



Ontario
College of
Teachers

Ordre des
enseignantes et
des enseignants
de l'Ontario



BOOKLET ONE

Casework Inquiry for Educators

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Illuminating the Standards for the Profession: Casework as a Mirror of Practice

Standards and Cases of Experience

This document presents cases of teaching practice that describe dilemmas of practice by educators from across the province of Ontario. Each educator participated in a series of provincial Standards Case Institutes facilitated by the Ontario College of Teachers. After learning about the case genre, these educators discussed their own teaching experiences and examined their own diverse teaching situations. They wrote their cases, reflecting on the intricacies and complexities of their professional lives in classrooms and throughout schools across the province.

Engaging in casework, whether it be writing, reading or dialoguing about real life scenarios, enables professional inquiry and learning to be positioned within practice. This process transforms the actual context of teachers' lives into professional curriculum as each teacher composes his or her story as a case. Educators' cases express experiences that reveal how the standards are lived out in the daily routines of Ontario schools. For educators, writing a case about a problem encountered in practice provides a way to communicate understanding of difficult issues to colleagues, while at the same time encouraging their peers to inquire more deeply into their own work through discussion and writing (Shulman, Whittaker & Lew, 2002).

When you read these cases, you will enter classrooms and schools across the province, ones you have been familiar with: as a student, as a teacher or as a concerned member of the community. You will recognize the students, their learning styles, their conflicts and how members of the College grappled with situations to resolve diverse learning and teaching issues. The *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession*, the *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession*

and the *Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession*, the College's foundation documents, can be heard and seen in these cases because they connect with and document teachers' work in real practice.

These standards are made visible through the reflections of these educators, intent on discovering remedies or explanations for these challenging situations. Cases are records of teaching. They illustrate the complexity and importance of contextual influences. They convey multiple images that describe the professional educator. But above all, you will hear the voices of dedicated professionals as they seek the best way to implement the tenets of the standards. Changes have been made to the cases –gender, location or other details – to respect confidentiality.

Images of the Professional Educator

The vision of the professional educator in the province of Ontario is articulated through the *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession*, the *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession* and the *Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession*. These documents outline the knowledge, skills and values educators in Ontario not only possess, but also continue to strive to fulfill. As well, these documents convey various ways that ongoing professional learning can occur.

Through consultation with educators across the province, multiple images of the educator began to emerge that are now evident in these documents. Embedded in the *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession*, the *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession* and the *Professional Learning Framework for the*

Teaching Profession are images of professional educators as:

- reflective practitioners
- self-directed learners
- critical inquirers
- collaborative partners
- educational leaders
- community members
- ethical decision makers
- holistic thinkers

These images speak to the serious nature of combining personal and practical knowledge that enhances the learning of both the teacher and the learner. You will glimpse a variety of situations presented in the casebook, not all stereotypical pictures of easily solved dilemmas: that is the point of cases, for they represent dilemmas that arise in real situations.

In this collection of cases, as teachers attempt to deal with issues, you will hear their voices of self-doubt, of exasperation, of failed attempts. You may be surprised at their occasional frustrated utterances, but you will know that in every case, a teacher cared deeply and resolved to do better. Each of the participants in the Case Institute was committed to using the standards' guiding principles to deal with a past teaching situation, one that, maybe even after 20 years had passed, still piqued the writer.

As you reflect upon the congruence or even the disparity between images of the teacher illustrated in the cases and those communicated in the standards, you will understand how the standards can foster professional growth and learning in the profession: casework invites this form of professional reflection.

Teaching is complex. Teachers continually shape and reshape their actions to respond to the individual needs of their students, the nature of their communities and the expectations of the curriculum – they engage in knowledge-based work that is dependent upon many contextual factors.

Teachers respond professionally to diverse circumstances, and their practices illuminate the standards in integrated and numerous ways. The *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession*, the *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession* and the *Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession* recognize that contexts significantly influence teaching. Exploring teaching through casework acknowledges the many contextual influences that aid in constructing teachers' identities and actions.

Illuminating the Standards Through Teaching Experiences

Actual demonstrations of the knowledge, skills and values rooted in practice are embedded in the standards. Cases provide concrete ways to understand the standards that are found within the contexts of teaching. Capturing teaching experiences through various artifacts of practice, such as classroom videotapes, school newsletters, parent communiqués, learning portfolios or written teaching cases, promotes exploration of practice. Through these resources, educators are able to stop time, pause, examine and consider the dynamics of the environment in which they spend their days. Artifacts of teaching foster an authentic lens through which teachers continue to learn about practice. This casebook is but one lens through which the standards can be examined and understood.

Cases of teaching experiences can also serve as a bridge between the concrete world of teaching and the abstract world of theory that guides the professional practitioner. The standards are the theoretical foundations for the teaching profession in Ontario. Written cases provide specific or real examples of how standards have been lived out in actual teaching experiences. Cases are a touchstone to remembering, re-examining, re-framing and re-investigating practice.

Through reading and discussing cases of teaching, or instances of practice, you are invited to contemplate and grapple with the standards. You may make judgements, consult experts and

colleagues, and engage in a conversation that is based on the work of your peers. You can list the benefits, risks and possible results of a proposed action, trying out myriad solutions. By pondering, questioning and considering, you are preparing for your future interactions in your professional arena. Cases provoke reflection into your own practice as you replay conversations or scenarios that remind you of the standards as an instructional tool that extends a vision of practice. Schon has referred to these situations as “reflective practicum.” (Schon, 1987)

The Case Institutes brought together practitioners who discovered through a process of studying case genre, writing and sharing their own stories that they had much to celebrate in their professional lives. One participant noted:

When you hear or read other peoples’ cases, it’s almost a way to step inside their shoes and see a situation from their perspective. As a teacher, that’s something you have to do a lot. Cases were comforting to me as I am sure I’ll find myself in some of these situations and I now have something to draw on. (M. Feiner, personal communication, June 15, 2002)

Cases engage educators in critical inquiry; as they foster deeper awareness and insight into the standards for the profession.

Standards Casebook; Cases for Teacher Development – Preparing for the Classroom

The College has developed a standards-based case resource book. It utilizes cases written by Ontario educators as a key strategy in the integration and ongoing review of the standards. An essential feature of this resource is that it establishes cases as a guiding framework for professional inquiry into practice and research. Reflective questions, bibliographic materials and commentaries accompany the casebook to encourage professional dialogue.

The standards casebook is one component of an implementation plan for the College’s provincial Standards Resource Kit developed under the direction of the Standards of Practice and Education Committee. The casebook stimulates awareness and understanding of the standards and helps to integrate them into the everyday work of teachers. It is hoped that standards-based discourses will create opportunities for teachers to engage with the standards in meaningful, varied and continual ways by discussing artifacts and records of practice.

The cases in this resource booklet have been validated with hundreds of College members. This process has provided information regarding the connection of the cases to the standards as well as ascertaining the level of relevance and meaning these standards-based cases hold for the profession. The following formal opportunities have been used to engage educators in discussions regarding the cases:

- Principal’s Qualification Courses
- Supervisory Officers Qualification Courses
- Pre-service Teacher Education Forums
- In-service Teacher Education Forums
- Case Institute Focus Groups
- Case Discussion Institutes with District School Board Representatives
- Educational Conferences
- Graduate Courses in Education
- International, Provincial and Local Venues.

College staff have also gathered feedback in informal opportunities in the field. Additional cases of teaching experiences have also been used in provincial Standards Casework Institutes that will serve as a secondary component of the College’s Standards integration and ongoing review plan.

The College is proud to acknowledge the high level of engagement and feedback provided by participants involved in the provincial Standards Case Institutes. These professional learning experiences have served as an effective tool for understanding the standards:

Introducing the standards in the form of a case can work brilliantly to broaden awareness and deepen understanding of them. Cases provide a meaningful context for reflecting on how standards can guide improved practice. The standards are intertwined and I think cases can help represent this for people. (Whittaker in personal conversation, OCT, June 2003)

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Split Decision

This is the staffing committee meeting that people care about. This is the one that matters. We're not here to talk about new couches in the staff room. We're not here to talk about recess treats on Fridays. We're here to talk about the class distribution for next year. People care, I later realized, because it is important to them. At this point I'm still naive enough to think they care because it is important to the school.

The school is Inglewood Elementary, a large K-6 in a lower middle class, culturally diverse area. Inglewood is full of new Canadians and only a handful of the students in my class speak English at home. I love the school—everything about it. And I'm not the only one. I've heard people refer to it as “an oasis.” It's only my first year teaching, but I feel as if this is where I want to be for a long, long time.

The committee chair, Dave Dinsmore, begins the meeting by reminding us of what we already know: we've lost one and a half positions for next year, and Tim, our principal, has given us the task of figuring out how we can make it all work. If this were a movie, the quiet, foreboding music would have kicked in right about now. Someone's walking away unhappy from this meeting and everybody sitting at the table knows it.

We've all looked at the numbers, and there are only so many ways this can go. The principal has told us that library, guidance positions, English as a Second Language (ESL) and special education are not part of the negotiables, and are therefore untouchable. It's all a matter of how we distribute the classes.

The Grade 1 team gathers before the meeting, and we all agree that we would like to see five Grade 1 classes. Having fewer than that would push the class sizes too high. At the meeting, I speak for the team.

“We think it's best to have five Grade 1 classes next year. This will allow us to keep the classes small enough so that the kids can get the attention they need. Now, I don't want this to turn into a contest of whose grade is hardest to teach, but I think everyone will agree that, in terms of requiring teacher support, the younger students are the most needy. Having 24 Grade 6s in a class is a lot different than having 24 Grade 1s. Another issue we need to examine is special education. Currently, there is no full-time special education program for the Grade 1s. Look at your own grades and try to imagine what that's like. If you think it is hard to teach your class now, try adding two or three learners with special education needs to the mix.”

Dave interrupts me at this point, “We're not here to talk about the special education program.”

“Not specifically,” I say, “but you have to look at the effect it has on the classes. Imagine if Simon and Teo were suddenly dropped into your class tomorrow. Are you telling me that wouldn't completely change the environment of the class?”

There is a pause and I know Dave has conjured before his eyes Simon and Teo, two well-known and challenging students. Simon and Teo, in a junior special education class with five other students, are almost legendary for their behavioural and academic challenges. Their reputations throughout the school community are almost mythic, so I feel that all of the teachers get my point.

“Do you think that kids like Simon and Teo only became learners with special education needs when they reached Grade 2? Each of the Grade 1 teachers has kids like these two in their classes and each one needs a huge amount of our time and attention. It's one of the main reasons why we need smaller Grade 1 classes.”

I have the sense each teacher is pondering my explanation.

“Another point I want to raise is the testing issue. I know that Grade 3s sometimes get smaller classes so that the students will be well prepared for the EQAO [Education Quality and Accountability Office] tests. Personally, I don’t think that should be an issue. I don’t feel we should be structuring our classes around standardized testing. We should just consider what’s best for the kids. If you are going to look at that though, it’s not as if what the kids learn in Grade 1 doesn’t affect how they do after that. How they perform on the tests is not only a matter of how they’re prepared in Grade 3. If anything, I’d suggest how they’re prepared in Grade 1 is more important because it’s a formative year, academically and in terms of shaping their attitudes towards school and learning.”

Heads nod. Frances, the teacher in the room next to mine, gives me a thumbs-up, but I notice several teachers are avoiding eye contact with me as I scan faces. I wonder if they will support my position.

Yet I sit down satisfied that I’ve made the case for smaller Grade 1 classes. A few seconds later, my feeling is confirmed.

“That all makes sense to me,” says Christina Ross, an experienced second-grade teacher. “I think we’re probably going to have to have a split Grade 4/5 class.”

On the heels of Christina’s comment I hear, “That’s what we were thinking.” It’s Sam, one of the kindergarten teachers. “It just seems to make sense with the numbers.”

A few more of the other grade reps nod their heads in agreement. At this point there are no combined classes in our school. It’s something the school has tried to avoid wherever possible. Here, unfortunately, it seems pretty clear that we’re going to have to have a combination of some kind. I’m glad it’s going to be a junior class: having a younger split grade seems like a really bad idea to me.

I’m momentarily satisfied that we have reached a consensus and the most vulnerable in the school will be exempt. The beat of my heart slows, and I begin to relax a bit.

“There’s still the question of who’s going to teach the split class though,” continues Dave, sitting at the head of the table. “I don’t know if anyone is willing to do it.”

Again, my adrenalin starts to rush as I sense that the issue is once more open to debate. “I don’t think we should look at it that way,” I interrupt. “We’re here to figure out what’s best for the kids, not for the teachers. Pretend you don’t know what grade you’re teaching next year, and ask yourself what you think is right. If Tim, the principal, tells me I’m teaching a Grade 6 class next year, I’ll still feel it’s right to have smaller Grade 1 classes. If we agree that a split Grade 4/5 is the way to go, let’s leave it at that, and let Tim decide who will teach the combined grade.”

It’s too late now to repeat my concerns. My earlier moment of triumph has vanished, and the meeting centres on the question of who is willing to teach a Grade 4/5 class. We’ve moved from the philosophical to the personal issue here. The meeting drags on, and on, and on, and I intuit that somehow this discussion will not turn out right.

Finally, Anna, one of the other Grade 1 teachers, says she doesn’t see what the big deal about a combined grade is, and that she is willing to do a split Grade 1/2 class. And suddenly – I hardly blink or gasp – that’s that. Dave puts it to a vote, and almost all of the teachers agree with the 1/2 combined class.

I’m in shock. A few minutes ago, most people agreed that five Grade 1 classes would be the best thing for the school. How quickly things change with the slim possibility of some kind of personal sacrifice.

After the meeting, teachers from different grades gather around me and say that they agreed with what I said, but they didn't want to hurt their team, or they didn't want to end up teaching a combined grade. Then they walk away. I sit here in disbelief, wondering how much of this oasis is really just a mirage.

Group Inquiry

What Are the Facts: Who? What? Where? When?

Analysis & Reflections: Analyze the problem(s) from the viewpoints of the different people in the case using the reflective questions or charts (see Appendix IV and V) following the case as a guide to explore, extend or discover information.

Evaluation: Examine critically the teacher's strategies for handling the problem(s).

Alternative Solutions & Explanations: Generate alternative solutions and explanations to the ones presented in the narrative. Take into consideration the risks and benefits as well as the long and short-term consequences of each proposed action.

Principles of Practice: Formulate some generalizations about effective practice. Remember that the Standards of Practice and the Ethical Standards are guiding principles for teacher action.

What Is This a Case of? Link this resource to more general categories. Rich cases suggest many themes, issues and layers of interpretation. A rich case is a case of many things.

Changing Opinions: Who or what has caused you to consider a new way of thinking? How strongly do you still feel about your previous assumptions?

Reflecting on the Case

1. What are the facts of the case?
2. The teacher is self-described as "naive." Consider the teacher's skills, knowledge, experience and attitudes. What word might you use to describe the teacher?
3. What is the central dilemma? Evaluate the team's recommendation for reorganization. Differentiate the players and their concerns.
4. What role do Simon and Teo play in the discussion?
5. How should special education, assessments and EQAO results impact on the teachers' decisions?
6. Although some decisions sound fine in theory, applying them to practice is another matter. Why does the actual implementation of the proposed solution raise new issues? What are the pressure points in this case?
7. Evaluate the ultimate solution to the problem. Who has lost and who has won? What long-term results might occur with this decision?
8. Were there alternate solutions to the problem? How might the teacher have prepared for success in this situation?
9. What is this a case of?
10. Formulate some generalizations about good practice in group decision-making.

Further Inquiry

1. Which Standard of Practice might have guided the decisions made in this meeting? Pinpoint the key elements in the standards that impact directly on this case.
2. Often decisions are complex and multi-layered. How could teachers avoid being drawn into those kinds of discussions? Do the Standards provide guidance or remedy to those situations? How can the Standards support and guide educators' decisions in cases?
3. Have you been involved in a situation, staff meeting or decision similar to the one described in the case? Were you satisfied with the outcome? Explain your answer.
4. Consult the Ethical Standards at the end of this booklet. How might they provide support or guidance for the individuals in this case?
5. List the school issues that could be decided in this kind of meeting. How might you prepare for those situations?

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How Hard Could It Be to Teach Special Education?

In my third year of teaching, I was asked to teach the special education behaviour class at my school. How difficult could that be? After all, there were only eight students in the class, and there was a full-time child and youth worker. The teacher I was to replace was leaving the school and moving out of the province. Not surprisingly, I was offered the class since I had hinted that teaching special education students was probably much easier than teaching a class of 30 students. Surely it would be a nice change to work with students on a one-to-one basis. After all, I had successfully completed the Special Education, Part 1 Additional Qualification course. I had even taken the behaviour option. I couldn't believe how pumped and prepared I felt ... then!

As I left the principal's office, I was happy, I think! However, doubts began to surface almost immediately. I had been assigned a class of students with behaviour challenges at the junior and intermediate level, Grades 4 to 8, and many of the students were taller than me. In fact, one student stood a full head taller than me and, no doubt, outweighed me by 30 pounds.

My experience so far had included a Grade 5 class for one year and a split Grade 3/4 for the following two years. True, I did not really know what to expect, as none of these students with behavioural challenges had ever been integrated into my regular classes.

Yet, I did do a lunch duty in that part of the school one day a week. I would walk up and down a short hallway and peek into classrooms if I heard a loud noise, or if one of the students needed something, he or she would seek me out. But generally, an adult stayed with that behaviour class every lunch hour, so there was little need to even approach that room.

Staff room stories tended to impart gossip about that class. Almost daily, it was reported how one student or another had started a fight in the classroom or caused a major conflict at recess. We teachers would raise our eyebrows and knowingly identify the problem: no doubt it was a lack of discipline at home, or those kids just got away with murder; in any case, there was probably no hope for them.

In retrospect, I have to admit that the teacher and the child and youth worker assigned to that class full time looked exhausted more often than any other member on staff, but at the time I was sure the exhaustion was caused by the personal demands of their own families.

I realized I had a great deal to learn, but I was up for the challenge, I think! Still, two other concerns crept into my mind. What should I teach them, and how would I engage eight learners that ranged from eight to 14 in age with diverse academic abilities that spread even further than their ages?

As the summer wore on and I thought more and more about it, I decided to research what a special education teacher should know in order to teach these students. I met with the special education consultant, and she shared some articles and books with me. I reread the texts I had studied in the Special Education, Part 1 course, and I dug out articles that I had received in my teacher training courses. I was ready!

On Labour Day weekend, apprehension turned into terror. On Labour Day Monday, I received a phone call from the child and youth worker. He had fallen out of a tree and would not be able to come to school for the first week. I would truly be on my own. I had a sick feeling in my stomach. What if none of the students listened to me, or even worse, just ran around the class in circles and refused to follow instructions? How would

the events in my new class affect the rest of the school?

The school was in a middle-class area with a population of about 600. The students in the regular classes were relatively well behaved. I really enjoyed teaching there, and the principal seemed to think I was a good teacher. The students in my regular class liked me as a teacher. The parents complimented me on my style, my class management, and my interesting assignments for their children, and almost all of the parents visited the class during the school day at my invitation.

It was a large building, so we did not need portables: that meant we felt as if we really belonged to the school community. The students in this behavioural class were placed there because their home school had diagnosed them as requiring a separate, not regular class. Our class was supposed to help, may be even cure them – at least, that was their expectation.

So the first day of school arrived and the students did too. One child had cerebral palsy and had been diagnosed as “Trainable Mentally Retarded” (TMR), a special education designation for exceptional students at that time. Another student was very bright but had been abandoned by his adopted mother. A third child had autism. And the rest, well, they were challenging, each in his or her own way. Suddenly, Special Education, Part 1 and the little actual experience I had terrified me.

Those first few days, the students were well behaved and seemed to shift into routines. I became a sergeant major who set up strict and inflexible routines. Permission was needed to move around the class and even to sharpen a pencil or throw waste paper into the garbage.

I worried about giving them any freedom as I thought they would take advantage of me and I would lose control.

Miraculously, they co-operated. Busy work was my goal for that first week, but I hoped that in the second week I could begin to program for their different needs: if only I knew what those

different needs were! So I guessed at what I thought they knew, what they could do and how they might behave.

The child who had cerebral palsy and the designation of TMR provided me with a major challenge. She was the only female in the class and her parents’ expectations differed from what I had observed of her behaviour and abilities. I tried to understand what she needed. Now as I look back, I can articulate: she struggled with reading, writing and mathematics. Her parents insisted that she could handle three-digit division at home, but I wasn’t too sure that she understood rote counting. Her parents insisted that she could explain how an island was formed, but I had trouble getting her to read a list of pre-primer words. How do you program for a student whose behaviour and actions are inconsistent with parental information? How do you program for students who haven’t revealed exactly what they can achieve?

At the end of the first week, problems erupted on the schoolyard. In my regular class, I dealt with recess problems by chatting with students. If the problem was a major one, I enlisted the help of the office and the principal.

Now I taught a behaviour class and part of my job was solving behaviour problems. Here, a small chat didn’t cut it. Problems that occurred during the morning recess usually took a major part of the day to investigate. Conflicts usually involved a student from another class in the school who could explain the solution fairly well. My students would be angry, and in their perception, the louder kids yelled, the stronger they were: might made right in their eyes. So, processing with them was difficult. They could not see that there were two sides to every story. Someone was always right, and someone else was always wrong. And, most usually, the other person was wrong.

I thought that at some point in the year everything would eventually fall into place. Yes, some aspects did; others were not as evident. Mary, my only female student, seemed to settle down, and, yes, did make progress. But how to evaluate that progress? That was another question.

Students in a regular setting could demonstrate in a pencil and paper assessment the content of their learning, and what still needed to be accomplished. A teacher in regular classroom settings could talk to a colleague and plan and discuss the next steps. But I was the only special education teacher in the school, and I didn't have anyone to talk to on a daily basis. Being a relatively new teacher, I had trouble trying to gauge what was appropriate for these students. I knew I needed a mentor.

What I did find powerful was listening to the parents. I met with them throughout the year and, fortunately, spent more than an hour with each student's parent. They would share their hopes for their child, and what past experiences had taught them about their son or daughter. Most parents were very supportive but some did question every decision I made.

In spite of all of my best intentions, I continually experienced "teacher guilt." It hung over my head. I never felt I was doing enough. I continued to ask myself, "Am I just babysitting or do I really make a difference?" I was a novice teacher and I, myself, questioned everything I was trying to do.

I continued throughout the year and I believe we made gains, but I always worried that I had not done all that I could have for the students. How hard could it be to teach special education? Hard enough that I am still trying to figure it out.

Group Inquiry

What Are the Facts: Who? What? Where? When?

Analysis & Reflections: Analyze the problem(s) from the viewpoints of the different people in the case using the reflective questions or charts (see Appendix IV and V) following the case as a guide to explore, extend or discover information.

Evaluation: Examine critically the teacher's strategies for handling the problem(s).

Alternative Solutions & Explanations: Generate alternative solutions and explanations to the ones presented in the narrative. Take into consideration the risks and benefits as well as the long and short-term consequences of each proposed action.

Principles of Practice: Formulate some generalizations about effective practice. Remember that the Standards of Practice and the Ethical Standards are guiding principles for teacher action.

What Is This a Case of? Link this resource to more general categories. Rich cases suggest many themes, issues and layers of interpretation. A rich case is a case of many things.

Changing Opinions: Who or what has caused you to consider a new way of thinking? How strongly do you still feel about your previous assumptions?

Reflecting on the Case

1. What are the facts of the case?
2. Describe the knowledge, skills, attitudes and experience of the teacher. How does the teacher prepare for the new assignment?
3. How extensive is the teacher's knowledge of special education and in particular the special education situation in their school?
4. Describe the contextual elements of the school and the class presented that impact on the dilemma that this teacher faces.
5. How does this teacher cope with the class? Evaluate the teacher's preparation for this job.
6. What challenges does Mary pose for this teacher? Where might the teacher have found resources or support?
7. What conflicts exist between the teacher and the parents' perspectives about Mary? Do you think there were avenues for collaboration? Describe how they might have worked together for Mary's sake.
8. What questions does the teacher ask that require deeper knowledge of teaching principles? What solutions would you propose? Which Standards are revealed within this case? Which Standards could be used as a guide for future growth?
9. What is this a case of?

Further Inquiry

1. Examine the standards. Which domains are most applicable to this situation?
2. Teachers new to teaching often face isolation. How might support be offered to new teachers?
3. The school and its personnel depicted in this case seem to possess some rather strong biases regarding special education students. Have you noted similar stereotypical views about

any specific groups of students in your school community? How can educators respond to divisive thinking?

4. This story reflects the experience of a teacher many years ago. Compare the situation described with the present-day reality. Examine issues that persist as well as improvements for change.
5. Consider the role the Ethical Standards play in this case. Which standards could be used as a guide for this teacher's behaviour and attitudes?
6. Based on the standards, what advice would you give to teachers who work with exceptional students?

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Reality Bites

“Katherine, I need to talk to you and Tom immediately!” insists Sarah Brown, an enthusiastic and dedicated Kindergarten teacher.

I bristle, “Oh no! Not another complaint about the lack of red and yellow paint in the Kindergarten classrooms.”

It is the last week of August at Saint Matthias School, a busy elementary school in an upscale neighbourhood south of the city. Teachers scurry about the building organizing textbooks, notebooks, paper and pencils for their students. Parents, anxiously awaiting the arrival of the new school year, continually question the secretary about just one more detail.

Tom Adams, the newly appointed vice-principal, and I are frantically trying to schedule interviews for four long-term occasional teaching positions. A pile of rising telephone messages, reminders and requests for meetings gathers outside of my office door.

Sarah grows persistent. “Katherine, I know you will want to hear about the telephone call I just received from a parent. In fact, Mrs. Walker will probably call you. I told her she should really speak to you.”

Frustrated, I put my pen down and take a deep breath, as I know I must deal with this situation. I know Sarah would not bother me if the issue were not important, yet I’m annoyed by the interruption, and just as everything seemed to be falling into place.

“Sarah and Tom, come into my office.”

As she sits down, Sarah sighs. “My goodness! I don’t know how I will ever cope with this little boy!” She begins to describe her concerns. “Mrs. Walker called me because her son Anthony is going to start school in my classroom. She says she wants to forewarn me about Anthony’s behaviour problems. Mrs. Walker claims her son

doesn’t listen, has no fear, can’t sit still for two minutes and bites!” The words tumble out of Sarah’s mouth. “The mother didn’t want to tell any one at school about Anthony’s problems because she was afraid we wouldn’t allow Anthony to attend Kindergarten. However, his pediatrician and the staff at the daycare urged her to call and inform me of Anthony’s behaviour.”

Sarah, beginning to look frantic, continues, “It gets worse. Last year Anthony bit one of the staff at the daycare centre very severely. Mrs. Walker says there is now an extra staff person at the daycare just to watch Anthony. She wonders if we can get some additional help, too, because she doesn’t know how he will behave in a class of 20 four-year-old children. Is there any way you can get some help for me?” asks Sarah, obviously rattled, “because I really don’t know how I will manage to keep the other children safe.”

A sinking feeling descends on me. I try to ignore the nagging questions nudging at my brain, “How will we cope with this child? Will the school board provide an educational assistant for him? What if he bites another child or the teacher? Does inclusion really work for children like Anthony, who pose a threat?”

I feel confused, angry and scared. Anthony’s parents should have informed us of his behaviour problems long before the end of August! It seems as if they already distrust us. Mrs. Walker has admitted to the teacher that she shared the information only under duress. I know I will have to put forth tremendous effort in order to establish a positive relationship with Mr. and Mrs. Walker, while at the same time I must set out clear expectations and consequences for Anthony’s behaviour.

Suddenly another thought courses through my brain. I picture Sarah’s classroom filled with innocent little children – boys and girls who might go home with severe welts and bite marks on their shoulders and arms. I, too, begin to feel anxious.

If the parents of the other students in Anthony's class hear about the harm Anthony poses, they might demand immediate action from me, from the school board, even from the Ministry of Education!

Sarah's next question jolts me from my reverie and back into the discussion. "Katherine, you do realize that Julie, the little girl with Down's Syndrome, will also be in my class?" I try desperately to hide my own anxiety as I attempt to reassure Sarah.

Sarah blanches, slouches in her chair, her shoulders drop.

"Try not to worry, Sarah. I will call the board office today to see if we can have another educational assistant. I really think you will need another adult with you at all times in the classroom. In the meantime, let's pass on this information to Rosa, the special education resource teacher. We will also need to hold a team meeting before Anthony begins school."

I work quickly to telephone Anthony's parents and schedule a meeting. During the first week of school, Mr. and Mrs. Walker meet with Tom, Sarah, Rosa and me. Reluctantly, the parents share much more information about Anthony.

"Anthony is a lovely, bright little boy," begins Mrs. Walker. "He was a normal, affectionate child until he was 18 months of age. Then he began biting for no reason – his baby sister, other children, adults and especially people in authority." Mrs. Walker continues, "Finally I put Anthony in daycare when he was two-and-a-half years old. He was so aggressive that I was fearful of him killing his younger sister."

"Have you sought medical advice?" I ask Mr. and Mrs. Walker.

"Oh yes," replies the mother. "I'm fed up because no one can figure out why he acts this way. Dr. Andrews, Anthony's pediatrician, has ruled out Asperger Syndrome. She thinks he has Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and wants to put him on Ritalin. However, Anthony

also has petit mal seizures. Dr. Wong, the neurologist, believes that Ritalin will interfere with the anti-seizure medication."

"We are looking for another neurologist," adds Mr. Walker. "That Dr. Wong has some weird ideas. He doesn't believe us when we describe Anthony's behaviour to him. So he wants us to videotape Anthony at home for a weekend and send the tape to him. Who has time for that?"

"Have any other agencies or organizations been involved with Anthony?" enquires the vice-principal.

"Yes," replies Mr. Walker, "Southside Behaviour Management. The daycare invited them to become involved with our son. They visited our home on five occasions. Then we kicked them out. We had no privacy. I will not permit that agency to become involved with my son." Mr. Walker turns his head away from me, refusing eye contact.

At that moment Mrs. Walker notices the look of bewilderment on my face. "Those people from Southside Behaviour Management were nothing but trouble," she explains. "They kept insinuating that we were the cause of Anthony's problems.

"We also worked with 'Children's Access to Care.' That's the agency that managed to get additional staff at the daycare because of Anthony's biting. But they won't be involved with him once he begins school."

Suddenly Mrs. Walker becomes defensive. "I knew we never should have agreed to attend this meeting," she says. "I can tell you have labelled Anthony as a bad boy. You won't give him a fair chance."

Although I have been listening, careful not to make any judgemental comments, I begin to feel uneasy. "Exactly what does she expect of us?" I wonder. I attempt to assuage Mrs. Walker's worries, reassuring her that we will do everything possible to ensure Anthony's success at school.

“However, you must understand that I have an obligation to ensure the safety of the other children. If Anthony bites another child, he will be sent home.”

Mrs. Walker speaks up, “Anthony is our son. He is an amazing little boy who can be very affectionate. Just because he bites ... now you think he is a monster who poses a threat to the other children. I don’t see why you are planning to send him home just because he bites.”

Silently, I agree with Mrs. Walker. I do, in fact, view her son as a threat to the safety of the other children and to the staff. I wish they would decide to leave him at the daycare centre where they have additional support for him.

Sarah speaks up. “Mr. and Mrs. Walker, I observed Anthony the other day at the daycare centre. He is indeed a lovely child. I know how much you love him and want him to succeed in Kindergarten. Let’s set up a daily communication book between home and school. Perhaps we can talk on the telephone weekly about Anthony’s progress.”

“Would you be willing to have the child and youth counsellor work with Anthony?” asks Rosa, the special education resource teacher. She also requests the parents’ permission to have the social worker involved with Anthony. Reluctantly, Mr. and Mrs. Walker agree.

“Dr. Andrews is planning to complete a pediatric assessment on Anthony in November,” states Mr. Walker, “so we don’t need any tests done at school.” Both Mr. and Mrs. Walker look miserable as they hurriedly depart my office.

Much later that day, Tom and I spend a few moments reflecting on the team meeting. “Anthony is going to be our greatest challenge this year,” I predict.

“Can you imagine Mr. and Mrs. Walker’s reaction if we call them to take Anthony home?” questions Tom.

I wonder out loud how we are ever going to face the obstacles surrounding Anthony and his

aggressive behaviour. Will we have enough assistance in the classroom? What about Sarah? Will she communicate her needs to us? Will Sarah feel that we have supported her? How will the other children react to Anthony?

The end of a long day was closing at Saint Matthias School. I left for home with numerous questions, few answers and a growing feeling of unease.

Group Inquiry

What Are the Facts: Who? What? Where? When?

Analysis & Reflections: Analyze the problem(s) from the viewpoints of the different people in the case using the reflective questions or charts (see Appendix IV and V) following the case as a guide to explore, extend or discover information.

Evaluation: Examine critically the teacher’s strategies for handling the problem(s).

Alternative Solutions & Explanations: Generate alternative solutions and explanations to the ones presented in the narrative. Take into consideration the risks and benefits as well as the long and short-term consequences of each proposed action.

Principles of Practice: Formulate some generalizations about effective practice. Remember that the Standards of Practice and the Ethical Standards are guiding principles for teacher action.

What Is This a Case of? Link this resource to more general categories. Rich cases suggest many themes, issues and layers of interpretation. A rich case is a case of many things.

Changing Opinions: Who or what has caused you to consider a new way of thinking? How strongly do you still feel about your previous assumptions?

Reflecting on the Case

1. What are the facts of the case?
2. Describe the context for this story.
3. What is the main dilemma that the principal faces?
4. Consider the perspectives of:
 - the Walkers
 - Anthony
 - the parents of Anthony's schoolmates
 - Sarah
 - Rosa
 - the day-care center
 - the school board.
5. What processes and diagnoses have the Walkers participated in? How have the parents reacted to the barrage of information? What have the Walkers decided are their rights in this situation? What do you think are their responsibilities to Anthony and to the school?
6. What risks are being taken by both home and school, and are they warranted?
7. Evaluate the educators' suggestions for Anthony. How appropriate are they? Consult the standards. Does any one domain of the standards provide support for interventions?
8. Even after meeting with the Walkers and putting safeguards into place, the principal does not feel at ease. What are her fears? Why?
9. What is this a case of?

Further Inquiry

1. The school personnel are presented as a collaborative team. What suggestions would you make to a school group that works with exceptional students and their parents?
2. Examine the standards for statements on leadership. How can educational staff at all

levels prepare to be leaders as well as advocates for children in special education?

3. Transitions can be difficult for all children, but especially for children with special needs. What resources or supports need to be put in place to facilitate effective transitions?
4. Which Ethical Standards are evident in this case? Which Ethical Standards might be stronger to help with this dilemma?

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Abandoning Ship

“This is the last straw! After months of bickering, complaining about each other and causing tension among the staff, John and Janice have finally done it.” Allison, the principal, shakes her head as she looks out of her office window. It is six o’clock on a beautiful June evening and she should be going home, but she is too tired to even move.

Allison is thinking about the Grade 7 and 8 divisional meeting that has just finished. It was the last planning meeting before the Québec excursion for the intermediate students the following Tuesday. Just as the last details are being finalized, John tells Allison that he cannot supervise his Grade 8 class in Québec because he has injured his foot playing touch football with his friends on the weekend, and he can’t do all the walking that the trip to Québec requires.

Allison’s first reaction is to say what is on her mind. “John, I don’t understand. I saw you earlier today in the schoolyard, playing soccer with your students during a gym class. Was your foot not hurting then?”

But Allison knows better. She believes that if John thought that she was questioning his decision, he would claim harassment. John has made it quite clear all year that extracurricular activities cannot be mandated by her or the board, and no one should feel pressured into participating in such activities.

Allison merely says, “That is too bad, John. We shall miss you.” Inwardly, she is angry, but she makes herself smile and walks slowly back to her office, wondering what can possibly happen next? She doesn’t have to wait long before she receives the answer: Allison hears a knock on her office door, and Janice walks in.

“Allison, may I speak with you?”

“Of course, Janice. Come in and sit down.”

“Allison, first of all, thank you for working with me on the presentation for my Master’s course in educational leadership. I really appreciated your

expertise and support. But last night while I was working on my presentation I realized that the date that I have to present to the course group is the Thursday night when I will be in Québec with my class. I am really sorry, but I am going to have to back out of the Québec trip. I hope you understand.”

Allison is stunned. She just looks at Janice and doesn’t really know what to say. Allison has her suspicions about this turn of events because John and Janice are very supportive of each other. Unless one agrees to something concerning school activities, the other doesn’t agree either. However, Allison holds her tongue, stymied.

“You realize, Janice, this puts the school in a bind. It is rather late to find another supervisor, since the trip is next Tuesday.”

“I’m sorry, but it can’t be helped. You know how anxious I am to complete my Master’s degree.”

Allison is a first-year principal. Her elementary school is in a quiet neighbourhood in which many of the mothers do not work outside the home. Consequently, there is no shortage of volunteers in the school. Parents are always in the school, helping teachers.

But the parents can also be demanding of the teachers. Some bad feelings exist among the staff because parents gossip and criticize the ways various teachers teach and control their classes. The school council is active, but many of the members seem to have forgotten that their role is advisory. They are quick to demand services from the teachers and want to pry into almost every aspect of school life.

Teachers feel resentful because they surmise that parents play a greater role in decision-making in the school than they should. When Allison met with the previous principal, she was told that the staff was competent and dedicated, but the Grade 7 and 8 teachers posed a problem because they did not work well together as a team.

John and Janice have been at the school for over 10 years, and besides supporting one another, they are friends. The other two intermediate teachers, who teach Grade 7 and 8, are relatively new on staff. They have been at the school for only three years, but are already popular with staff, students and parents.

Tension exists in the intermediate division because early on John and Janice announced to these new teachers that the Grade 7 and 8 students would be treated like secondary school students, having a homeroom and a full rotary for other subjects.

The new teachers tried unsuccessfully for three years to make changes in the rotary schedule because they felt that this arrangement did not benefit students experiencing academic challenges, and that the scheduling actually contributed to discipline problems. It was almost impossible for these four teachers to plan together because every discussion, whether it was how to teach a particular unit in language, or how to submit marks for the report cards for the rotary subjects, ended up with John and Janice pitted against the other two teachers.

All four had agreed to take the Grade 7 and 8 students to Québec because the trip had become a tradition, and they were well aware of parental antagonism if the trip were to be cancelled. It had taken all of Allison's skills and patience to work out the plan with these teachers for the excursion, and now this ...

Since September, Allison has had to intervene numerous times to help alleviate the tension in the intermediate division. Parents volunteering in the school have complained that John and Janice are sarcastic and critical of the other two teachers in front of the students. A few parents have even called Allison to advise her that John made a negative comment about one of the other Grade 8 teachers during a bus ride on an excursion to Midland last year.

Now it was Tuesday, and in one week, over 88 students would go to Québec, and two out of the four classroom teachers had backed out. As Allison was deciding what her next move should be, the telephone rang and she thought, "Six o'clock is not a good time to answer the phone. It must be a complaint. Who else would call at this hour?" Sure enough, the chair of the school council was telephoning to demand a meeting for all of the Grade 7 and 8 parents in order to discuss the teachers' withdrawal from the Québec trip.

Allison seethed with annoyance, "How could the chairperson possibly know so quickly about this turn of events?" Then she remembered the woman had a daughter in Janice's class. This was the second time this year that Janice had revealed information to students before informing the principal first.

Allison was fuming by this time, inwardly ready to boil over, as the chairperson of the school council began her harangue. "Why can't these teachers just learn to co-operate with one other and work together? Only four weeks left of school, and they still won't let up. Where is their commitment to our students?"

Allison tried to be calm as she attempted to placate the woman. She spoke in a confident manner, "Let me do some investigation before we call a meeting. I need some time to make alternate arrangements for supervision. I assure you that I will call you back by Thursday morning, and we will set up a meeting for Friday night." Allison knew that the chair was not happy with her decision, but it would have to do.

The next day, Allison approached Janice. "Janice, would you like me to talk with your instructor, and ask if he could give you an alternate date? I would be glad to explain your predicament. I have done this in the past with someone else in another course, and I've always found the instructors to be very understanding and flexible."

“No. I would rather just get my presentation over with.” Janice lowered her eyes.

Later that day, Allison called John to her office and offered to rent a wheelchair to help him with his walking tour of Québec. He refused.

Allison immediately telephoned her superintendent to alert him to the situation. The superintendent advised her not to approach John and Janice again about their refusal to participate on the trip because they might perceive it as harassment. The superintendent told Allison that he would pay for supply teachers if Allison wanted to take supply teachers as supervisors on the trip, but preferred that Allison ask other staff members to accompany the students to Québec. He volunteered to pay for supply teachers to cover their classes. Allison informed the superintendent that so far her request had not produced any results, so she hesitantly decided on the plan to use supply teachers to supervise the trip and thanked him for the financial support.

Late Wednesday afternoon, Allison called a divisional meeting and informed the four teachers that the school council was holding an emergency meeting on Friday night to discuss alternative supervision for the Québec trip. She related to them the superintendent’s proposal to use supply teachers.

Allison explained that she had received numerous telephone calls from irate parents who were concerned for the safety of their children. She also knew from the secretary, but did not mention this to the teachers, that John and Janice had also received numerous phone calls from parents during the day, and the conversations were heated.

Late Thursday afternoon, Janice entered Allison’s office and said that she had reversed her decision and would consent to go on the trip; however, John remained steadfast in his decision.

The parent meeting was set for Friday evening and Allison continued to attempt to enlist the assistance of other staff for the trip. She was uneasy, telling the parents that the fourth chaperone was a supply teacher. She fretted,

“Chaos is going to erupt. More teacher bashing! More principal bashing! Who needs this? Maybe next year, no overnight trip at all!”

Although Janice had changed her plans, the situation remained troublesome. The parents of the Grade 7 and 8 students were angry with the number of changes, blaming the entire staff, labelling them “irresponsible.” All of the staff felt that they had been pressured and wrongly put upon by both principal and parents. The children sensed the tension and the trip was undermined by the niggling acrimonious conflicts that Allison had tried to mitigate. Even the teachers who had committed to the trip initially lamented that they had been tarred with the same brush, dragged into the turmoil by community reaction. Allison was miserable, reflecting, “What a way to end a school year!”

Epilogue: The trip did go on, but with some difficulty. On the way to Québec, one student was left behind in Kingston when the group stopped for lunch. The student was not missed by anyone on the bus until he called his mother, who then called the bus company, which alerted the principal on the bus. The bus had to return to Kingston to pick up the student. The principal had to deal with this issue when she returned from Québec.

Group Inquiry

What Are the Facts: Who? What? Where? When?

Analysis & Reflections: Analyze the problem(s) from the viewpoints of the different people in the case using the reflective questions or charts (see Appendix IV and V) following the case as a guide to explore, extend or discover information.

Evaluation: Examine critically the teacher's strategies for handling the problem(s).

Alternative Solutions & Explanations:

Generate alternative solutions and explanations to the ones presented in the narrative. Take into consideration the risks and benefits as well as the long and short-term consequences of each proposed action.

Principles of Practice: Formulate some generalizations about effective practice. Remember that the Standards of Practice and the Ethical Standards are guiding principles for teacher action.

What Is This a Case of? Link this resource to more general categories. Rich cases suggest many themes, issues and layers of interpretation. A rich case is a case of many things.

Changing Opinions: Who or what has caused you to consider a new way of thinking? How strongly do you still feel about your previous assumptions?

Reflecting on the Case

1. What are the facts in the case?
2. What problems does the principal face:
 - with John and Janice
 - with the other Grade 7 and 8 teachers
 - with the students
 - with the school community
 - with the staff
 - with herself.
3. Consider the perspectives of each of the above.
4. What issues impact on the principal's ability to take action?
5. What skills does the principal use in her attempts to avert a difficult situation?
6. What skills does the principal use to reconcile the elements of the dilemma?
7. Evaluate the principal's effectiveness. What Standards might she have been considering that prompted her decisions?
8. What are the pressure points in this case?
9. What ethical issues reside at the heart of the issue(s)?
10. Evaluate Allison's solutions. Consider the epilogue in conjunction with the case. What might you have done in a similar situation? Were there means available to resolve all of the conflicts and satisfy all of the stakeholders? Discuss those avenues of redress.
11. What role could the Standards play as a means of reconciling or providing a way towards resolving conflicts in this case?
12. What is this a case of?

Further Inquiry

1. The words and phrases reflective practitioner, school team and collaboration have begun to appear in school documents. How might a principal insert these concepts into the daily life of a school in a meaningful way?
2. School trips can pose many challenges. What can a school community do to create positive situations for all concerned?
3. Are there elements you might add to the standard, Leadership in Learning Communities? Explain, with consideration for all parties' perspectives.
4. Which Ethical Standards underline the dilemmas in this case? What does your insight reveal?

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Facilitator Guide: Using the Case Method

What Is a Case?

A case is a carefully crafted narrative with a real-life dilemma. Each case has:

- an authentic dilemma, conflict or tension
- a context or contexts that are integral to the dilemma (classroom, staff room, school yard, educational community)
- the author's inner thoughts and attempts to problem solve, often written as a first-person account
- ambiguity – particularly ambiguous endings that invite discussion
- complexity – because teaching is complex
- a theoretical claim because a case is a case “of” something
- a situation that occurs frequently in education
- a narrative or story that involves observations, perspectives and conversations from a variety of participants
- no one right answer to the dilemma(s).

The Case Method

The case is a catalyst for examining teacher practice. The participants list facts, raise issues, evaluate and propose solutions based on what they might do in similar situations. This is a starting point. Hearing their colleagues' voices, the group should analyze its own processes by listening to one another, debating alternative and diverse views, and asking themselves, how does this effect me? Once engaged, participants might speculate on how to use this newly acquired information, and then contemplate short and long-term implications on student learning.

A facilitator does not direct, but listens, responds and records. A facilitator is also a participant, involved and interested in the discussion. The case discussion is a vicarious experience, a give and take of ideas, a focused inquiry into practice to explore consequences of actions.

The case discussion also serves as preparation for group members to consider situations in their own practice. The facilitator may probe deeply into an area raised by the participants. The facilitator also provides a theoretical framework such as the *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession* and the *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession* that will connect abstract principles of practice to the practical examples in the cases.

Using the language from the standards as well as the group members' own experiences validates and empowers group members as teachers capable of directing their own practice. This shared endeavour of case analysis that entwines discussion based on personal practice with the theoretical guiding principles of the standards binds practice with theory. It establishes a context for the group as problem-solvers and action researchers, and promotes a culture of inquiry.

Facilitating a Case Decision

Setting the Tone

Smile, nod, encourage. Use group members' names. Encourage all group members to participate. Sometimes body language will suggest that a person would like to respond but needs encouragement.

Establish a respectful, supportive environment in which all group members feel valued and safe to speak out honestly and share their concerns. Activities like icebreakers or community-builders create laughter and break down solitude so that participants feel that they belong to the group.

Focusing Your Reading

Invite group members to read the case with a pen, using marginalia and underlining facts, pressure points and any element that bothers or surprises, or that motivates action in the narrative.

Responding to the Case Individually

Individuals will reflect in writing on the case before entering into a discussion with the group.

Identifying the Facts

Ask group members to list the facts of the case. This is important because participants should have a shared understanding of the story's events. By looking closely at evidence in the text, an opinion swap is avoided. Contributing literal facts in a group promotes a comfort level for those who are unsure or reticent about contributing incorrect information.

Identifying the Dilemma

Once the context, characters and conflicts have been established, invite participants to identify the issues. If participants are not forthcoming with responses, you might make this a table or small-group activity and have one person become the reporter so they can share each small group's consensus with the larger group. List issues, point out dilemmas and raise questions. Ask the entire group which issue they would like to investigate. Allow the participants to decide where to begin. You, as a facilitator, are not directing or pushing your authority onto the group.

Considering Multiple Perspectives

Delve deeply into the issue selected. Ask open questions. Try to keep your biases to yourself. Your questions should not lead, but help group members unravel and unscramble puzzling elements. Discuss the conflicts or tensions from the perspectives of all story participants. Encourage the group to consider the dilemma from multiple points of view. Each case should possess many layers of rich meaning at a variety of levels.

Generating Alternative Solutions

Since the dilemma is at the core of the narrative, it is important to focus on it. Evaluate the solution(s) presented in the case. Speculate or generate alternative solutions to the problem(s). Have group members postulate short and long-term consequences for proposed solutions. What would happen if...? In this way, the group

investigates the short and long-term impact and consequences of a variety of solutions

Identifying the Concept

Ask what is this a case of? Again, there is no one right answer. The answers, if participants were discussing *How Hard Could It Be to Teach Special Education?* (page 9), might be a case of new teacher insecurity, classroom management, teaching strategies, mentorship, school support, professional knowledge, community building ...

Connecting Cases to Principles of Practice

Group members, map back to the standards or examine the situation in light of the standards, considering which standards are evident in or absent from the story. They discuss the teacher's described practice. Where in the story are the standards observable and where might the standards provide a vision for growth or remediation or celebration? Group members may choose to map back individually or in larger groups.

Responding to the Case After Group Discussion

Individuals will reflect on the group discussion and write down their insights.

Writing Commentaries

The group or individual participants may choose to write a brief comment on any aspect of the case.

Connecting to Personal Practices

The group members might discuss their own experiences in light of the case. They could even craft their own cases in written form. Having tested principles of practice in the case and having established standards as their theoretical frame, participants might recall a personal dilemma of practice, reflect and explore a new approach for an old problem. The process should promote informed decision-making and renewed confidence in themselves as professionals.

Appendix I

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 Purposes 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* is 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.

Appendix II

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 practice of members of the Ontario College of Teachers.

The Purposes 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 leadership roles in facilitating 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.

Appendix III

Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession

Professional learning is at the heart of teacher professionalism. The *Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession* describes and acknowledges the great variety of opportunities for ongoing professional learning available to its members.

The *Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession* provides for this growth and development through the identification of accredited pre-service and in-service programs of professional teaching education and a wide range of other learning opportunities. All of these opportunities, designed to improve practice and enhance student learning, are an integral part of the *Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession*.

Following their pre-service training, members of the College can complete courses or programs that are identified in Regulation 184/97 Teachers' Qualifications, made under the Ontario College of Teachers Act. These courses or programs are accredited by the College and offered by registered providers. When a member successfully completes one of these courses or programs, it is recorded on the Certificate of Qualification.

However, members of the College stay current and up-to-date in many ways beyond completing Additional Qualification courses and programs.

Educators can participate in or facilitate professional development activities, mentor colleagues, join professional networks engage in research activities and read books and articles about educational issues.

Educators participate in learning opportunities offered by their employers, the Ministry of Education, faculties of education, professional organizations, federations and subject associations.

Through this professional learning, College members demonstrate a commitment to continued professional growth.

By developing the *Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession*, the Ontario College of Teachers addresses its legislated mandate to “provide for the ongoing education of members of the College, including professional learning required to maintain certificates of qualification and registration.” It also informs the public of the many ways educators remain knowledgeable and current.

The *Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession* has informed and supported the development of the Professional Learning Program (PLP). The professional learning experiences catalogued in the framework have been the starting point for the kinds of activities recognized in the PLP.

The *Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession*:

- acknowledges the commitment members of the teaching profession make to professional learning
- highlights a range of options to improve practice and enhance student learning
- identifies programs and professional learning activities accredited or approved by the College
- assists members of the College to identify, collect, reflect upon and celebrate their learning experiences and accomplishments
- assures the profession and the public that members of the College have the opportunity through professional learning to remain current through out their careers.

The *Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession* supports the following principles:

- The goals of professional learning are the ongoing improvement of practice. Teacher learning is directly correlated to student learning. The *Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession* encourages learning activities based on provincial legislation and policy, system needs, personal growth needs and student-learning needs. The *Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Professional* so encourages members of the College to identify and pursue their strengths and personal interests to further their professional learning
- Standards-based professional learning provides for an integrated approach to teacher education. All programs and professional learning activities accredited by the College must be designed to support the *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession* and the *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession*.
- Exemplary professional learning opportunities are based on the principles of effective learning. The framework takes into account individual career and personal priorities. It outlines professional learning activities that are varied, flexible, and accessible to members of the College.
- Teachers plan for and reflect on their professional learning. Responsible life-long learning is continuous learning that is initiated by members of the College and directed and reviewed by them on an ongoing basis.
- Learning communities enhance professional learning. The *Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession* encourages collaboration. It supports ongoing commitment to the improvement and currency of teaching practice as an individual and collective responsibility.

Appendix IV

Using Cases and the Standards: Mapping Back to the Standards of Practice

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.

In the case, I found the following examples of Commitment to Students and Student Learning:

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.

In the case, I found the following examples of Professional Knowledge:

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.

In the case, I found the following examples of Professional Practice:

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.

In the case, I found the following examples of Leadership in 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.

In the case, I found the following examples of Ongoing Professional Learning:

Appendix V

Using Cases and the Standards: Mapping Back to the Ethical Standards

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.

RESPECT

Intrinsic to the ethical standard of Respect is 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.

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.

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

In the Case, I found the following examples of the Ethical Standards:



Ontario
College of
Teachers

Ordre des
enseignantes et
des enseignants
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