaps.

These ethical ideas and important practical concerns, among other aspects, are afforded considerable treatment to distinguish different interpretations, scope, and applications. The authors offer such a range of rationales, thoughtful case studies, and ways of approaching ethical and professional issues in education that the introductory reader is likely to be inspired to pursue further questions that will extend their thinking about the interactions between Canadian education law, ethics, and professional expectations, and develop further their capacities for professional judgement. The authors bring together moral education, social justice, and professional ethics in a complementary triptych. The rationale for using a multidimensional approach is explained thus:

> when teachers treat their students equitably, they are respecting norms of ethical professionalism *and* promoting fairness as a moral and social value through modelling *and* acting to ensure that their school is inclusive and free from discrimination. (p. vii)

Exemplary of this approach is the careful distinctions made in the final section of the book, where the authors render a more complex picture of teacher autonomy than readers may find in other introductory texts. Distinguishing between the "three faces of teacher autonomy" – individual, collective, and managerial autonomy – the authors demonstrate how teacher concerns about de-professionalization require a more nuanced analysis. As they explain:

> reducing professional autonomy to *individual* professional autonomy, or the freedom to exercise professional skills as one sees fit, obscures a much more complex reality about professional autonomy and, by the same token, the challenges that lie before teaching in its aspiration to become a bona fide profession. This is because individual autonomy is just one of at least three distinguishable forms of professional autonomy. (p. 182)

Their treatment of teacher autonomy helps to articulate where teachers can exercise their professional freedom, to garner greater collective power over their work and perhaps push back against some of the encroachments on what teachers might find the more attractive elements to their craft, such as how they choose to assess student learning and meet competency mandates and curriculum. This even-handed analysis also recognizes that to some extent, "encroachments" may not be direct attacks on the profession.

Moving From Common Sense to Teacher Judgement With Respect to the Law: Organization of the Guidebook

The guidebook is arranged in four sections. The first section is titled "Teacher Ethics Beyond Common Sense." This section takes three introductory chapters to orient readers to the connections between one's values and the practices of teachers with an emphasis on the essential need for but insufficiency of rules and regulations to guide teachers' decisions. It builds the reader towards an understanding of the characteristics of professional judgement. This conceptualisation is then built on and practiced in the remaining three sections. The authors introduce fundamental ethical norms and elaborate on their application to work as a teacher. For example, the "Principle of Equal Respect for Persons" is explained by exploring a hypothetical decision to call in sick under false pretences at work one day, and what are justifiable considerations that enable readers to think through the implications of human dignity in terms of ends rather than means. This leads into a discussion of the dimensions of ethical thinking needed in teaching specifically, a thorough treatment of the question "Teaching, a profession?" and some careful delineation of the relationship between a teacher's use of authority and their capacity for thoughtful and timely professional judgement.

The second section, titled "Ethical and Legal Sources of Teacher Professionalism," focuses on regulatory frameworks in which regional laws, policies, and codes of conduct inform the ethical expectations and parameters of good teaching. In the first of two chapters, readers are helped to appreciate that whilst a network of expectations are at work over teachers and their behaviour,

the pursuit of excellence in teaching requires … nuanced appreciation of the worth and limitations of conceptions of the good teacher, professional values, and codes of ethics. (p. 71)

In the second chapter of this second section, the authors consider the delegation of parental responsibility to teachers, the role and limitations of school boards, and the primary responsibilities of the profession.

The third section, titled "Responsibilities to Students and Their Families," drills down into the many questions regarding the proximity in which teachers work with children and youth. It approaches the ways in which constitutional rights such as freedom of expression ought to be protected at school and how teachers play their role *in loco parentis* to protect student safety and wellbeing. This section engages with concepts of fairness and respect to explore how teachers ought, ethically, to relate to the different needs of students. It considers characteristics of appropriate relationships between teachers and their students. The authors provide guidance regarding the thorny question of physical touch by distinguishing between corrective, pedagogical, nurturing, and incidental touching. They address unintentional bias and preferential treatment, characteristics of legitimacy in school policy, and how seemingly innocuous interactions with students can cross boundaries.

Lastly, the fourth section, "Responsibilities to Colleagues and the Profession," addresses ethical issues that teachers face outside the classroom: those relating to workmates and leaders, as well as to themselves and the profession as a whole. It elaborates on the implications of the competency-based education reform to teachers' autonomy. In this final section, readers will find three chapters dealing with tensions surrounding teacher accountability – framed within the concepts of autonomy and freedom – on dealing with disagreements through using the rule of ascension, and the differences between reasonable dissent and insubordination. The book finishes up on questions regarding off-duty conduct, including legal cases in which teachers' behaviour in online platforms has raised red flags.

Concluding Remarks

Unlike a recent textbook publication on the law and ethics in education specifically directed for the Australian context (Butlin, McNamara & Anglin, 2021), which contains a single chapter on ethics, the beauty of Maxwell, Gereluk, and Martin's book is the way it has fashioned the readers' introductory journey to both ethics and educational law with due respect for the complexities of these fields, taking the opportunity to examine distinctions and nuances which will help to prepare readers to think critically about their value-laden assumptions and practices in the context of regionally specific regulatory parameters. Whilst a textbook for beginning teachers on educational law may offer analysis of cases to enhance legal literacy around child protection, privacy, work health and safety, or duty of care and to illustrate the law in practice, it is just as crucial to have mastered complementary approaches where ethical judgement is necessary. Those based in strong theoretical knowledge in ethics, alongside practical philosophical tools and moral psychology, support informed decisions and offer ways in which readers can apply their learning in context to build their professional insight and commitment to the aims of good teaching.

With a book of this scope there are many strengths. It is available in digital copy as well as paperback, so it is both affordable and accessible. Thirteen chapters makes for a useful semester-worth of material that teacher educators can draw on. The way the case studies and provocations for reflection are dispersed means that the guidebook can be worked into many modes of teaching, both for those programs favouring self-paced online course work and those using face-to-face modes in which lively discussion can be enjoyed, or alternatively, for those using hybrid modalities. One rounding up chapter – making a total of 14 – would be my preference for a book like this, where readers could be treated to some final words by the authors on the relationships between ethics and the law in education. I think it would be appreciated to have the authors circle back to their initial purposes and provide a timely reminder of the scope of conceptual gains and opportunities for learning that their guidebook offered. Tying back and re-emphasising the philosophically rich and lifelong journey of being and becoming a good teacher, as a raison d'être for the significant value of this field to teacher education programs, to professional development, and ultimately to students in school, would be of benefit to future editions of this excellent introduction to ethics and law in Canada.

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