

Ontario  
College of  
Teachers  
Classroom  
Practice:  
A Teacher's  
Story

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# Introduction

*Classroom Practice: A Teacher's Story* is a visual narrative developed by a member of the Ontario College of Teachers. This educator tells a story of his professional practice. His professional knowledge, ethics and instructional strategies are revealed through the words and images depicted in the video.

This visual narrative communicates a story of teaching that is authentic and reflective of the ethical standards and standards of practice.

To facilitate professional inquiry into the teaching experiences conveyed in this visual narrative, a storyboard and reflective questions are provided to support collegial discussions based on the standards.

The professional inquiry processes presented in this booklet include:

- Preparing to View the Visual Narrative**
- Narrative Storyboard**
- Narrative Discussion Process**
- Reflecting on Professional Practice**
- Identifying Professional Insights**

# Professional Inquiry

## Preparing to View the Visual Narrative

Reviewing the ethical standards and standards of practice prior to viewing the visual narrative will enhance the viewers' ability to connect the standards to the "lived" practice of the teacher presented in this video.

The four domains of the ethical standards are **Care, Trust, Respect** and **Integrity**. The five domains of the standards of practice are **Commitment to Students and Student Learning, Professional Knowledge, Professional Practice, Leadership in Learning Communities** and **Ongoing Professional Learning**.

The ethical standards and the standards of practice are illuminated in the words, actions and images communicated in the visual narrative. The story reveals one teacher's perspectives regarding teaching and learning.

The teacher in the visual narrative says,

*I searched for ways to make the curriculum come alive for students, designed lessons to spark their imaginations. Whether we were reading poetry or prose, I encouraged students to enter the lives of those amazing characters.*

Reflecting on the following questions before viewing the visual narrative may assist viewers in understanding the teacher's vision of teaching.

1. What type of learning environment do you create for students?
2. What would you describe was your first teaching moment?
3. What metaphor would you use to describe your teaching?

The visual narrative can be viewed individually or with colleagues.

## Narrative Storyboard

In order to stimulate discussion regarding the standards, a narrative storyboard is provided in this booklet (Appendix I). The storyboard reflects the actual words and images of the video.

Two blank columns are provided in the storyboard to elicit viewers' identification of examples of the standards that emerge from the visual narrative. Viewers might use the storyboard to identify in writing which ethical standards and standards of practice are connected to the words and visual images on the storyboard. A facilitator might initiate the process of reflection and then encourage discussion. Alternatively, an individual might reflect on the standards for the purposes of self-study.

## Narrative Discussion Process

1. Engaging in a narrative discussion regarding the teaching story has many benefits. It provides additional opportunities for viewers to explore the multiple perspectives associated with this particular teaching experience. It also invites viewers to identify, discuss and critique teaching approaches. Through collegial discussion, viewers might change their original assumptions and perspectives. They might also begin to use the standards to understand their daily practice.
2. A facilitator might begin the discussion process by encouraging the sharing of written responses to the storyboard. Referring to the words of the standards will help participants make explicit links between the visual narrative and the standards. Narrative discussions can build collaborative and supportive communities of study or deepen self-understanding and encourage thoughtful reflection and discussion. This form of shared inquiry can enhance professional knowledge and contribute to fostering professional ethical practice.
3. Following discussion of the storyboard, a series of reflective questions are provided to support deeper inquiry. The first set of questions focuses on professional practice and the second focuses on professional insights.
4. Alternatively, individuals may want to write their own individual teaching narratives based on the connections they make between their professional practice and the standards.

## Reflecting on Professional Practice

Viewers may also inquire into the professional practice of the teacher in the visual narrative by using the following reflective questions to help elucidate and foster connections to the standards.

1. Discuss the significance of the memory of the teacher's first teaching moment.
2. Identify a dominant metaphor or image from the teacher's story that flows throughout the visual narrative.
3. In what way does the teacher's personal reflection work as a tool to investigate his teaching?
4. Which dimensions from the two standards **Commitment to Students and Student Learning** and **Ongoing Professional Learning** can you identify in the teacher's experience of teaching his father to swim?
5. What dimensions of the standards are reflected in the teacher's planning and concern for his students? In particular, note the components of **Professional Knowledge** and **Professional Practice** that underpin this teacher's knowledge and skills.
6. The teacher displays sensitivity for individual differences in "promot[ing] student learning." What techniques does he use to enable students to make connections between the realms of books and poetry and their own life experience? Which of the ethical standards are illuminated by this teacher's stance towards learning?

7. How does the teacher create “safe and supportive learning communities?”  
(**Leadership in Learning Communities**)
8. How is “student development” (**Professional Knowledge**) and “the needs of individual student(s)” (**Professional Practice**) reflected in the variety of teaching strategies used so that the students make “the stories their own?” Why is it important to connect with and address the individual needs of students and be aware of their development? What ethical values can be glimpsed in the practices this teacher uses to build student confidence?
9. The teacher has a revelation that “we were becoming a community of learners.” Which elements of the ethical standards and standards of practice work together towards building community?
10. Why would this teacher describe students’ “ongoing inquiry” and love of learning (**Professional Practice**) as “riding on the backs of waves?”

## Identifying Professional Insights

This visual narrative highlights one teacher’s insights and understandings as a teacher. The following questions relate to the insights gained by the teacher. Viewers might respond to these questions or use them as the basis for discussion regarding the importance of gaining professional insight to enhance teaching practice.

1. What insights does the teacher in the visual narrative gain about teaching and learning?
2. The teacher says,

*Seeing these pictures again, I feel such respect for these students who openly shared their insights and learning.*

Would you agree that the teacher and the students are active and engaged learners in this video? Explain your response. In what ways could both the **ethical standards** and **standards of practice** offer a framework for a teacher’s personal professional knowledge?

3. The opportunity to reflect on his practice as a teacher provides a kind of homecoming for this teacher. How does the phrase “refine their professional practice through ongoing inquiry, dialogue and reflection” from the standard **Professional Practice** facilitate this teacher’s development? What elements in **Ongoing Professional Learning** standard support the teachers’ professional learning?
4. How does the teacher react to the students’ struggling “to make sense of the world?”

5. Which of the teacher’s reflections reveal that his professional knowledge and professional practice have “facilitate[d] the development of students?”  
(**Commitment to Students and Student Learning**)
6. What ethical standards are evident in the words of the teacher?
7. Discuss any other professional insights revealed in the visual story.

## Conclusion

This visual narrative can serve as a pedagogical and curriculum resource for teacher education and professional learning. Supplementary educative or reflective experiences might include writing personal narratives of teaching or developing individual or collaborative visual narratives.

### Acknowledgements

The Ontario College of Teachers would like to acknowledge the many College members who shared their experiences and wisdom in the development of this collaborative educative resource.

# Appendix I – Storyboard

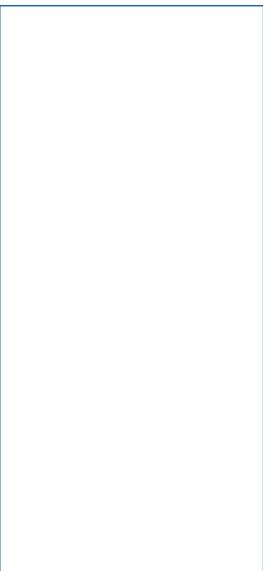
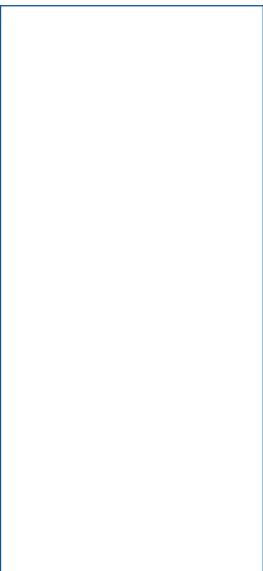
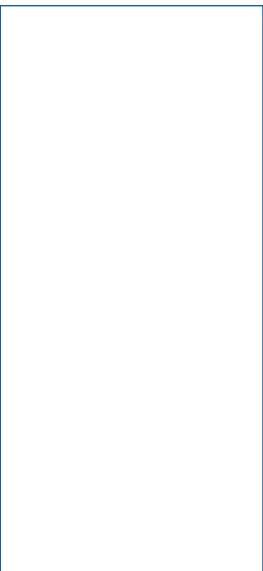
## A Teacher’s Story – Connecting to the Standards

**Professional Inquiry:** Use the narrative storyboard over the next 12 pages to identify and record your perspective of how the ethical standards and standards of practice are “lived” out in the words and images the teacher has used to illustrate his teaching practice.

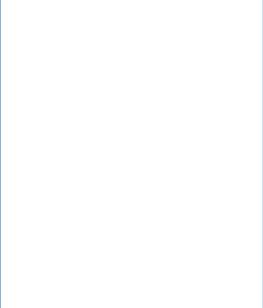
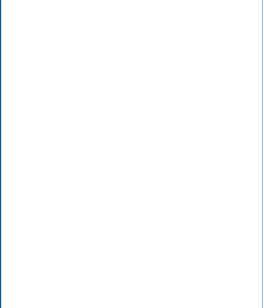
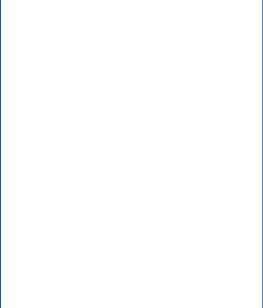
Images	Script	Living examples of ethical standards	Living examples of standards of practice
<p>Realizing the Standards</p>			
<p>A Teacher's Story</p>			
	<p>I can't remember a time</p>		
	<p>that I didn't have pictures inside my head.</p>		

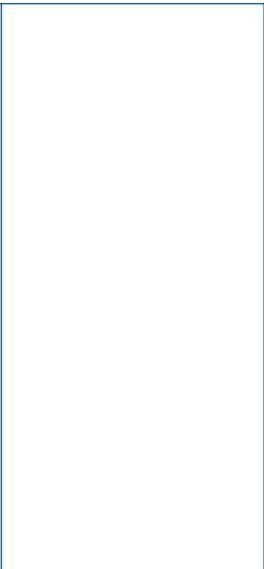
Images	Script	Living examples of ethical standards	Living examples of standards of practice
	<p>When I was a boy, I loved being by the water. I think pictures somehow came more easily there.</p>		
	<p>Most summers my family vacationed by the lake.</p>		
	<p>My dad didn't spend much time on the beach because he was afraid of the water. But this one day, we left the others and waded into the shallows, just the two of us.</p>		

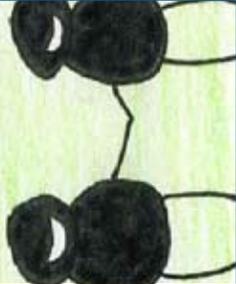
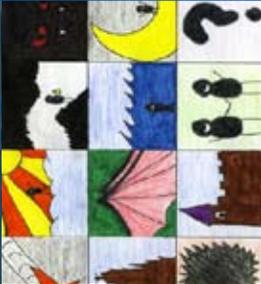
Images	Script	Living examples of ethical standards	Living examples of standards of practice
	<p>I coached him to open his eyes underwater and count my fingers. I watched as he slowly put his head under;</p>		
	<p>and when he came up, his face was all scrunched up like a little boy.</p>		
	<p>Looking back, I think it was my first teaching moment. I was only eight years old, but that memory has stayed with me.</p>		

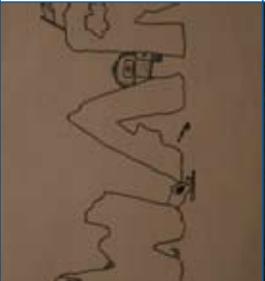
Images	Script	Living examples of ethical standards	Living examples of standards of practice
	<p>It's no surprise to me that I later became a teacher. As a high school English teacher</p>		
	<p>I always loved how stories created pictures.</p>		
	<p>I searched for ways to make the curriculum come alive for students, designed lessons to</p>		
	<p>spark their imaginations.</p>		



Images	Script	Living examples of ethical standards	Living examples of standards of practice
	<p>We played with roles,</p>		
	<p>painted,</p>		
	<p>drew, created music,</p>		
	<p>we wrote and made the stories our own,</p>		

Images	Script	Living examples of ethical standards	Living examples of standards of practice
	<p>building their confidence so they believed they could travel</p>		
	<p>anywhere.</p>		
	<p>In our discussions, we dove into the fascinating worlds of great writers, opening our eyes to new ideas, to new ways of seeing. And I think, over time</p>		

Images	Script	Living examples of ethical standards	Living examples of standards of practice
	<p>we were becoming a community of learners.</p>		
	<p>I love that moment in a class when questions begin to flow and it's as if we're riding on the backs of waves</p>		
	<p>seeing where they'll take us.</p>		
	<p>Their pictures created more questions.</p>		

Images	Script	Living examples of ethical standards	Living examples of standards of practice
	<p>What does it feel like to be small?</p>		
	<p>And what does it look like to belong?</p>		
	<p>I saw how they were struggling to make sense of the world so I needed to learn how to listen better.</p>		
	<p>As we grew closer, they began to speak of places where they had come from</p>		

Images	Script	Living examples of ethical standards	Living examples of standards of practice
	<p>and all that they had learned there.</p>		
	<p>In time, their pictures became more interesting, more complex.</p>		
	<p>We were going to deeper places that mattered to them.</p>		
	<p>Seeing these pictures again, I feel such respect for these students</p>		

Images	Script	Living examples of ethical standards	Living examples of standards of practice
	<p>openly share their insights and learning.</p>		
	<p>That moment by the lake, when I took my father's hand, I realize now that he didn't just count my fingers. He took a risk because he trusted me.</p>		
	<p>And when I'm teaching, I'm inside that moment again connecting with students.</p>		

Images	Script	Living examples of ethical standards	Living examples of standards of practice
	<p>As a child, I used to think that lakes and rivers</p>		
	<p>opened me up to the world. But that's not true.</p>		
	<p>Teaching did!</p>		

Images	Script	Living examples of ethical standards	Living examples of standards of practice
	<p>I close my eyes and finally understand the picture that's been inside my head. It's such a privilege to be a teacher. Each and every day I get to guide others just to the water's edge, and together dream of new places to discover.</p>		
			
			

# The Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession

*The Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession* represent a vision of professional practice. At the heart of a strong and effective teaching profession is a commitment to students and their learning. Members of the Ontario College of Teachers, in their position of trust, demonstrate responsibility in their relationships with students, parents, guardians, colleagues, educational partners, other professionals, the environment and the public.

## The Purpose of the Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession are:

- to inspire members to reflect and uphold the honour and dignity of the teaching profession
- to identify the ethical responsibilities and commitments in the teaching profession
- to guide ethical decisions and actions in the teaching profession
- to promote public trust and confidence in the teaching profession.

## The Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession are:

### Care

The ethical standard of *Care* includes compassion, acceptance, interest and insight for developing students' potential. Members express their commitment to students' well-being and learning through positive influence, professional judgment and empathy in practice.

### Trust

The ethical standard of *Trust* embodies fairness, openness and honesty. Members' professional relationships with students, colleagues, parents, guardians and the public are based on trust.

### Respect

Intrinsic to the ethical standard of *Respect* are trust and fair-mindedness. Members honour human dignity, emotional wellness and cognitive development. In their professional practice, they model respect for spiritual and cultural values, social justice, confidentiality, freedom, democracy and the environment.

### Integrity

Honesty, reliability and moral action are embodied in the ethical standard of *Integrity*. Continual reflection assists members in exercising integrity in their professional commitments and responsibilities.

# The Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession

*The Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession* provide a framework of principles that describes the knowledge, skills, and values inherent in Ontario's teaching profession. These standards articulate the goals and aspirations of the profession. These standards convey a collective vision of professionalism that guides the daily practices of members of the Ontario College of Teachers.

## The Purpose of the Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession are:

- to inspire a shared vision for the teaching profession
- to identify the values, knowledge and skills that are distinctive to the teaching profession
- to guide the professional judgment and actions of the teaching profession
- to promote a common language that fosters an understanding of what it means to be a member of the teaching profession.

## The Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession are:

### **Commitment to Students and Student Learning**

Members are dedicated in their care and commitment to students. They treat students equitably and with respect and are sensitive to factors that influence individual student learning. Members facilitate the development of students as contributing citizens of Canadian society.

### **Leadership In Learning Communities**

Members promote and participate in the creation of collaborative, safe and supportive learning communities. They recognize their shared responsibilities and their leadership roles in order to facilitate student success. Members maintain and uphold the principles of the ethical standards in these learning communities.

### **Ongoing Professional Learning**

Members recognize that a commitment to ongoing professional learning is integral to effective practice and to student learning.

Professional practice and self-directed learning are informed by experience, research, collaboration and knowledge.

### **Professional Knowledge**

Members strive to be current in their professional knowledge and recognize its relationship to practice. They understand and reflect on student development, learning theory, pedagogy, curriculum, ethics, educational research and related policies and legislation to inform professional judgment in practice

### **Professional Practice**

Members apply professional knowledge and experience to promote student learning. They use appropriate pedagogy, assessment and evaluation, resources and technology in planning for and responding to the needs of individual students and learning communities. Members refine their professional practice through ongoing inquiry, dialogue and reflection.

Shared inquiry can enhance  
professional knowledge and foster  
professional ethical practice.



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