

An exploration of teachers' ethics training

by

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

MAGISTER EDUCATIONIS
(Educational Psychology)

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November 2021

Declaration

I, Phumzile Kunene (15267912), declare that the dissertation, which I hereby submit for the degree Magister Educationis in Educational Psychology at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not been previously submitted by me for any degree at this or any other tertiary institution.



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November 2021

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INVESTIGATOR	Ms Phumzile Kunene
DEPARTMENT	Educational Psychology
APPROVAL TO COMMENCE STUDY	02 April 2020
DATE OF CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	07 October 2021

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Ethics Statement

The author, whose name appears on the title page of this dissertation, has obtained, for the research described in this work, the applicable research ethics approval. The author declares that she has observed the ethical standards required in terms of the University of Pretoria's *Code of ethics for researchers and the Policy guidelines for responsible research*.



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November 2021

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Acknowledgements

I would not have achieved this milestone without the support of significant role players in my life. I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to the following people who contributed towards me completing this mini-dissertation:

- ❖ My supervisor, Dr Suzanne Bester. Thank you for your invaluable advice and guidance throughout this research process and for developing an awareness in me that has transformed me into a better writer.
- ❖ My dad, Jabulani Kunene. Thank you for your patience, reassurance and the sacrifices you have made to ensure that I am able to follow my dreams.
- ❖ My mom, Lindiwe Kunene. Thank you for your prayers and for the many days you emphasized that I am capable. You build me up, always.
- ❖ My family and friends. Thank you for your unwavering love and support.
- ❖ My classmate and friend, Aarifah Karrim. Thank you for making this process less lonely, for being the person I could ask for help and for keeping me motivated.
- ❖ The school management team of the selected secondary school. Thank you for your kindness and for granting me the opportunity to learn from your staff.
- ❖ The participants in my study. Thank you for your willingness to participate and for offering your valuable time to share your opinions and experiences with me.
- ❖ My aunt, Khanyisile Tshite and her wonderful friend, Ma' Sonto Maseko. Thank you for your support during the data collection phase of this study. I appreciate you extending yourselves beyond my expectations.
- ❖ Finally, my brother, Njabulo Kunene. You are my driving force, I am because you are. I love you.

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Abstract

The purpose of this exploratory case study was to explore and describe the experiences of seven teachers at a mainstream, secondary school in Johannesburg on the ethics training they received in their undergraduate years. The conceptual framework of this study was guided by constructs from the professional ethics perspective, deontological theory, consequentialist theory and virtue ethics. An interpretive paradigm and qualitative research methodology were used to understand participants' experience of ethics training and how it equipped them to make ethical decisions in their daily work. Data were generated through a focus group and the findings suggested that the participants had contradictory experiences with some having received ethics training that was integrated into modules in their programme while others reported not receiving any ethics training at all. All the participants felt that their training was inadequate and they experienced feelings of uncertainty when required to make ethical decisions. In the absence of adequate training, they relied on cultural and religious beliefs, their personal values, their own understanding of right and wrong and the constitution to resolve ethical dilemmas. The participants recommended that future in-service and undergraduate ethics training should reflect the contexts in which they work. It should also emotionally equip them to manage moral stress and enable them to have an adequate understanding of their moral responsibilities.

Key words:

- Ethics training
- Undergraduate training
- Ethical dilemmas
- In-service training
- Moral stress

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To whom it may concern

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List of Abbreviations

AAE	Association of American Educators
AITSL	Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
Covid-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
ICT	Information and communications technology
L	Line
NAEYC	National Association for the Education of Young Children
P	Participant
QCT	Queensland College of Teachers
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SACE	South African Council of Educators
SMT	School Management Team

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

Morality is always at play in classrooms whether intentionally or not, either through moral education or moral development. Teachers have to teach sensitive or ethical topics relating to social justice or conflict resolution. Furthermore, they are expected to be models that enable learners to develop a set of values consistent with the fundamental rights of humans (Maphosa et al., 2015; Osguthorpe & Sanger, 2013).

Quality teachers are considered to be those whose beliefs and values are embedded in trust and high standards of professional ethics (Betweli, 2013; Maphosa et al., 2015). These are teachers who can maintain professional relationships with learners, provide constructive encouragement, discourage discrimination, advocate for altruistic behaviour, and promote gender equality (Betweli, 2013; Maphosa et al., 2015).

Considering the moral responsibility that teachers have, there is growing concern regarding how teachers are trained to assume such responsibility (Boon, 2011; Boon & Maxwell, 2016; Maxwell & Schwimmer, 2016). Evidence suggests that the ethics training of teachers does not adequately prepare them for the moral aspect of their work (Maxwell, 2017; Maxwell et al., 2016) and that they lack a professional language for the moral phenomena they encounter and the ability to address the complexity of the moral judgements they must make (Bullough, 2011; Colnerud, 2015).

Although there is expanding research that speaks to the existence and outcomes of ethical training in teacher education programmes, research remains limited. International studies suggest that teacher education programmes have not met the standards set by other professions with regard to prioritising ethics education (Maxwell, 2017; Maxwell et al., 2016). Therefore, scholars in this field have invested in accumulating knowledge of whether or not ethics education is adequately addressed in teacher education programmes (Maxwell, 2017; Maxwell et al., 2016).

Additionally, the limited studies conducted in South Africa seem to only focus on the professional conduct of teachers and the value of ensuring that teachers behave according to professional standards (Kimathi & Rusznyak, 2018; Maphosa et al., 2015; SADTU Curtis Nkondo Professional Development Institute, 2017). It is not yet known

how ethics training is being conducted in teacher education programmes or rather, how teachers are trained to understand their ethical obligations (Kimathi & Rusznyak, 2018).

This is concerning as teachers are required to make ethical decisions that implicate the well-being, personal development, and academic achievement of learners (Betweli, 2013; Maphosa et al., 2015; Maxwell et al., 2016). Society imposes on teachers moral standards that are higher than average, partly because they are assigned the responsibility of shaping future citizens (Maphosa et al., 2015). Teachers can only help produce individuals who have the wisdom to know right from wrong, who are honest, trustworthy, fair, respectful, responsible, and accountable, if they are sufficiently trained to do so (Maphosa et al., 2015).

Therefore, critical to the value and logic of this research study was to fill the existing gap in the literature by exploring how teachers were trained on ethics in their undergraduate programmes. Furthermore, to enquire whether this training has equipped them to make ethical decisions and what their future training needs might be. Such an exploration will contribute to the body of knowledge regarding ethical training in the teaching profession. Additionally, the findings of this research study can inform teacher training and potentially encourage workshops on ethical conduct in education.

Through exposure to family members who are in the teaching profession, I have observed the complex ethical matters that arise in their daily work and how they have felt unprepared to address these matters due to inadequate ethics training. I have observed the immense pressure they experience to make ethical decisions that benefit learners but simultaneously, the doubt they often feel after a decision has been made. Therefore, this observation of discomfort and indecisive decision making was the basis of my interest in this research inquiry. As an advocate for teacher support, I believe that for teachers to fulfil what is required of them, it is important to know what support exists that enables them to adequately carry out their responsibilities.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this exploratory case study was to explore and describe the ethics training teachers received during their undergraduate training. For this research study, ethics is broadly defined as a system of moral principles that guide people in making

decisions and how they lead their lives (White & Howard, 2017). Furthermore, ethical training is defined as the learning that teachers experienced in their undergraduate programmes to develop ethically (Ben-Jacob et al., 2018; Walters et al., 2018).

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.3.1 PRIMARY RESEARCH QUESTION

What are the experiences of seven mainstream secondary school teachers in South Africa, of the ethics training they received during their undergraduate training?

1.3.2 SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study also posed the following sub-questions:

- ❖ How are teachers trained on ethics?
- ❖ How has teachers' training equipped them to make ethical decisions?
- ❖ What are teachers' future ethics training needs?

1.4 WORKING ASSUMPTIONS

This study will be based on the following assumptions:

- Teachers may not have received adequate training on ethics.
- Teachers have sufficient knowledge on whether the ethics training equipped them to make ethical decisions.
- Teachers are faced with ethical dilemmas.
- Teachers know what their future ethics training needs are.

1.5 CONCEPT CLARIFICATION

The key concepts of the study, which are ethics education, ethical dilemmas, and moral stress are clarified below.

1.5.1 ETHICS TRAINING

Ethics education is defined as the training of teachers on acceptable standards of behaviour in their profession (Walters et al., 2018). It intends to increase teachers' ethical awareness and understanding, develop ethical character traits, and increase

motivation to act ethically (Boon, 2011; Lau, 2010). For the present research, ethics education refers to the training of teachers on how they ought to behave and how to make responsible ethical decisions.

1.5.2 ETHICAL DILEMMAS

An ethical dilemma is a conversation with the self about available ethical options and entails deciding between two or more courses of action. It is often difficult to decide which course of action to pursue because the available options all present with obstacles (Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2011). For the purpose of this research, ethical dilemmas refer to circumstances where teachers find it difficult to make an ethical decision because each course of action requires them to violate or compromise an ethical standard.

1.5.3 MORAL STRESS

Moral stress is defined as a psychological state marked by unrest, because of the uncertainty about one's ability to fulfil moral obligations (Thunman, 2016). For the present research, the term "moral stress" refers to the psychological strain that teachers experience as a result of feelings of uncertainty when having to make ethical decisions.

1.6 INTRODUCING THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK SUPPORTING THE STUDY

The conceptual framework of this research study was informed by the professional ethics perspective, deontology, consequentialism, and virtue ethics.

The professional ethics perspective states that there are norms of professional conduct that teachers must adhere to (Belinova et al., 2017). This perspective argues that the focus of ethics education should be to familiarise pre-service teachers with these norms of professional conduct (Belinova et al., 2017; Ćurko et al., 2015; Maxwell & Schwimmer, 2016). The inclusion of the professional ethics perspective provided an understanding of the ethical standards that guide the behaviour of teachers.

In addition to the professional ethics perspective, the deontological perspective was included. Deontology is concerned with moral actions that obey rules or obligations and proposes that the moral status of an action is not dependent on the impact of the

consequences it yields (Gaus, 2001). The deontological perspective provided an understanding of how teachers' ethical decision making was informed by their role or duty as teachers.

Because of deontology's disregard of the impact of consequences, consequentialism in the conceptual framework as a supplement was included (Paquette et al., 2015). Consequentialists propose that the moral rightness of an action is solely dependent on the consequences or the outcome of that action, with the right action producing the best consequences (Paquette et al., 2015). The consequentialist perspective helped in understanding how consequences were the source of teachers' inner conflict when confronted with ethical dilemmas.

The conceptual framework also consisted of virtue ethics which emphasises moral character – it considers the role that virtues or dispositions play in ethical decision making (Driver, 2011). Virtue ethics provided an understanding of how teachers' personal values, character traits, and beliefs also informed their ethical decision making.

The conceptual framework is discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

1.7 OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY, APPROACH AND PROCESS

An interpretivist paradigm was utilised for this research study to gain a deeper understanding of teachers' experiences of their ethics training. In line with the selected paradigm, a qualitative research methodology was employed as it provided the means to gain rich, contextual data (Willig, 2013).

The research design that was utilised in this research study was an exploratory case study. The researcher conveniently selected seven teachers who were readily available to participate and a focus group was used to generate data on the research topic.

Audio recordings, transcriptions, field notes, and a reflective journal were used to document the data. Data were analysed through thematic analysis in which six phases were followed. These included familiarisation with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining themes, naming them, and producing the report.

Criteria of transferability, credibility, dependability, and confirmability were used to assess the rigour of this research study. Furthermore, the ethical considerations of this study included informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, privacy, no deception, and protection against harm (Willig, 2013).

A detailed explanation of the research methodology, approach, and process will be provided in Chapter 3.

1.8 SUMMARY

In this chapter, I discussed the rationale of the research study. I then provided the purpose of the research study and described the associated research questions. Clarification of the concepts that were used in this research study was also provided. Additionally, an overview of the conceptual framework of this study and the research approach and methodology were discussed. The next chapter will explore the literature on the ethics training of teachers.

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Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter commences with a discussion about what makes a teacher ethical. This section will detail how ethical conduct is defined or conceptualised in the teaching profession. This is followed by an overview of ethics education for teachers, contextualising what ethics education for teachers entails, its origins, and how teacher education programmes nationally and internationally are currently equipping teachers to make ethical decisions.

Subsequently, the inadequacies that have been identified in teachers' current ethics training both nationally and internationally will be foregrounded. This section highlights how teacher education programmes need to improve the time spent on ethics education, how teacher education programmes should consider the ethics of care and familiarise teachers with the conduct that is expected of them by their profession.

The chapter then focuses on how competent teachers feel to deal with the ethical dilemmas they are confronted with. This is to highlight how the ethics training of teachers internationally is currently not meeting teachers' ethical needs. As a result of this, future directions on how pre-service teachers can be trained on ethics are discussed. In this section, the approaches that have been suggested in scholarly literature, which teacher education programmes can potentially use to sufficiently train teachers on ethics, will be discussed. Thereafter, the psychological implications of the ethical dilemmas that teachers experience are discussed. This section creates an awareness of how teachers and learners are affected by the moral nature of the teaching profession.

This chapter concludes with a discussion of the conceptual framework that underlies this research study. The professional ethics perspective and theories such as deontology, consequentialism, and virtue ethics are discussed. Reference is then made to the relevance of this perspective and these theories to this research study.

2.2 BEING AN ETHICAL TEACHER

Ethical teachers respect the constitutional rights of learners and strive to enable learners to develop a set of values consistent with these rights (South African Council of Educators [SACE], 2000).¹ They foster virtues such as integrity, equality, diligence, responsibility, cooperation and respect (Association of American Educators [AAE], 1994).

Ethical teachers exercise their authority with compassion. This includes avoiding and protecting learners from any form of abuse, either physical, sexual, or psychological (SACE, 2000). They conduct themselves appropriately by refraining from improper conduct with learners and from using inappropriate language and behaviour when interacting with learners (SACE, 2000).

The teaching profession expects ethical teachers to deal with each learner in a considerable and just manner by acknowledging the uniqueness of a learner (AAE, 1994). This entails understanding the specific learning needs of each learner and assisting the learner to reach his or her potential (AAE, 1994; Queensland College of Teachers [QCT], n.d.; SACE, 2000).

The teaching profession also expects ethical teachers to conduct themselves appropriately when interacting with colleagues as well as the community (AAE, 1994). Such teachers value the diversity of the cultures represented in the community and respect the diversity of family backgrounds (AAE, 1994). They also treat colleagues with respect and work collaboratively with them in the best interest of education (QCT, n.d.).

Ethical teachers are expected by the teaching profession to behave in a way that maintains the dignity of the teaching profession. This includes not engaging in illegal activities or those considered to be inappropriate such as drug-taking (SACE, 2000). Such teachers ensure they keep abreast with educational developments, strive for professional growth, and assume responsibility and accountability for their performance (QCT, n.d.).

¹ Terms will be first described in full. Thereafter, their acronyms will be used.

2.3 ETHICS TRAINING FOR TEACHERS

Ethics training for teachers refers to the training of teachers on acceptable standards of behaviour in their profession (Boon, 2011). It entails developing teachers' awareness, understanding, and practical judgement regarding ethical matters (Walters et al., 2018).

In the early 20th century, in countries such as Australia, North America, and Europe, teacher education programmes were conducted in education colleges (Boon & Maxwell, 2016; Maxwell & Schwimmer, 2016). Pre-service teachers who were enrolled for a teacher education programme in these countries initially had to take modules such as Moral Philosophy and Ethics as part of their teaching course. This happened in their final year in order to set up their moral compass before they began their teaching career (Boon & Maxwell, 2016).

However, this approach to ethics education began to recede when these teacher education programmes were absorbed by universities in the 1940s. Emphasis was then placed on pedagogy, which is the technical skill related to teaching (Boon & Maxwell, 2016; Maxwell & Schwimmer, 2016).

Focus on training teachers to become moral models was reintroduced in the 1960s. This was to align teacher education with broader trends that were occurring in other professions with regard to ethics education (Maxwell & Schwimmer, 2016). Efforts to do this began in the United States when a report by The National Commission on Excellence in Education advocated that institutions responsible for teacher education programmes should reach a consensus concerning what constitutes teacher professionalism (Maxwell & Schwimmer, 2016).

In addition, a new discourse in scholarly teacher education literature advocated that teacher education programmes should now focus on familiarising pre-service teachers with an ethical code and ethical concepts (Campbell, 2000; Maxwell et al., 2015, 2016).

In the 1980s, scholarly literature also started emphasising the need to prioritise the ethical and moral dimensions of teaching (Boon & Maxwell, 2016; Maxwell & Schwimmer, 2016; Osguthorpe & Sanger, 2013; Soltis, 1986; Strike, 1990). The authors of this scholarly literature argued that the teaching profession was too focused on making teacher education an applied science when in actual fact, teaching was

more about transforming learners in ways that ensure they have good morals than it was about imparting knowledge and skills to learners (Boon & Maxwell, 2016; Maxwell & Schwimmer, 2016; Soltis, 1986; Strike, 1990).

Teacher education programmes in countries such as Australia and England have adopted two approaches. These programmes currently offer ethics education either as a stand-alone module or integrated into other modules, with the integrated approach being the most common (Boon & Maxwell, 2016; Walters et al., 2018). The objective of both approaches is to help pre-service teachers develop their philosophy of education by clarifying what they value. It is also to help pre-service teachers understand their professional ethical obligations, promote the professional values of teaching, and develop sensitivity to the ethical context (Boon & Maxwell, 2016; Maxwell et al., 2015).

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) is a body that provides accreditation for teacher education programmes in Australia (The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, n.d). The AITSL requires that the minimum standard for education programmes is to ensure that pre-service teachers are equipped with and possess ethical qualities or attributes which they must demonstrate in the classroom and community (The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, n.d).

Informed by what is stipulated by this professional body, teacher education programmes in Australian universities have mandatory modules such as Foundations of Education, Sociology of Teaching, Education of Law, and Multicultural Education which incorporate ethics (Boon & Maxwell, 2016). For example, Multicultural Education deals with topics such as inclusive education and also addresses questions of social justice and fairness in the classroom (Boon & Maxwell, 2016). Moral philosophy and professional ethics are then integrated as themes within this Multicultural Education module (Boon & Maxwell, 2016; Walters et al., 2018).

Universities in England incorporate ethics education in modules such as “Professional Studies” in which ethical issues are addressed through group discussions. This usually occurs when themes such as professional procedures, teacher values, and professionalism are addressed (Walters et al., 2018).

There seems to be limited evidence which indicates how ethics education is offered in teacher education programmes in South Africa. However, what is known is that there is a policy framework and a professional body that informs the design of ethics education curricula of these programmes (Kimathi & Rusznyak, 2018).

The *Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications* is a policy in South Africa that details seven roles that the state expects every teacher to be able to fulfil after training (Kimathi & Rusznyak, 2018). This includes the role of learning mediator, specialist in a subject discipline, and interpreter and designer of learning programmes and materials (Department of Higher Education and Training [DHET], Republic of South Africa [RSA], 2015; Kimathi & Rusznyak, 2018). It also includes the role of leader, administrator, manager, scholar, researcher, lifelong learner, assessor and a community, citizenship, and pastoral role (DHET, RSA, 2015; Kimathi & Rusznyak, 2018).

The community, citizenship, and pastoral role is specifically associated with ethics (Kimathi & Rusznyak, 2018). I refer to these roles because, within this role, teachers are expected to practice and promote an ethical attitude that develops a sense of respect and responsibility towards others; therefore, the state expects ethics education, in teacher education programmes, to be in a format that trains teachers to uphold the constitution and promotes democratic values (DHET, RSA, 2015).

The *Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications* also indicates that one of the types of learning that should be the basis of the design of curricula of teacher education programmes is disciplinary learning – this includes the study of professional ethics and issues related to knowledge of relationships between the self and others (DHET, RSA, 2015).

In addition to a policy framework, there is the SACE which is a professional body that aims to enhance the status of the teaching profession through the management of professional development, registration, and a code of ethics (SACE, 2000). The SACE plays a role in ethics education by advising the minister of higher education about the professional standards that teacher education programmes must develop (SACE, 2000). Although there is evidence that teachers are being trained, there is no sufficient evidence to indicate if these recommendations are incorporated adequately in different teachers' undergraduate training in South Africa (Maxwell, 2017; Maxwell & Schwimmer, 2016; Walters et al., 2018).

2.4 THE INADEQUACIES IDENTIFIED IN THE ETHICS TRAINING OF TEACHERS

Evidence suggests that pre-service teachers studying in the United States, England, Canada, Australia, and the Netherlands are still leaving university with no clear understanding of what is ethically expected of them by their profession (Maxwell, 2017; Maxwell & Schwimmer, 2016; Walters et al., 2018).

Studies have revealed that pre-service teachers have indicated a need for more adequate training on ethics as they felt that this need was not met by their teacher education programmes (Heilbronn & Foreman-Peck, 2015; Maxwell, 2017). Maxwell et al. (2016) investigated undergraduate teacher education programmes of various universities in Canada, England, Australia, Netherlands, and the United States and found that there was a low percentage of teacher education programmes that focused on ethics.

Scholarly literature from these countries have indicated that only 22% of teacher education programmes had at least one required course in ethics and that only 44% of teacher education programmes required pre-service teachers to study ethics in a stand-alone course (Maxwell et al., 2015, 2016).

Additionally, there seems to be evidence which indicates that the more advanced the teacher education programme is, the less likely that it would contain a mandatory ethics-related course (Maxwell, 2017; Maxwell et al., 2016). To illustrate, while 30% of primary education programmes and 26% of secondary education programmes were found to have an ethics requirement, this was the case for only 8% in a master's teaching programme (Maxwell et al., 2016). This is a low percentage considering that teachers are considered to be moral models (Maxwell, 2017).

Administrative heads of academic units in teacher education programmes in an Australian university were consulted to understand why ethics education seemed less common in their teacher education programmes (Boon & Maxwell, 2016). These administrative heads indicated that ethics is embedded in all programmes as opposed to it being a stand-alone module, therefore, this may be the reason it was assumed that ethics education is uncommon (Boon & Maxwell, 2016).

The administrative heads argued that it is difficult to have ethics as a stand-alone module in teacher education programmes because there was not enough time to deal

with ethics separately. This was due to the pressure they experienced from the policies that regulated them which emphasised preparing teachers for subjects such as Mathematics and English (Walters et al., 2018).

Other reasons provided were that ethics had not been a priority as there was intense competition on what content to include in teacher education programmes. Furthermore, the administrative heads indicated that ethics did not warrant a stand-alone module as what students needed to know about ethics could be integrated into the programme (Maxwell et al., 2015). They also indicated that offering a mandatory ethics module would require a faculty-wide agreement about the ethical obligations and responsibilities of teachers which seemed impossible as ethics was too personal and subjective (Maxwell et al., 2015).

Another inadequacy identified in the ethics training of teachers is that it does not include the ethics of care (Taggart, 2016). Taggart (2016) called upon teacher education programmes in Europe to adopt an ethics of care that acknowledges that particular ethical situations require teachers to be responsive, effective, and flexible. Taggart (2016) argued that the current ethics training of teachers is based on men's perspective on ethics – this is based on her proposition that the training focuses on cultivating ethical reasoning and marginalises the affective dimension of ethics.

Taggart (2016) further stated that ethics education fails to acknowledge the relevance of motivation and intuition when making ethical decisions and that ethical practice cannot be understood impersonally. She reasoned that ethics engages the head and the heart because affect is part of our affiliation system and ontological package as human beings which comprises of the mind-body-spirit/heart (Taggart, 2016).

In Tanzania, there is evidence that suggests that ethics training is not a priority as it seems to be the least important learning and teaching objective (Anangisye, 2010; Maxwell & Schwimmer, 2016). A study by Anangisye (2010) revealed that colleges, departments, and faculties of education in Tanzania did not have specific modules on professional ethics nor was ethics incorporated in other modules. The focus was on education modules such as classroom management, pedagogical knowledge, basic knowledge in Information and Communications Technology (ICT), preparation and use of teaching/learning materials, and the teaching and learning process (Anangisye, 2010).

In South Africa, evidence suggests that teachers are not adequately trained on what professional conduct is and there are numerous cases of teacher misconduct that have been reported (Kimathi & Rusznyak, 2018; Maphosa et al., 2015). Such misconduct is related to teacher absenteeism and teachers' poor discipline, where it has been reported that South Africa has the worst teacher absenteeism rate out of 14 African countries (Maphosa et al., 2015). Teacher absenteeism has been reported as an act of indiscipline where teachers do not come to work as often as they are expected to (Kimathi & Rusznyak, 2018). The inadequacies identified in the ethics training is evident in that teachers are experiencing difficulties in dealing with the ethical dilemmas that they are confronted with (Kimathi & Rusznyak, 2018).

2.5 TEACHERS' INCOMPETENCE TO DEAL WITH ETHICAL DILEMMAS

There is evidence that suggests that teachers experience ethical dilemmas that speak to a variety of situations and that they feel somewhat ill-equipped or unprepared to tackle such dilemmas (Boon, 2011; French-Lee & McMunn Dooley, 2015).

Colnerud (2015) found that, when attempting to implement fair practices within the classroom setting, teachers find it difficult to decide which principle of fairness to adhere to. They are expected to treat learners equally, yet they are also expected to devote time to each learner according to their needs (Colnerud, 2015; Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2011). They are required to understand that learners are unique but simultaneously, are faced with the institutional responsibility to grade learners based on the same rubric (Colnerud, 2015). Thus, teachers can often be confused about what would be the most beneficial way to contribute to a learner's development (Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2011).

In addition, there are circumstances where teachers have to make the ethical decision of either protecting a learner against harm or remaining loyal to a colleague (Colnerud, 2015). For instance, a teacher may observe a colleague humiliating a learner or not attending classes. The teacher is then confronted with the difficulty of deciding whether to report the colleague and potentially expose them to the consequences that might follow or remain silent and leave learners vulnerable to further harm (Colnerud, 2015).

Ethical dilemmas centred on confidentiality are also characteristic of the ethical decisions teachers have to make in their daily work (Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2011). This is evident in circumstances where a learner discloses sensitive information about a

personal matter to a teacher. In such instances, teachers feel conflicted about whether to make efforts to protect the learner against harm by reporting the matter or to keep what has been disclosed confidential (Colnerud, 2015).

The uncertainty that teachers often feel when having to make ethical decisions has led to literature recommending how future ethics training could be structured in ways that would sufficiently equip pre-service teachers to deal with ethical matters. Therefore, the next section will explore future directions on the ethics training of teachers.

2.6 FUTURE DIRECTIONS OF ETHICS TRAINING FOR TEACHERS

Research conducted in Canada, England, Netherlands, and the United States have addressed how teacher education programmes can better equip teachers to make ethical decisions (Campbell, 2000; Ehrich et al., 2011; Maxwell, 2017). This research presented various approaches that are accompanied by their own limitations but indicate the diverse approaches that could be implemented.

Forster (2012) and Maxwell (2017) advocated that teachers should be trained with an existing code of ethics as the value of a code of ethics lies in its ability to inform teachers about the collective norms in the teaching profession. In addition, Maxwell (2017) argued that a code of ethics provides teachers with knowledge of what it means to conduct oneself professionally.

However, an argument against only using a code of ethics to train teachers on ethics is that it is a simplistic approach to ethics education and that it does not accommodate the complexity of ethical matters (Ehrich et al., 2011; Forster, 2012). In other words, it does not indicate what must happen should principles and standards in the code be in conflict (Barrett et al., 2012).

This has been deemed problematic, especially because the likelihood of principles and standards conflicting in the teaching profession are high (Barrett et al., 2012). This is because the interests of those that teachers are in relationships with, including school boards, parents, the community, and the department of education, are sometimes in conflict (Barrett et al., 2012). For example, a parent may want their child to go through to the next grade yet the teacher might deem this disadvantageous because the learner needs further academic assistance (Lasater, 2016). Additionally, a code of ethics does not consider that what constitutes ethical behaviour is likely to

lie in a grey zone and that it is particularly that grey zone that tests teachers' morality in their everyday work (Ehrich et al., 2011).

Another argument brought forward is that a code of ethics contains merely principles and standards (Ehrich et al., 2011). It does not help pre-service teachers develop moral judgement and that, instead, it prevents them from developing ethical maturity (Colnerud, 2015). The learning of only principles and standards in the teaching profession encourages a culture of obedience as opposed to critical thinking – this is detrimental as ethics is a complex matter (Colnerud, 2015).

In contrast, in a study conducted by French-Lee and McMunn Dooley (2015), teachers were familiarised with a code of ethical conduct of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The NAEYC's code of conduct stipulates the core values on which standards of ethical behaviour are rooted such as respecting the dignity of children; furthermore, it describes the ethical responsibilities that teachers have towards children and their families and the responsibilities they have towards employers and co-workers (French-Lee & McMunn Dooley, 2015).

The authors of this study analysed how teachers would approach ethical dilemmas based on familiarity with the code and found that an ethical code can be useful in training teachers on ethics (French-Lee & McMunn Dooley, 2014). The authors indicated that the code of conduct helped teachers gain understanding and familiarity about professional and ethical behaviour in their profession and that teachers were able to exercise moral judgement and resolve ethical dilemmas by using the code (French-Lee & McMunn Dooley, 2015).

Research conducted by Bullough (2011), suggested a curriculum that would familiarise teachers with moral concepts. However, there has been general disagreement about the nature of the content of this curriculum (Maxwell et al., 2016). This disagreement largely stems from the acknowledgement that the understanding of morality is subjective, therefore, the question posed is whose moral values the ethics in the curriculum would reflect (Campbell, 2000).

Other scholars of teacher education literature have suggested that teachers can also be trained using problem-solving learning processes (Ehrich et al., 2011). This involves providing teachers with the opportunity to analyse ethical dilemmas. In such instances, teachers could be given ethically related scenarios in which they would

answer questions about these scenarios (Ehrich et al., 2011). Teachers could share ideas on how they would approach a particular ethical scenario, which means that teachers would then have to reflect on their own morals and values and consider how these morals and values may have implications for the ethical decisions that they have to make (Ehrich et al., 2011; Osguthorpe & Sanger, 2013).

2.7 POSITIONING THE STUDY IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

Teacher incompetence, when confronted with ethical dilemmas, may cause moral stress (Colnerud, 2015). There is evidence that suggests that the high levels of stress that teachers experience can lead to occupational burnout, which often manifests in depersonalisation, emotional exhaustion, and a lack of feeling accomplished in one's work (Roeser et al., 2013).

These effects not only compromise a teacher's well-being but have implications for the academic achievement of learners as stress interferes with learners' opportunities to receive quality education (Roeser et al., 2013). Learners may feel frustrated, anxious, and demotivated as teachers will not be able to engage with them in ways that are beneficial to their learning (Roeser et al., 2013).

However, it is important to note that the consequences of teachers not being certain on how to handle ethical dilemmas extends beyond how the classroom operates and whether effective teaching and learning can occur. A teacher's unethical decision making or the inability to know which ethical decision to make may also compromise the psychosocial development of learners (Paterson, 2017).

As an example, Paterson (2017) highlighted a circumstance where a teacher is unsure whether to report that a learner is being sexually harassed. The author explained that sexual harassment is known to have adverse effects on certain developmental processes such as emotional regulation and the coping mechanisms used. It is also known to create risks in that learners could develop depressive and dissociative symptoms, anxiety, fear and distrust of others, social isolation behaviours, and maladjustment at school. These are factors that affect the way learners will function beyond the school setting and may be determinants of who they eventually become in adulthood (Paterson, 2017).

Teachers are key role players in the optimal functioning of learners as they are models that shape learners through the knowledge they impart and how they conduct themselves (Maphosa et al., 2015); therefore, it becomes imperative to highlight the conditions that make it difficult for them to be these models to the very learners that are central to many referrals made to educational psychologists. Problems that are experienced in the school are systemic in nature, if a particular matter affects the way teachers do their job, it will essentially affect the way learners learn, develop, and function (Paterson, 2017).

2.8 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework of this research study is based on the professional ethics perspective and theories of deontology, consequentialism, and virtue ethics.

The professional ethics perspective emphasises that teachers are subject to common norms of professional conduct to ensure that they conduct themselves in a manner that maintains public trust in the teaching profession (Maxwell & Schwimmer, 2016). This perspective argues that the focus of ethics education should be to introduce future teachers to the norms of the teaching profession (Belinova et al., 2017; Ćurko et al., 2015; Maxwell & Schwimmer, 2016). This whole perspective was relevant to this study because my research question aimed to understand how teachers were trained on ethics or rather how they were introduced to the ethical norms that govern their professional behaviour.

Deontology emphasises that people should adhere to their duties and obligations when they are engaged in ethical decision-making (Paquette et al., 2015). Deontologists argue that moral actions have the moral character that they do by their own nature, irrespective of the consequences, whether good or bad (Paquette et al., 2015). Deontologists state that what is morally good in every circumstance is goodwill – and that goodwill is the steady motivation to do one’s duty for its own sake (Paquette et al., 2015). This whole theory was relevant to the study because teachers are aware that they are considered to be moral models (Osguthorpe & Sanger, 2013), therefore, teachers deal with ethical concerns or dilemmas by considering the duty and obligation they have as teachers as emphasised by their training.

However, deontology does not take into account the outcome of actions, therefore, I included consequentialism as it takes into account what deontology ignores.

Consequentialism focuses on the effects of the possible courses of action and what will achieve the best consequences (Paquette et al., 2015). This whole theory was relevant to this study because teachers often experience ethical dilemmas that are centred on the uncertainty, they experience regarding what course of action to take (Colnerud, 2015). This is because they worry about the outcome or consequence of their action as it will most likely impact someone, as teachers are involved in relationships with different role players such as colleagues, parents, learners, and other stakeholders (Colnerud, 2015).

Virtue ethics is concerned with how character traits, whether negative or positive, motivate us in a given situation and takes into account how personal morals and the consideration of one's reputation plays a role in ethical deliberation (Van Hooft, 2014). I chose to use this whole theory because teachers also resolve ethical concerns or dilemmas by relying on personal values or their conscience in cases where they feel the training has not equipped them (Bullough, 2011).

2.9 SUMMARY

In this chapter, I discussed how an ethical teacher is conceptualised in the teaching profession, followed by an overview of ethics education for teachers. I then discussed the inadequacies identified in the ethics training of teachers and presented the ethical dilemmas that teachers experience. Subsequently, I explored the future directions for teacher education programmes with regard to ethics training and continued with the positioning of the study in the context of educational psychology. The chapter concluded with a discussion about the professional ethics perspective, deontology, consequentialism, and virtue ethics which is the conceptual framework on which the research study is based.

The following chapter will discuss the research design and methodology of this study. It will cover the underlying paradigm and research approach, data collection and documentation, data analysis and interpretation, and the ethical considerations.

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Chapter 3

Research Design and Methodology

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The chapter commences with a description of the paradigmatic perspective and methodological paradigm which I have used in this research study. This is followed by a justification for using these paradigms. Subsequently, a description of the research design, the selection of the case and participants, and how data were collected and analysed is provided. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the criteria I used to ensure the trustworthiness of the study and the ethical considerations I adhered to during the research process.

3.2 PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVE AND METHODOLOGICAL PARADIGM

3.2.1 PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVE

An interpretivist paradigm guided this research study. Interpretivism focuses on understanding the meaning that individuals attach to phenomena through exploring lived experiences and different perspectives (Irshaidat, 2019).

Interpretivism emanated from the German sociologist Max Weber. Weber believed that to understand human societies, we must begin with the individual actor and what was intended when choices were made. He argued that individuals do not simply respond to external stimuli but often think before they act; in other words, they attach meaning to what they do. Thus, the task of the sociologist is to try and understand or interpret what individuals intend when they make certain choices. Furthermore, he stated that one must get close enough to individuals to begin to empathise or to understand from their point of view why they made a certain choice (Irshaidat, 2019; O'Reilly, 2009; Willig, 2013).

In addition to the influences of sociology, interpretivism stemmed from the philosophical traditions of hermeneutics and phenomenology (O'Reilly, 2009). Phenomenology is concerned with people's lived experiences within particular contexts at particular times, through exploring judgments, perceptions, and emotions (Willig, 2013). Hermeneutics, first introduced as a method to illuminate the meaning of biblical and classical literary texts, is the study of interpretation. This approach

critiques all notions of objective knowledge in favour of an understanding that considers the perspectives of others (O'Reilly, 2009).

An interpretivist paradigm is based on a constructivist ontology, which is the belief that the social world is subjective as it is constructed by individuals through social interaction (Mack, 2010). Researchers who use this paradigm believe that multiple realities can exist as language, culture, assumptions, and experiences cause individuals to interpret or make meaning of events differently (Maree, 2016; Wahyuni, 2012). Based on this understanding, interpretivists thus propose that knowledge can only be acquired through the eyes of participants as you directly interact with them (Mack, 2010). However, they understand that knowledge obtained is not value-free as researchers also use their own preconceptions to guide the process of enquiry (Chowdhury, 2014).

Interpretivist researchers seek to understand the social reality of participants in the context in which it occurs. They are concerned with the uniqueness of a particular situation which contributes to the pursuit of contextual depth (Chowdhury, 2014). Thus, researchers who use this paradigm propose that knowledge cannot be generalised as knowledge gained is located within a socio-cultural determined community (Willis, 2007).

3.2.2 METHODOLOGICAL PARADIGM

A qualitative research approach was utilised in this research study. Qualitative research is concerned with how people make sense of the world and how they experience events (Patten & Newhart, 2018). In other words, qualitative researchers aim to understand what it is like to experience particular conditions and how people manage them through exploring the subjective meanings that people attribute to these conditions (Willig, 2013). Therefore, qualitative researchers intend to possibly describe and explain experiences as opposed to identifying or predicting cause-effect relationships (Patten & Newhart, 2018).

According to Creswell (2009), qualitative research has several characteristics. The first is that a qualitative research approach involves collecting data in a setting where participants experience the issue or problem under study (Creswell, 2009). Qualitative researchers do not bring people into a contrived situation, nor do they send out

instruments for people to complete but rather interact with participants within their context (Creswell, 2009).

Second, qualitative researchers are considered as key instruments as they collect the data themselves through examining documents, talking directly to participants, and observing behaviour. Furthermore, researchers using the qualitative research approach collect the data from multiple sources as they do not rely on a single source (Creswell, 2009).

Third, qualitative research entails inductive data analysis where patterns are identified and constructed into more comprehensive themes through working back and forth between the themes and the data. Theme construction also involves collaborating with participants interactively, for participants to be granted the opportunity to shape the themes that emerge from the research enquiry (Creswell, 2009).

Fourth, qualitative researchers focus on learning the meaning that the participants hold about the problem and not the meaning the researcher brings. However, they acknowledge that qualitative research is an interpretive inquiry as researchers make their own interpretation of the data as they engage with it (Creswell, 2009). In addition, qualitative researchers understand that this interpretation cannot be separated from their background and prior understanding (Fossey et al., 2002). Therefore, qualitative research also encourages reflexivity, which is the awareness of the researcher's contribution to the construction of meaning throughout the research process (Fossey et al., 2002).

Fifth, qualitative research takes up an emergent design, implying that the initial plan of the research cannot be tightly prescribed. Questions may change and data collection methods may shift to understand the problem under study comprehensively (Creswell, 2009). Therefore, qualitative research can also be described as an open system where conditions continuously develop and interact with each other to give rise to a process of ongoing change (Willig, 2013).

The last characteristic of qualitative research is that it provides a holistic account of the problem or issue under study. This includes presenting multiple perspectives and identifying the many facets involved in a situation or problem (Creswell, 2009).

3.2.3 JUSTIFICATION FOR THE PARADIGMS SELECTED FOR THIS STUDY

The researcher used an interpretive paradigm because the purpose of the research study was to gain insight into teachers' experiences of their ethics training in their undergraduate training. It was believed that teachers would provide varying accounts of how they were trained on ethics as the researcher would interact with teachers from diverse backgrounds who were trained in different institutions. Considering that the interpretivist paradigm acknowledges that multiple realities can exist, this paradigm because it was believed it would accommodate how teachers' perspectives on ethics training could be influenced by their varying experiences.

Additionally, the interpretivist paradigm was chosen because it enabled the researcher to achieve contextual depth. It was believed that teachers would provide insight on their unique understanding and experience of their ethics training and its adequacy, given the ethical decisions they have to make in their current school contexts.

Lastly, it was imperative to understand from the teachers' perspectives how they were equipped to make ethical decisions. Therefore, this paradigm was chosen because it allowed the researcher to explore ethics training from the teachers' viewpoints. This was necessary as it is the teachers themselves who underwent the training and thus could provide an accurate understanding of what was under investigation.

Methodologically, a qualitative research approach was chosen because it provided the researcher with a means to access teachers' viewpoints through one of its data collection methods. The researcher was able to hear the teachers' experiences directly from them, which provided the opportunity to get rich, detailed descriptions through the open-ended questions that were asked during the focus group interview. Furthermore, this data collection method enabled the researcher to hear from all the teachers involved, which encouraged the exploration of various perspectives. This provided a holistic account of teachers' ethics training.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design that was utilised in this research study was an exploratory case study. A case study is an in-depth exploration of a case that is defined or described within certain parameters (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Case studies that are exploratory set out to investigate any phenomenon which serves as a point of interest to the researcher (Zainal, 2007). An exploratory case study allows for questions that are meant to encourage further examination of a phenomenon, where not much research has been conducted (Streb, 2012; Zainal, 2007). Additionally, it enables a researcher to examine a relevant issue in-depth because it allows close interaction with participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Salkind, 2010; Yin, 1981).

An exploratory case study was chosen as a research design as teachers' ethics training is still a relatively new area of research that has not yet been fully explored in South Africa. At the time of the study, there were barely any South African resources that address this topic. Therefore, through this exploratory case study, the researcher was able to reveal what could be learnt about teachers' ethics training. This included the ethics training teachers received in their undergraduate training, how it has equipped them to make ethical decisions, and what their future ethics training needs are.

Additionally, an exploratory case study was chosen because it granted the researcher the opportunity to interact with the teachers. This provided in-depth information as being in the presence of the teachers increased understanding and empathy about their experiences (Salkind, 2014). Teachers were able to express themselves in ways that were enabled by face-to-face interactions.

The potential challenges identified concerning case studies are that they are criticised for a lack of rigour, they can be time-consuming, and that their focused nature limits the generalisability of their findings. Strategies that were implemented to address these challenges included ensuring that this research study contained illustrative examples such as direct quotations of what participants said (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Furthermore, time management was discussed with the researcher's supervisor to ensure that the research schedule was adhered to. Additionally, the purpose of this research study was not to generalise findings but to acquire in-depth knowledge about how the selected teachers experienced their ethics training. Therefore, generalisation did not present as a potential challenge.

3.4 SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

In this research study, convenience selection was used. Convenience selection is the process of selecting participants based on convenient accessibility and proximity to the researcher (Christensen et al., 2015).

The researcher had an existing networking relationship with one of the staff members of the school. Thus, the school was selected based on this existing relationship. Seven teachers [this excluded the known staff member] from this government secondary school in the township of Daveyton, Johannesburg agreed to participate in the study after invitations to participate, which included the researcher's contact details, were circulated to the teachers by the school principal. Those teachers who contacted the researcher, indicating their willingness to participate and that were readily available, were included.

A disadvantage associated with convenience selection is that information received from such a sample is often not representative of the general population (Gravetter et al., 2021). However, as mentioned before, the purpose of this research study was to illuminate understanding of this particular case and not to generalise the findings.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION – FOCUS GROUP

For this research study, data were collected through a semi-structured focus group.

A focus group is a group comprised of individuals with certain characteristics who discuss a given issue or topic (Dilshad & Latif, 2013). It consists of a small group of people, usually between six and nine in number, who are brought together by a researcher to explore attitudes, perceptions, feelings, and ideas about a topic (Dilshad & Latif, 2013). A focus group provides a setting for a relatively homogeneous group to reflect on the questions asked by the researcher (Dilshad & Latif, 2013).

For this research study, the focus group consisted of seven teachers who taught at the selected secondary school. The focus group was arranged for a time convenient for all the participants, outside of school hours. Additionally, the focus group was conducted off the school premises, at a venue that was convenient for all participants. This was due to the safety measures that were put in place by the Gauteng Department of Education to reduce the risks associated with the spread of the Coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19). This venue offered a larger space to meet

safely. This adhered to the University of Pretoria and the secondary's school protocols for social distancing.

The focus group lasted about 75 minutes and the researcher asked questions that were open-ended but also relevant to the research question (Merriam, 2009). The focus group provided the researcher with the opportunity to hear participants talk about their experiences (Willig, 2008). However, the experiences that participants described were triggered by the questions that were asked from the interview schedule (Barbour, 2007; Merriam, 2009). Therefore, although the semi-structured focus group aimed at encouraging the participants to talk, the researcher steered the focus group so that the research questions could be answered (Barbour, 2007; Merriam, 2009). In addition to the semi-structured questions, the researcher asked clarifying questions to ensure that the meaning of what the participants said was not lost.

A semi-structured focus group was beneficial for this research study because it allowed participants to provide detailed information regarding the ethics training they received. It also accommodated the perspectives of different teachers and allowed the researcher to clarify anything said by the participants that were unclear (Willig, 2008).

Focus groups are known to be influenced by the status of the researcher (Willig, 2008). Therefore, to alleviate such an influence, the researcher became familiar with the cultural meanings that participants attributed to the focus group to understand how the participants contributed to the focus group (Willig, 2008). Familiarity with the participants' cultural backgrounds helped the researcher to understand how the participants used language in the focus group interview and the meanings attributed to what was being said (Willig, 2008).

Additionally, focus groups are also known to influence the responses of participants because of the other participants (Dilshad & Latif, 2013). To alleviate such an influence, rules were established to ensure that the information shared during the focus group remained confidential. Rules pertained to not discussing information shared in the focus group with other staff members who are not involved in the study. Group dynamics were also managed. This management entailed careful observation of participants who had not spoken and to ask their input in order to ensure equal contribution.

3.6 DATA DOCUMENTATION

An audio recorder was used to keep a record of the interview. In addition, field notes were taken, and a reflective journal was kept.

3.6.1 AUDIO RECORDING AND TRANSCRIPTION

An audio recorder was used with the consent of the participants. The purpose of this audio was to capture verbatim what the participants said to ensure that their words were not misinterpreted and for the researcher to fully engage with the focus group.

In addition, the audio recording was transcribed to aid the process of analysing the data. The transcription assisted in the researcher gaining an in-depth understanding of how teachers were trained on ethics as it allowed for engagement with what teachers had said once again, word for word.

3.6.2 FIELD NOTES

Field notes are notes made by the researcher in the course of qualitative fieldwork. Often, they consist of observation notes on the participants, locations, or events. Field notes serve many functions, predominately, they aid in constructing rich descriptions of the study context, encounter, interview, focus group, documents, and valuable contextual data (Phillippi & Lauderdale, 2018). According to Phillippi and Lauderdale (2018), field notes can also be useful in subsequent analyses such as secondary analyses and meta-synthesis.

To ensure that field notes that would be valuable for this research study were generated, the researcher either wrote the field notes during interactions with participants or immediately after interactions with participants. This was to ensure that what was observed was accurately reflected as the researcher remembered it.

3.6.3 REFLECTIVE JOURNAL

A reflective journal is a written or verbal record by the researcher during the research process which details what the researcher did and provides the researcher with an opportunity to engage in self-observation. Reflective journals are known to be beneficial because they foster an active and independent approach for researchers to take ownership of the research process (Fung & Hoon, 2013).

It helps researchers make sense of the phenomena under investigation and for researchers to take note of the processes they are engaged in. Reflective journals also help researchers develop a deep understanding and awareness of themselves and how their background and assumptions influence the research process (Fung & Hoon, 2013).

A reflective journal was kept throughout the research process. The researcher's subjective perspective of ethics was critically reflected on and how this might influence the understanding of the ethics training that teachers received in their undergraduate training. Reflecting on the researcher's bias, standpoint, and opinions helped to better understand the perspective of the participants.

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

A thematic analysis was used to analyse and interpret the data. Thematic analysis involves the interpretation of the implicit and explicit ideas that are evident in the data (Guest et al., 2012). Furthermore, it is a method for analysing and reporting patterns or themes that are identified in the data (Flick, 2014). The identified patterns or themes will not necessarily in and of themselves always be important (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Therefore, researchers need to ensure that they can identify important themes with the particular research question being explored (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Braun and Clarke (2006) stated that thematic analysis has the following six phases:

Table 3.1: Six phases of thematic analysis

Phase	Description of the process
1. Familiarise yourself with the data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transcribing the data • Reading and re-reading • Noting down the initial ideas
2. Generating initial codes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coding salient features of the data in a systematic manner • Combing data relevant to each code
3. Searching for themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combining codes into potential themes and gathering all data that corresponds with each potential theme
4. Reviewing themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Checking if the themes correlate to the codes and the data set
5. Defining themes and naming them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making clear the specifics of each theme and overall analysis • Creating clear definitions and names for each theme

6. Producing the report

- The last opportunity for analysis
- Finding a correlation between the analysis and the research question and literature
- Produce a scholarly report of the analysis

Thematic analysis was chosen as it is useful in capturing the complex nature of meanings that are evident in the data (Guest et al., 2012). Thematic analysis is based on analysing subjective viewpoints (Flick, 2014). This was beneficial to this research study as it captured the varied viewpoints or meanings that emerged from teachers' experiences of their ethics training.

Thematic analysis is generally criticised for being unreliable because much interpretation goes into the analysis especially with defining the data items (Guest et al., 2012). Therefore, a strategy that was implemented to deal with this challenge was participant validation where the participants were asked to confirm if the researcher's interpretations were an accurate reflection of the meanings that they had attributed to their ethics training (Willig, 2013).

3.8 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF STUDY

The trustworthiness of a study refers to the rigour with which a study was conducted (Willig, 2013). The criteria that qualitative researchers use to judge the quality of qualitative research is based on the assumption that it is not possible to obtain objectivity because of the meaning-making that takes place on the part of the researcher and the researched (Willig, 2013). Therefore, trustworthiness in qualitative research ensures rigour while acknowledging the creativity that occurs during the research process (Willig, 2013). The criteria that were utilised to ensure the rigour of this study included transferability, credibility, dependability, and confirmability (Willig, 2013).

Transferability refers to the extent to which the study allows readers to explore whether or not the study is applicable beyond the specific context within which data was generated (Moon et al., 2016). In this study, transferability was ensured by fully describing the contextual features of the research study.

Credibility refers to the degree to which the researcher represents the actual meanings of the research participants (Moon et al., 2016). In this study, strategies such as data

and method triangulation were used which means using multiple sources of data and/or methods (Moon et al., 2016). Field notes, an audio recording, transcription of the focus group, and a reflective journal were used.

Lastly, member checking was used, which meant returning findings to participants to determine if the findings reflected their experiences (Moon et al., 2016). After the data were analysed, I sent the findings of the research study to the participants via email. I asked the teachers to comment whether they believed that I had interpreted the findings correctly by checking if my interpretations accurately reflected their perceptions or opinions. The participants were given the option to provide feedback individually or as a group, either via email or telephonically. They opted to provide feedback individually, each using their preferred means to communicate their feedback. Those who opted for a phone call were called at an arranged time that was convenient for them, outside of school hours. The average duration of the phone calls was 15–20 minutes. Member checking revealed that teachers agreed with how the researcher interpreted the data and had no concerns about being falsely represented. Thus, no new information was added or removed from the data.

In addition to credibility is dependability, which refers to the consistency of research findings and the degree to which research procedures are documented so that other researchers can follow the same research process and obtain similar results (Moon et al., 2016). To attain dependability, the researcher's research process was described which included evidence where possible. The data collection method and how data were analysed were also detailed. The researcher explained the use of field notes, a reflective journal, an audio recording from the focus group interview, and the transcriptions of the participants' responses.

Confirmability refers to the extent to which the findings are clearly linked to the conclusions in a way that can be followed and later replicated (Moon et al., 2016). In this study, confirmability was ensured by providing an audit trail and keeping a reflective journal so that the researcher could be aware of her assumptions and viewpoints and how that might influence the study. The researcher also had feedback sessions with her supervisor which assisted in ensuring that the interpretation of the findings was derived only from the data.

3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The researcher adhered to the ethical guidelines of research; furthermore, the researcher obtained ethical clearance from the University of Pretoria and also obtained informed consent from participants. Obtaining consent involved ensuring that participants indicated whether or not they agreed to participate in the research study and if the information gathered about them could be used (Christensen et al., 2015; Patten & Newhart, 2018). Additionally, I obtained consent from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct research in the secondary school I selected. Data collection only occurred once permission was granted.

The research process was not deceptive; participants were not misled about anything regarding the purpose of the research, the nature of their participation, and how the data gathered about them will be used. Participants were also made aware of their right to participate voluntarily and that they could withdraw whenever they felt the need to (Christensen et al., 2015; Willig, 2013). They were also informed of the advantages or disadvantages for participating in this study (Christensen et al., 2015; Willig, 2013).

The confidentiality of participants was also a priority in the research process (Patten & Newhart, 2018). Participant information was protected by storing data electronically which was encrypted. The anonymity of participants was ensured by establishing group rules in the focus group to keep information shared confidential. However, they also informed of the limits to confidentiality by virtue of the nature of the focus group. Additionally, the identity of participants was protected by removing their names from transcripts. Participants were also asked for consent to use direct quotes under a pseudonym (Christensen et al., 2015; Patten & Newhart, 2018). I informed the participants that the raw data would only be shared with my research supervisor.

Case studies require participants to reveal and describe their experiences, therefore, the possibility of participants being confronted with feelings that may be a risk to their well-being was considered. The necessary steps were taken to ensure that participants were protected from harm by providing information on mental health services. Attention was paid to participant responses for any signs of concern to offer extended help after the research process (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008).

As this research study was conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic, additional ethical considerations entailed ensuring that the risk of potentially spreading the Covid-

19 virus was reduced. This was done by limiting contact with participants where possible and adhering to the Covid-19 regulations when interacting with them. This included ensuring that participants were encouraged to wear masks, to social distance themselves during the focus group, and to use the provided hand sanitiser.

The participants were also informed that final results and a summary of the findings would be emailed to them and that the findings will be published in a mini-dissertation. Additionally, it was indicated that the data will be kept at the University of Pretoria for 15 years and may be used for future research.

3.10 SUMMARY

In this chapter, the paradigmatic and methodological paradigm and the research design that was used for this research study were discussed. How participants were selected, how the data were collected and then analysed, were explained. Justifications for the choices made during the research process were provided and how the advantages and disadvantages of each choice were taken into consideration. Furthermore, the attempt to ensure the trustworthiness of this study and the ethics that were taken into consideration during the research process was discussed.

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Chapter 4 Findings of the Study

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the findings of the study. Three themes from which six sub-themes emanated are reported on. Theme 1 presents the ethics training participants received in their undergraduate years and the training received through in-service training. Theme 2 presents the ethical decisions that participants have to make and the ethical dilemmas they are confronted with. Theme 3 relates to the participants' future ethics training needs. This includes their views on the inadequacies of current ethics training and future recommendations for this training.

An overview of the themes and sub-themes is given in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1: Overview of themes and sub-themes

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Theme 1: Ethics training	Sub-theme 1.1: Undergraduate training Sub-theme 1.2: In-service training
Theme 2: Ethical decision making	Sub-theme 2.1: Ethical dilemmas relating to teaching Sub-theme 2.2: Sources used to resolve ethical dilemmas
Theme 3: Teachers' ethics training needs	Sub-theme 3.1: Inadequacies of teachers' current ethics training Sub-theme 3.2: Future recommendations for ethics training

In the following section, the results of the study that emerged through data analysis are discussed.

4.2 RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The definitions for each theme and sub-theme that emanated from the data are provided. Furthermore, excerpts from the data are included to support the results. The inclusion criteria for each theme will be discussed after the working definition.

4.2.1 THEME 1: ETHICS TRAINING

This theme includes a discussion of the ethics training the participants received during their undergraduate teacher education programmes as well as after qualifying as teachers. The participants also volunteered information about their ethics training after they qualified since some of them believed that that was the only ethics training they received. Therefore, this theme is divided into two sub-themes that speaks to undergraduate training and in-service training

4.2.1.1 Sub-theme 1.1: Undergraduate training

Table 4.2: Working definition and inclusion criteria for sub-theme 1.1

WORKING DEFINITION: Undergraduate training
Undergraduate training refers to training that equips pre-service teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills to apply themselves in the teaching environment (Avci, 2017).
INCLUSION CRITERIA
Any reference made to the ethics training that the participants received in their undergraduate years.

When asked about the ethics training they received in their undergraduate training, two participants indicated that they received ethics training and five participants shook their heads indicating that they did not receive any training. The two participants who indicated that they received ethics training indicated that this was integrated into a module in their programme. They stated the following in this regard:

In my case, I was trained in my undergraduate years on professional ethics using management, which was a vocational module. So in² that module, they touched on the importance of adhering to the prescriptions of the South African Council of Educators as an educator. So basically the content was speaking about the code of conduct of the educator as to say what is expected of me as an educator on the school premises and also in the community. (Participant [P] 2, Line [L] 164–171)

Back at varsity, there was this module that we did called Education Studies and then there we were taught about the role of the teacher in the classroom (P6, L180–182).

² Light editing was done on the verbatim quotes to promote readability.

Participant 6 elaborated further on the format of how this training formed part of the curriculum by explaining that this training was not provided through only one module but was integrated into various modules in the undergraduate programme.

Teaching Studies was also talking about that. We had a module called Education Studies and we had a module called Teaching Studies (P6, L227–229).

Based on the fact that there were participants who did not receive ethics training in their undergraduate training, the discussion naturally progressed to other forms of ethics training received. Therefore, the next sub-theme introduces in-service training that the participants received.

4.2.1.2 Sub-theme 1.2: In-service training

Table 4.3: Working definition and inclusion criteria for sub-theme 1.2

WORKING DEFINITION: In-service training
In-service training refers to training that teachers receive during employment to enhance their teaching skills (Vu et al., 2015).
INCLUSION CRITERIA
Any reference made to the ethics training that the participants received during their course of employment.

As indicated in sub-theme 1.1, most participants could not contribute to the discussion when asked about the ethics training they received in their undergraduate years. Instead, they referred to any experiences during their employment that guided them on ethics. I indicate in my field notes that there is more engagement on this part of this focus group interview. It seemed other participants could now contribute further to the discussion. This may be a reflection on that ethics training occurs more in employment rather than in undergraduate years.

Two participants indicated that they made use of mentoring each other to develop their ethical decision making.

Sometimes we are just talking ‘you know there is a learner who did this, and you know a learner who does this, deal with the learner like that’ you see? It is not like we mislead each other and say, ‘no you must slap the learner’, no but we advise each other that ‘you know, since you are new, when a learner does

this, you deal with them in this way'; so the male teachers that are older are the ones who show us so it is like it is training, people sit down, maybe we just have a conversation (P7, L850–858)

Participant 3 confirmed this by stating:

It is informal (P3, L859).

Another participant agreed with them but elaborated further on the in-service training that he received, which was more formal and presented by the school management team. He stated the following in this regard:

We also get informal but partially formal training with the [School Management Team] SMT, sometimes the SMT used to highlight how you can – for the educators, especially the educators that are new in the system, they used to highlight how we can handle ethical situations. (P5, L860–864)

The discussion of ethics training progressed to an exploration of how their ethics training enabled them to make ethical decisions. One participant indicated that the training he received in his undergraduate programme enabled him to make ethical decisions by stating the following:

I work closely with the school social worker, the training has assisted me as I assumed the office last year, I was taught about the sensitivity of cases to say that the cases are not the same, bullying and rape cannot be handled or mediated the same. (P2, L441–446)

Another participant indicated that the in-service training he received from the school management team helped equip him to make ethical decisions. P5 stated:

It used to help in terms of how to deal with certain situations for the educators in class, in case learners did something (P5, L886–868).

However, as the discussion progressed, the majority of participants were of the view that the ethics training they received did not adequately equip them to make ethical decisions. One participant illustrated her lack of knowledge through the following statement:

Some of the decisions I am making them as I go along (P6, L494–495).

Upon discussing whether or not training equipped them to make ethical decisions, the participants began to reflect on the ethical decisions they are required to make daily. Therefore, the next section presents a discussion on the ethical deliberations that often take place in the participants' workplaces.

4.2.2 THEME 2: ETHICAL DECISION MAKING

This theme illustrates the ethical decisions that teachers have to make in their daily work and the ethical dilemmas that arise when having to make ethical decisions.

4.2.2.1 Ethical dilemmas relating to teaching

Table 4.4: Working definition and inclusion criteria for sub-theme 2.1

WORKING DEFINITION: ETHICAL DILEMMAS RELATING TO TEACHING
An ethical dilemma relating to teaching refers to circumstances where teachers are required to make an ethical decision about a learner but experience difficulty choosing between two conflicting moral options (Colnerud, 2015; Ehrich et al., 2011).
INCLUSION CRITERIA
Any reference made to the ethical dilemmas participants have encountered in their teaching practice.

The participants stated that a common ethical decision they are required to make relates to the confidential nature of their relationships with learners. They indicated that learners tend to discuss their personal matters with them as they are the adults that learners rely on during school time. However, sometimes the learners ask that they do not disclose the information shared with them but often these personal matters are harmful to the learners and are required to be reported to the school management team.

Therefore, the participants indicated that they are often uncertain whether to disclose confidential information considering the implications of such matters or respect the learner's request. Such an ethical dilemma seemed specific to male teachers who expressed that it is more difficult to make decisions if a female learner confides in them. This is because they fear that the decision to remain silent may give the impression that they wanted to take advantage of the learner in some way.

One participant stated the following:

So you know those cases for us as males, sometimes it becomes difficult to advise and when the learners ask you not to talk out now you always become afraid because if I keep this confidential to myself, I do not know when it comes tomorrow, at what angle will it come; maybe then it will be as if I was taking advantage myself because I can listen because nowadays it is a problem to even listen. (P1, L365–372)

Participant 3 agreed that the uncertainty arises when there is a fear that the ethical decision to remain silent may be an avenue for the learner’s parents or the school to misinterpret his intentions. He indicated that it could easily be assumed that he wanted to pursue an inappropriate relationship with the learner should the matter end up being disclosed.

I do not want to be caught in a situation whereby ‘also P3 knew the secret’ because they may take advantage tomorrow and say ‘you knew about this and you kept quiet’ maybe you had ulterior motives (P3, L420–423).

Another participant indicated that feelings of uncertainty arise when there is concern about what is being endorsed through the decision taken. Participant 7 stated that difficulty arises when he wishes to respect the learner’s request but worries that the learner may receive the wrong message based on his decision. Participant 7 stated the following:

Since you told me that your boyfriend hits or molests you and I keep quiet, then it means my silence means that yes, the boyfriend is right, he must continue and do that (P7, L396–399).

The discussion progressed to what guides teachers’ ethical decision making when confronted with ethical dilemmas. Therefore, the next sub-theme discusses the sources which the participants draw on to resolve ethical dilemmas.

4.2.2.2 Sub-theme 2.2: Sources used to resolve ethical dilemmas

Table 4.5: Working definition and inclusion criteria for sub-theme 2.2

WORKING DEFINITION: SOURCES USED TO RESOLVE ETHICAL DILEMMAS
Sources used to resolve ethical dilemmas refer to belief systems, professional codes, the constitution, or personal values that teachers refer to when needing to decide between two conflicting moral options (Colnerud, 2015).

INCLUSION CRITERIA

A reference made to any source that assists with resolving ethical dilemmas.
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The participants indicated that they draw on various sources to resolve the ethical dilemmas they encounter. One participant referred to the constitution when resolving ethical dilemmas related to confidential relationships with learners. He stated the following in this regard:

According to the constitution of the country, we have privacy as one of our rights but in section 36, which is limitations, we are allowed to limit the right of privacy on the grounds that it is reasonable and justifiable. (P2, L451–455)

Participant 1 drew on policies implemented by the department of education when having to decide on how to deal with the difficult behaviour of learners. He indicated that the policy of inclusivity guides him to maintain order in the classroom yet still give learners the right to continue learning.

I also indicated the policy of inclusivity, that each and every learner must feel welcome. If I can make an example with that one, I will make an example with the case of a learner misbehaving during my presence in the classroom. I cannot take that learner away from the class because of the policy of inclusivity, even if I give a punishment maybe I say stand by the door but I cannot say outside the door, a learner must be inside. (P1, L99–106)

In addition, participant 1 also indicated that he is guided by personal values:

As a human being, as an individual, you are guided by certain principles that you as a person subscribe to (P1, L43–45).

Participant 3 relied on cultural and religious belief systems to resolve ethical dilemmas:

Our black culture teaches us certain things that this and that cannot be done so I think we try to rely on that, and also different religions, I am a Christian (P3, L878–880).

The participants progressed into a broader conversation where they agreed that any ethical dilemma should be resolved by considering the best interests of the learner. Participant 3 stated the following:

So I think in certain circumstances when you make such decisions, you need to consider the best interest of the learner (P3, L307–309).

Participant 7 and participant 2 agreed and stated the following:

I think this goes back to what sir already said, it goes back to the thing that you have to decide what is best for the learner (P7, L384–386).

Me acting ethically means I will consider the best interest of the child (P2, L942–943).

The participants were of the view that ethical teachers will always strive to make decisions in the best interests of the learners. The conversation, therefore, steered to participants' understanding of what makes a teacher ethical. One participant was of the view that an ethical teacher understands how not to interact with learners:

It is a teacher that refrains from sexual harassment and sexual relationships with learners (P2, L10–11).

Another participant indicated that an ethical teacher is a teacher who comes to the classroom prepared for class so learning can take place and does not deviate from their role of teaching. He stated the following:

Ethically so I must come fully prepared, if I come to a class fully prepared, there is no issue for me now that I am looking at what is happening under the table, you understand? If I am coming in well prepared, there is not even a way for a learner to see a boyfriend in me because the way I come in, I come in fully prepared and I know my story, not unless I come in and make jokes and we find one another having topics other than the content that should be delivered to the learners. (P1, L58–66)

For another participant, an ethical teacher understands the many roles they assume when interacting with learners and the moral responsibility that accompanies those roles.

I think it goes beyond the delivery of content because as they speak about nation-building, it is not only the content but also motivating, also as a teacher you are a parent. So when you look at a learner with maybe needs or faced with circumstances that are maybe beyond one's control, as a person you should be able to intervene and you need not take advantage of the vulnerability of those learners so it goes beyond the delivery of content to me. (P3, L76–84)

Other participants indicated that what makes a teacher ethical is choosing to consistently engage in moral behaviour regardless of the conditions. They stated the following in this regard:

An ethical teacher could be someone who sticks with responsibility, inside and outside the classroom (P5, L16–17).

An ethical teacher is a teacher who does right even if the conditions or the circumstances do not allow them, so doing right even under situations whereby everyone is doing wrong and when you are doing right you are seen as an unpopular person. (P3, L71–75)

Two participant responses indicated that what makes a teacher ethical is adherence to the rules and codes prescribed by the teaching profession. They stated the following:

An ethical teacher adheres to the prescriptions of the council of education (P2, L13–14).

An ethical teacher is one who shows a strong understanding of what is right or what is expected or considered to be right as an educator all the time. Especially in classroom conduct whereby a teacher shows that he or she understands a code of conduct. (P5, L17–21)

Participant 1 stated that what makes a teacher ethical is having a professional attitude when dealing with others. He indicated that an ethical teacher understands that they are required to engage with many role players with whom they might experience conflict. Therefore, he argued that an ethical teacher strives for positive engagement even when the behaviour from others is negative. He stated the following:

With regards to attitude, attitude is something very difficult. The attitude you find from your colleague, the attitude you find from the learners but as an ethical educator, how do you behave in such circumstances? It is very important to be professional at all levels, at all times. (P1, L137–142)

The participants reasoned that for a teacher to be ethical and understand what is expected of them at all times, they should receive adequate training on ethics. Therefore, the next section explores teachers' ethics training needs.

4.2.3 THEME 3: TEACHERS' ETHICS TRAINING NEEDS

This theme reveals teachers' views about the existing inadequacies in ethics training and what they believe can be done to address these inadequacies. Therefore, this section is divided into two sub-themes, inadequacies of current ethics training and recommendations for future training.

4.2.3.1 Sub-theme 3.1: Inadequacies of teachers' current ethics training

Table 4.6: Working definition and inclusion criteria for sub-theme 3.1

WORKING DEFINITION: INADEQUACIES OF TEACHERS' CURRENT ETHICS TRAINING
Inadequacies of teachers' current ethics training refer to parts of the training that teachers felt were not sufficient to support them in making ethical decisions (Maxwell, 2017).
INCLUSION CRITERIA
Any reference made to how the training lacked in quality or quantity or where the training was insufficient for its purpose.

Most of the participants in this study indicated that the ethics training they received did not sufficiently equip them to make ethical decisions because it was lacking in several ways. One participant was of the view that the training did not focus enough on ethics and the following excerpt illustrates this:

It was not enough (P6, L494).

Some participants spoke about how ethics training, in general, is conducted from a particular worldview of moral principles and does not consider that these principles might not apply to all contexts. One participant stated the following in this regard:

It is more like a 'one shoe fits all', we are using the same principles and yet the circumstances are different (P3, L527–528).

Participant 5 agreed and emphasised that ethics training is conducted from the perspective of working in model C schools and not from the perspective of working in township schools.

So based on what is being spoken by P3, you need to keep in mind that the training is global, it is more like we are trained for a model C school but when you go to the township it functions differently. (P5, L551–554)

Participant 7 also agreed but went further by stating that the learners in township schools do not respond to what they have been taught in their ethics training.

I just wanted to say what sir just said, when you look at the training, it focuses on model C schools and if you look we teach in ‘Yizo Yizo’³ situations. So the way they taught us that a child in class when they make a noise, you just say ‘sorry, sit down you making noise’, does not work here you see? So the training focuses on one side, on model C schools. (P7, L563–569)

Based on the participants’ experiences of their ethics training being inadequate, they began to talk about what could be done to improve the ethics training of teachers. Therefore, the next section explores recommendations for future ethics training.

4.2.3.2 Sub-theme 3.2: Recommendations for future ethics training

Table 4.7: Working definition and inclusion criteria for sub-theme 3.2

WORKING DEFINITION: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE ETHICS TRAINING
Recommendations for future ethics training refers to suggestions that teachers believe will put them in a better position to deal with the ethical matters that they are faced with (Maxwell et al., 2016).
INCLUSION CRITERIA
Any reference made to how current ethical training could be improved.

After detailing the inadequacies of the training they received, the discussion then progressed to how ethics training could be improved to close existing gaps and meet the ethical needs of teachers. One participant indicated that the training should speak to the real ethical issues that teachers are confronted with daily. He argued that the ethics training should show teachers an example of how to deal with the actual ethical issues that arise during teaching. He went further to say that real examples would help understand what their role as teachers is when confronted with an ethical dilemma.

We must also look at the direct issues that are impacting teachers in the classrooms, if you are able to diagnose those matters, we will be able to identify our position and our responsibilities (P1, L624–628).

³ Yizo Yizo was a television drama series that was based on a school located in a township. This series depicted the issues of gangs, drugs, rape, and misbehaviour from learners, as well as other psychosocial issues that were occurring within the school.

Another participant believed that ethics training should include training on emotional intelligence. He argued that many teachers are confronted with the difficult behaviour of learners and are under immense pressure to behave ethically. He went further to say that this is rather overwhelming for teachers and can easily result in them experiencing stress causing them to break down. Therefore, he indicated that emotional intelligence should be incorporated for teachers to know how to deal with moral stress.

I feel that one of the other things that should be integrated into this training - it should also be on emotional intelligence, sometimes as teachers, we are confronted with situations whereby we may end up losing it (P3, 696–700).

The same participant indicated that ethics training should also include indigenous knowledge. This participant reasoned that for ethics training to apply to all teachers working in different environments, it should be informed by other forms of knowledge as well.

We need to integrate both the scientific and the indigenous knowledge system so that we can be able to accommodate everyone, I mean in education we have schools in the deep, deep rural areas, so whenever you are talking the scientific language it is something else to them so I think the training should also include that aspect of the indigenous knowledge system. (P3, L716–722)

In the next section, I present the findings of this study within the context of the literature reviewed and this will be based on the results from each theme and sub-theme.

4.3 PRESENTING THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE LITERATURE REVIEWED

This study had mixed findings regarding the ethics training the participants received during their undergraduate years. Some participants reported that their ethics training was integrated into some modules of their training programmes, which is a common approach to ethics education in teacher education programmes (Boon & Maxwell, 2016; Walters et al., 2018). In contrast to this, some participants indicated that they did not receive any ethics training in their undergraduate years.

Irrespective of their training, the majority of participants still felt ill-equipped to make ethical decisions. For example, they found it difficult to make decisions about matters such as maintaining a confidential relationship with their learners. They felt conflicted

about protecting this relationship as opposed to protecting themselves from harm or being negative role models. Their experiences were similar to what Colnerud (2015) found, which is that teachers experience ethical dilemmas that require them to play conflicting roles and make ethical decisions that are often in conflict with one another.

The participants' perceived difficulties to adequately and competently manage the complexity of ethical dilemmas is supported by research, which found that teachers do experience feelings of incompetence when making ethical decisions. Maxwell (2017) found that teachers' expressed feelings of incompetence were largely attributed to their beliefs that their training was inadequate for them to have a clear understanding of what is ethically expected of them (Maxwell, 2017).

The participants' views that their training was inadequate is further supported by research which found that ethics education is not made a priority in the teaching profession and that if it does exist, it is not adequately addressed (Anangisye, 2010; Maxwell et al., 2016). This is evident in how some participants who did receive ethics training expressed similar feelings of uncertainty when making ethical decisions as those who did not receive any training.

The participants drew on several sources, which they used to aid them to make ethical decisions or resolve ethical dilemmas. This included sources at their disposal such as the constitution, policies, cultural or religious values, and the principle to act in the best interests of the learners. They also relied on their own view of what is right and wrong. Gülcan (2015) found that a lack of adequate training results in teachers relying on their own understanding of how to deal with ethical matters. This entails engaging in a process of trial and error decision making as they decide which source is most applicable to draw on, given a particular ethical situation (Gülcan, 2015).

The participants believed that they would be better able to make ethical decisions if their ethics training needs were met. They indicated that the ethics training provided in general is currently inadequate, as it is designed for model C school environments. They argued that this training does not apply to the township context in which they are teaching.

They suggested that future ethics training should be mindful of the varying contexts that schools are located in by incorporating an indigenous knowledge system. Similar to this view, research conducted by Beets (2012) argued how teachers' morality can

be strengthened by infusing the principles of Ubuntu in the training of teachers. He argued that using the term “Ubuntu” is a way to train teachers in the South African context on ethics in a manner that resonates with them (Beets, 2012).

The participants also indicated that ethics training should address real examples of the ethical matters that teachers are faced with daily. The participants believed that this would enable teachers to best understand which course of action to take given an ethical situation. The participants shared similar views with research conducted by Ehrich et al. (2011), which indicated that analysing real ethical dilemmas provides teachers with the opportunity to reflect on how to best approach an ethical situation by considering the implications of the ethical decisions made in that situation.

Other suggestions included that ethics training needs to equip teachers with emotional intelligence as they indicated that expectations that come with their work can cause stress. Their view of the value of being trained on emotional intelligence aligns with a study conducted by Taggart (2016) who found that ethical practices cannot be understood impersonally as ethics engages our emotions. Therefore, this highlighted the need for the ethics of care to also be incorporated in ethics training as indicated by this research (Taggart, 2016).

In the next section, I readdress the conceptual framework that supported this research study.

4.4 REVISITING THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK SUPPORTING THIS STUDY

The participants in this study indicated there were situations where their training was not well suited to the contexts in which they are working, or they were not trained at all. In such instances, teachers would rely on their personal moral compass to guide the ethical decisions they needed to make. Virtue ethics considers the role of character traits and moral values in ethical deliberations (Van Hooft, 2014). Similar to this understanding, the participants would use personal moral values informed by religion or principles they uphold to make ethical decisions.

In other instances, the participants’ ethical decisions were guided by the norms of conduct in the teaching profession which they are subject to, as stated by the professional ethics perspective. For example, teachers understood that when dealing

with the misbehaviour of learners within the classroom, they had to adhere to the norm of inclusivity and not deprive the learner of the opportunity to learn.

Teachers were also guided by their duty as teachers, similar to what was proposed by deontology (Paquette et al., 2015). Some teachers referred to their role as contributing to teaching and learning and that based on this, they must come sufficiently prepared to class to meaningfully contribute to that role.

Some circumstances required ethical decision making that has to consider the consequences or outcomes as emphasised by consequentialism. Male teachers, in particular, seemed to experience ethical dilemmas and they resorted to wanting to make decisions that avoided any potential adverse consequences. These male teachers made decisions to ensure that they protected themselves as teachers but also attempted to act in the best interests of the learners.

4.5 SUMMARY

In this chapter, the findings of the study through a discussion of themes that emerged through data analysis were provided. Furthermore, the findings in the context of the existing reviewed literature were explored. The chapter concluded with a discussion of the findings concerning the conceptual framework that guided this study.

The following chapter will discuss the research questions presented in Chapter 1. In addition, it provides limitations of the study and recommendations for further research.

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Chapter 5

Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this exploratory case study was to explore and describe the experiences of seven teachers at a secondary school in Johannesburg on their ethics training. A literature review conducted revealed that ethics training is included in teacher education programmes worldwide as either a stand-alone module or integrated into the curriculum across various modules. However, it also revealed that teacher education programmes are giving inadequate attention to ethics education as teachers have reported that they feel incompetent to make ethical decisions.

Although research emphasised the moral duty of teachers, there is limited research that addresses how teachers in South Africa have been trained on ethics in their undergraduate years. Therefore, through a focus group, this study explored how seven secondary teachers were trained on ethics and how they believed this training equipped them to make ethical decisions.

In this final chapter, the primary and secondary research questions, as presented in Chapter 1, are answered. Thereafter, the potential contributions, challenges and limitations of the study are discussed. The chapter concludes with recommendations for further research and concluding remarks.

5.2 REFLECTING ON THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In answering the primary research question, “What are the experiences of seven mainstream secondary school teachers of the ethics training they received in their undergraduate training?”, the secondary research questions that guided this study were first considered. The secondary research questions of this study concerned how teachers were trained on ethics and how this training equipped them to make ethical decisions. Furthermore, it focused on their future ethics training needs.

5.2.1 SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

5.2.1.1 Secondary research question one

How are teachers trained on ethics?

The participants in this study had contradictory experiences about the ethics training they received in their undergraduate programmes. Some participants reported that they received no ethics training as student teachers while others indicated that it was integrated into various modules in their teacher education programmes. All participants indicated that they received ethics training while already in service as teachers. Some of these learning experiences were either informal training through advising or guiding one another or formal training provided by the school management team.

5.2.1.2 Secondary research question two

How has their training equipped them to make ethical decisions?

Irrespective of the nature or the extent of the type of training the participants in this study received, they were unanimous in their view that their training did not sufficiently equip them to make ethical decisions. They expressed feelings of uncertainty and indecisiveness when dealing with ethical matters that are commonly associated with their duties as teachers and feared that they may cause harm in the process. As a result of feeling ill-equipped because of their insufficient training, they tended to rely on personal values, cultural and religious beliefs, their own understanding of right and wrong, and the constitution to resolve ethical dilemmas.

5.2.1.3 Secondary research question three

What are their future ethics training needs?

The participants expressed that ethics training in future should prepare teachers to deal with real-life ethical issues that they are faced with daily. This is to ensure that teachers are well equipped with knowledge about their moral responsibilities and roles. They were also of the opinion that ethics training should include indigenous knowledge systems for the training to accommodate the varying contexts that teachers in South Africa work in. Finally, the participants indicated that training on emotional intelligence

is necessary since it might enable them to manage the moral stress associated with making ethical decisions.

5.2.1.4 Primary research question

What are the experiences of seven mainstream secondary school teachers of the ethics training they received in their undergraduate training?

The participants of the study felt that their undergraduate ethics training was inadequate, with some not having received ethics training at all. Irrespective of whether they had received training or not, the participants experienced feelings of incompetency when having to making ethical decisions that often involved learners. The participants' feelings of uncertainty highlighted their need for ethics training to be provided in ways that are suitable for their contexts that ensure they understand their moral responsibilities, and that emotionally equips them to manage the moral demands of making ethical decisions.

5.3 POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

Considering that there is limited research on the ethics training of teachers in South Africa, this study could serve as a guide for further research. Furthermore, this study provided insight into the possible existing gaps in teacher education programmes concerning teachers' ethics training. Therefore, this could encourage curriculum reform in teacher education programmes that aim to ensure that teachers can competently make ethical decisions. It could also stimulate thinking about continuous development programmes that can address the knowledge gap reported by the participants in this study.

5.4 CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

A limitation for this study concerned the unforeseen challenge of finding previous studies that have been conducted in South Africa regarding this field of inquiry. Studies that were available mainly addressed the ethical conduct of teachers but there were limited studies that spoke to how ethics education is conducted in teacher education programmes in South Africa. This may have impacted the scope of discussion on this topic; however, I read extensively on international studies to ensure that I had a knowledgeable foundation on the ethics training of teachers.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESEARCH

To gain further knowledge on the ethics training received by teachers in their undergraduate training, recommendations for research include the following:

- A research study with a larger sample. Considering that the research design was exploratory, a small sample of participants was included. Therefore, a large sample could provide diverse views from teachers who work in different school contexts.
- A research study that investigates how teacher education programmes provide ethics education. Such a study could indicate how these programmes understand the value of ethics and illuminate the logic behind how ethics education is provided. Furthermore, it could highlight existing gaps in the current teacher education programmes and possibly include the challenges that may be hindering teacher education programmes to provide adequate ethics education.

5.6 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The purpose of this exploratory case study was to explore and describe the ethics training that teachers received in their undergraduate training. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that they received inadequate ethics training during their undergraduate years as the participants experienced difficulty in making ethical decisions. This finding in this study aligned with international research which argued that teachers are not being adequately equipped to manage the moral demands of their work. Although the study was limited in scope, the findings can be used to guide further research into teachers' undergraduate ethics training. Furthermore, this research study was able to address an existing gap in the current knowledge in this field of enquiry as there are limited studies that exist in South Africa on this topic.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A:

Sample of the Permission Letter to Conduct Research at Secondary School and of Informed Consent Form: School Management Board

Appendix B:

Sample of Information Letter and Informed Consent Form for Participants

Appendix C:

Focus Group Schedule

Appendix D:

Field Notes including Initial Coding

Appendix E:

Reflective Journal

Appendix F:

Transcript of Focus Group Interview including Initial Coding

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APPENDIX A: SAMPLE OF THE PERMISSION LETTER TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT SECONDARY SCHOOL AND OF INFORMED CONSENT FORM: SCHOOL MANAGEMENT BOARD



Faculty of Education

Fakulteit Opvoedkunde
Lefapha la Thuto

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY

Dear School Management Board

I am currently registered as a student at the University of Pretoria and I am completing a Masters programme in Educational Psychology. As part of my degree requirements, I need to conduct a research study which I wish to conduct at your school. I hereby request your permission to conduct my research study at your school with five to eight of your teachers. The topic I am conducting my research on is:

An exploration of teachers' ethics training.

The purpose of this exploratory case study is to explore and describe the ethics training teachers received during their undergraduate training. Teachers play a significant role in the moral development of learners. It is through them and other significant others that learners acquire, emulate and evaluate ethical and moral behaviours. However, research indicates that the ethics training that teachers are receiving is not adequate. Therefore, this study can contribute to knowledge on how teachers are trained on ethics.

This research study will be in the form of a focus group interview with five to eight teachers from your school. The questions which will be addressed during the focus group interview are attached to this letter for you to review. The focus group interview will take place at your school, XXX Secondary School. This will be at an arranged time, outside of school hours, that will be convenient to all the teachers involved. The duration of the focus group interview will be approximately 90 minutes in which teachers will be encouraged to share with each other and with me about the ethics training they received during their undergraduate training. There will be one more session after I have analysed the findings from the focus group interview. This session will take approximately 30 minutes and will also be conducted at XXX Secondary School, outside of school hours, convenient to all the teachers involved. The purpose of this session will simply require the teachers to check that the findings were correctly interpreted. The final results, as presented in my mini-dissertation, will be made available to the teachers and to your School Management Board.

Teachers who participate do so voluntarily and are allowed to withdraw at any stage if they wish to do so. Issues regarding confidentiality and anonymity will be discussed with the teachers. Rules will be established to ensure that information shared during

the focus group interview remains confidential. To ensure the identity of teachers is protected, their names will also be removed from transcripts in the dissemination of the research results and they will be given a pseudonym. The information you give will only be used for academic purposes, in my mini-dissertation. However, as the data sets will be the intellectual property of the University of Pretoria, I also would like to request your permission to use your data, confidentially and anonymously, for further research purposes. Further research may include secondary data analysis and using the data for teaching purposes. The confidentiality and privacy applicable to this study will be binding on future research studies.

The collected data will be in my possession or my supervisor's and will be locked up for safety and confidential purposes. After completion of the study, the material will be stored at the University's Educational Psychology's department according to the policy requirements.

Your permission to conduct this research at your school will be highly appreciated and the contribution of your teachers will be of great value. Please complete the form below if your permission is granted. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Phumzile Kunene
Cell number: 079 987 0213
Email: phumzilegk@gmail.com

Dr Suzanne Bester (Supervisor)
Email: suzanne.bester@up.ac.za



Faculty of Education

Fakulteit Opvoedkunde
Lefapha la Thuto

INFORMED CONSENT SCHOOL MANAGEMENT BOARD

Title of research project: *An exploration of teachers' ethics training*

I, _____ the undersigned, in my capacity as a representative of the School Management board at _____ (name of school) hereby grant permission for Phumzile Kunene to conduct the above-mentioned research.

Signed at _____ on _____ 2021.

Representative of
School Management

Phumzile Kunene

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE OF INFORMATION LETTER AND INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS



REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION

Dear Sir/Madam

I am currently registered as a student at the University of Pretoria and I am completing a Masters programme in Educational Psychology. As part of my degree requirements, I need to conduct a research study. I hereby request and invite you to participate in this study. The topic I am conducting my research on is:

An exploration of teachers' ethics training

The purpose of this exploratory case study is to explore and describe the ethics training teachers received during their undergraduate training. Teachers play a significant role in the moral development of learners. It is through them and other significant others that learners acquire, emulate and evaluate ethical and moral behaviours. However, research indicates that the ethics training teachers are receiving may not be adequate. Therefore, this study can contribute to knowledge on how teachers are trained on ethics.

This research study will be in the form of a focus group interview that will be audio-recorded, with five to eight teachers. The questions which will be addressed during the focus group interview are attached to this invitation for you to review. The focus group interview will take place at your school, XXX Secondary School. This will be at an arranged time, outside of school hours, that will be convenient to you and all the other teachers involved. The duration of the focus group interview will be approximately 90 minutes in which you will be encouraged to share with other teachers and me, as I audio record, about the ethics you received during your undergraduate training. There will be one more session after I have analysed the findings from the focus group interview. This session will take approximately 30 minutes and will also be conducted at your school, at an arranged time, outside of school hours, convenient to you and all the other teachers involved. The purpose of this session will simply require you to check that the findings were correctly interpreted. The final results, as presented in my mini-dissertation, will be made available to you and to your School Management Board.

Your identity will be known to other participants who will partake in the focus group interview as you will share information amongst each other and me. Rules will be established to ensure that the information shared during the focus group interview

remains confidential. This matter will again be emphasized at the end of the research study.

Your identity will be protected in the dissemination of the results as your name will be removed from transcripts and you will be given a pseudonym. Only my supervisor and I will know your identity and this information will be treated as confidential. The information you give will only be used for academic purposes, in my mini-dissertation and in any other academic communication. Collected data will be in my possession or my supervisor's and will be locked up for safety and confidential purposes. After completion of the study, the material will be stored at the University's Educational Psychology's department according to the policy requirements.

Your participation in this research study is completely voluntary and you are allowed to withdraw from the study at any stage if you wish to do so. If at any stage of the research you wish to withdraw, please inform me, the researcher timeously. The data collected from you up until the point of withdrawal will be incorporated into the overall findings of the study.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please complete the form below. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Phumzile Kunene (Researcher)
Telephone number: 079 987 0213
Email: phumzilegk@gmail.com

Dr Suzanne Bester (Supervisor)
Email: suzanne.bester@up.ac.za



INFORMED CONSENT FOR TEACHERS

Title of research project: *An exploration of teachers' ethics training*

I, _____ the undersigned,
in my capacity as a teacher at _____
(Name of school) hereby agree to participate in the above-mentioned research study.
I furthermore give my permission for the research session to be audio-recorded. I
understand that my contribution will be treated as confidential and anonymous within
the limitations discussed above. I would / would not like to use a pseudonym to be
linked to my responses once the results of the study have been disseminated. I
understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time if I wish to do so and will
inform the researcher in a timeous manner of this decision.

Signed at _____ on _____ 2021.

Participant

Researcher

APPENDIX C: FOCUS GROUP SCHEDULE



Faculty of Education

Fakulteit Opvoedkunde
Lefapha la Thuto

THE TEACHER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

An exploration of teachers' ethics training

Date: _____

Time of interview: _____

Place: _____

Duration: 90 minutes

Interviewer: Phumzile Kunene

Participants: _____

QUESTIONS

1. How would you describe an ethical teacher?
2. What ethics training did you receive during your undergraduate training?
3. Describe your experience of the ethics training?
4. Describe the ethical decisions that you have been required to make?
5. How did the ethics training equip you to make those ethical decisions?
6. Do you think the ethics training you received in your undergraduate training is adequate?
7. What are your future ethics training needs? / What do you recommend current teacher education programmes should do to prepare teachers for the ethical decisions they have to make?

APPENDIX D: FIELD NOTES INCLUDING INITIAL CODING

Field notes 31 May 2021

- 10 am
- 7 teachers present
- Teachers are friendly and seem eager to participate

① ethics training received (undergrad)

- only two participants have immediate answers
- the rest shake their heads indicating no training "probes"
- Shakes head still
- contribute via in-service training, seem more acquainted with in-service. → responses, not engagement

② Adequacies of ethics training (PT)

- teacher who did not contribute much, contributes here → emphasizes and stresses that training does not accommodate current context, describes it as "Yizo Yizo"
- "must consider the direct impact matters impacting learners in the classroom" → teachers not in agreement
- emotional intelligence "you end up losing it" → sighs
- ethical decisions? Do NOT EQUIP THEM, still inadequate "Not enough" → all not in agree

③ ethical conduct of teachers

- confident about what constitutes an ethical teacher, no confusion, provide immediate responses. Build on each other's thoughts.
- no sexual harassment
- not taking advantage (vulnerability)
- focus on teaching and learning
- showing understanding of conduct

④ as ethical teachers

- not all seem in agreement
- best interest of the learner:
 - ↑ [when making] decisions
- What do these decisions look like?
 - confidentiality
 - but consequence?
 - How to find balance?
- seem sensitive and confused about this → attempts culture religion constitution moral values

APPENDIX E: REFLECTIVE JOURNAL

12 April 2021

After struggling with gaining access to schools as a result of the Covid-19, I managed to get a school that has agreed to my request to conduct research at their school. I have also had a few teachers come forward indicating their willingness to participate. The task I have now is to find a venue where I will conduct the focus group as I was instructed by the Gauteng Department of Education to not collect data on the school premises. The Covid-19 pandemic has left many of us living in fear and I am grateful that I have teachers who are willing to meet and share their experiences with me, I just need to ensure that I find a venue that is safe, where social distancing is possible as it my responsibility to ensure participants are protected from harm.

31 May 2021

Today I conducted my focus group interview. I was initially concerned that I was not be able to gain in-depth data about their ethics training as many of the participants where not necessarily verbal. They communicated through non-verbal gestures such as nodding or shaking their heads. I wondered if maybe they were uncomfortable with the language I was using, therefore, I would say a word here and there in isiZulu to indicate that I am welcoming of other languages. I think I did this because I made the assumption that teachers who work in the township may prefer to speak their own language. I have also been thinking about other assumptions that I have of teachers that work in schools located in the township and how being a former learner in the model C schooling system affects my understanding of these teachers. There is nothing I think of at this point but I will take note of it.

As I reflect, I think I should have maybe asked, also I think it is important to acknowledge that it was the first few minutes of the focus group and teachers or the participants were probably just easing into it. I think it will be beneficial to reframe this experience for me and understand that even with non-verbal gestures, the teachers did communicate in some way, in a manner that is most comfortable at that moment because they were able to give me an idea of their experience through confirming and disconfirming my statements through these gestures.

As the focus group progressed, the participants seemed to have become more comfortable as they were contributing more to the discussions by sharing their experiences and thoughts. Many understood their moral responsibility as teachers, they spoke of themselves as responsible for teaching and learning but also nation building. It seemed that to them, the impact of their roles was far reaching beyond the school context and I can only imagine the weight they feel because of that understanding. There is always a level of empathy and sensitivity I feel towards teachers as I come from a family background of teachers who I have seen, are expected to perform their duties exceptionally but do not always have the support to perform these duties. I think I should be aware of this sensitivity and how it may impact the way I make sense of their findings.

Teachers seemed to be clear on their understanding of what an ethical teacher is and it was interesting to see as I have read that teachers particularly in South Africa, rate high with regards to engaging in misconduct. It was interesting to see how others could recall in detail how they trained on ethics in their education programmes, while others

seemed did not experience training. I should consider how that speaks to the prioritising of ethics education in teacher education programmes and maybe why there are such contrasting experiences.

The participants had to make ethical decisions that had a great implication for the development of learners, usually in a social and emotional aspect, which would essentially affecting the learning aspect. I think it highlighted just how being a teacher or teaching is indeed moral in nature. Despite this fact teachers were clear that they were not sufficiently prepared to make ethical decisions. It was definitely similar to what I have read in the literature, they felt training was not enough or incompatible to their experiencing. It was interesting to see how they resorted to own resources to make ethical decisions where training was not provided.

Although they attempted to find ways to deal with the demands of their work, they were able to provide a lot of insight on what would be helpful if included in the ethics training of teachers. They had diverse views about the kind of knowledge that should be included, and how training should be conducted. It essentially highlighted existing ethics needs.

15 July 2021

The process of transcribing and coding has made me feel closer to data, I believe. I discovered a number of things that participants were expressing through other ideas. This has eased my mind because I think I went into the focus group with the assumption that participants were required to answer the questions a particular way but I could see how the expression of other ideas can reflect answers to other questions I was looking to explore. I am glad I am now aware of this blind spot because then I can engage more meaningfully with the data.

3 September 2021

Writing Chapter 4 has not been the easiest for me, I am trying to balance writing it in a manner that reflects what the participants have said but organising in a way is meaningful to my supervisor and eventually the examiner. Talking to my supervisor about this difficulty helped greatly as she explained how such this chapter is usually approached. I think it was also be helpful when participants check that the findings accurately represent what they have said.

APPENDIX F: TRANSCRIPT OF FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW INCLUDING INITIAL CODING

1 Focus Group (P: Interviewer; P1-P7: Participant)

2 P: I just want to go with the first question. How would you
3 describe an ethical teacher? What are your ideas of what an
4 ethical teacher is?

5 P2: An ethical teacher is a teacher that adheres to the norm
6 of proper conduct in terms of morality and self-conduct within
7 the workplace.

8 P: So when you say proper conduct, what do you mean?
9 What are those things?

10 P2: It is a teacher that refrains from sexual harassment and
11 sexual relationships with learners. A teacher that promotes
12 an ongoing development in education and keeps abreast
13 with educational trends and also adheres to the prescriptions
14 of the council of education.

15 P: Anyone else who wants to add on?

16 P5: An ethical teacher could be someone who sticks with
17 responsibility, inside and outside the classroom. Who is
18 showing a strong understanding of what is right or what is
19 expected or considered to be right as an educator all the
20 time. Especially in classroom conduct whereby a teacher
21 shows that he or she understands a code of conduct.

22 P1: Another thing I wish to add as my colleagues have
23 alluded. With regards to an educator being ethical, I also
24 look at the issue of a teacher or an educator using the
25 principles as an individual thing in the society. You live by
26 morals, you live by principles and so forth but within our
27 sector as educators we are also guided by policies. When
28 you are guided by policies, some of those policies speak
29 directly to inclusivity.

60 issue for me now that I am looking what is happening under
61 the table, you understand? Because I am coming in well
62 prepared. There is not even a way for a learner to see a
63 boyfriend in me because the way I come in, I come in fully
64 prepared and I know my story, not unless I come in and
65 make jokes and we find one another having topics other than
66 the content that should be delivered to the learners.

67 P: Okay, I hear you. Does anyone else have anything to add
68 about what you think is an ethical teacher?

69 P3: I think they already mentioned most of the things that we
70 all subscribe to in terms of an ethical teacher but I will maybe
71 go in further to say that an ethical is a teacher is teacher who
72 does right even if the conditions or the circumstances do not
73 allow them, so doing right even under situations whereby
74 everyone is doing wrong and when you are doing right you
75 are seen as an unpopular person or someone who is
76 another way but you still do the right thing but I think it goes
77 beyond the delivery of content because as they speak about
78 nation building, it is not only the content but also motivating,
79 also as a teacher you are a parent. So when you look at a
80 learner with maybe needs or faced with circumstances that
81 are maybe beyond one's control, as a person you should be
82 able to intervene and you need not to take advantage of the
83 vulnerability of the those learners so it goes beyond the
84 delivery of content to me.

85 P: I think you also mean that an ethical teacher is one who
86 extends themselves, who plays a role beyond their actual
87 teacher role.

88 P3: Exactly, yes

30 If you look into inclusivity, it goes hand and hand with
31 honesty or loyalty. A teacher alone in the class has a
32 responsibility to play in the stage for the benefit of the
33 learners but it is always within the best interest of that
34 educator if he or she is willing to do so, that is where there is
35 a question of justice to learners. So in the case of a teacher
36 being ethical that means that when that teachers gets into
37 the class, they come in well prepared because he or she
38 knows what is morally correct and that person will be
39 married to those principles and guidelines that seeks to
40 advance the development of the nation building.

41 P: Are those principles that you are guided by, principles that
42 you find in the policies?

43 P1: When I firstly started, I firstly indicated that as a human
44 being, as an individual you are guided by certain principles
45 that you as a person subscribe by.

46 P: Okay, I hear you

47 P1: Before I got a license from SACE (South Africa Council
48 of Educators) to get into a class, there are marriages I have
49 to marry myself as an individual. My colleague made an
50 example of sexual harassment and so forth. One of the
51 indications that have disturbed the system and have made
52 teachers have a wrong name in some other aspects. Then
53 my view in this matter was to say also, a teacher must also
54 have a justice to learners because the entire SMT (School
55 Management Team) members are not there in the class. A
56 class is the teacher and the learners so it depends on me if I
57 am coming in well prepared, yes or no. So then it comes
58 back to what is morally correct so ethically so I must come
59 fully prepared, if I come to a class fully prepared, there is no

89 P: Is there anything else?

90 P1: Before we skip this point, I also had an interest based on
91 what my colleague said when touching the most important
92 parts. I have also three points here, the decision making, the
93 attitude and the behaviour. As a teacher, under the topic of
94 an ethical educator, as a teacher when you get into a class,
95 to make a decision is something very difficult. Why am I
96 saying so? In a class, there is no time whereby you are
97 making a decision for few individuals selectively so. When a
98 teacher makes a decision in the classroom, it must support
99 the entire class because I also indicated the policy of
100 inclusivity, that each and every learner must feel welcome. If
101 I can make an example with that one, I will make an
102 example with the case of a learner misbehaving during my
103 presence in the classroom, I cannot take that learner away
104 from the class because of the policy of inclusivity, even if I
105 give a punishment maybe I say stand by the door but I
106 cannot say outside the door, a learner must be inside, that is
107 part of me being ethical because of my morals and my
108 understanding and the fact that the behaviour or the mistake
109 of the learner, must not punish the learner towards their
110 future because a learner has a right to education, that is why
111 he or she is here and the learner is expected as a child to
112 make mistakes, it is also their right to make mistakes and we
113 must guide them. Again, there is also the issue of behaviour,
114 in any classroom environment, there is always that ill
115 behaviour of learners depending on their societies and
116 where they are coming from, I cannot get in much on that
117 one but I want to act in my position, being ethical. In those ill
118 behaviour, when learners are acting in their own interest at
119 their own levels, you are a teacher you also have a

120 responsibility to be ethical by doing what? You will find a
121 learner in a class who will see you as a younger brother to
122 him or her or maybe because I do not know he or she is
123 having a boyfriend outside because we have lesbians and so
124 forth. So maybe she is having a boyfriend outside and then
125 feels that my age is also the age of that person that is
126 outside but when we are in the classroom, I must view this
127 learner by how he or she is challenging me but I must act
128 professionally and ethically at all times, with or without that
129 learner or even if that learner is trying to divulge, that is
130 taking me out of the classroom because a learner is very
131 tricky. The learner can easily open these small topics that
132 are going to take the teacher out of the content then that is
133 the conversation that they enjoy because they are no longer
134 teaching and learning. Us our focus as teachers who guide
135 these learners, we must focus on teaching and learning of
136 which is the core duties of us being here in this learning
137 environment. Lastly, with regards to attitude, the attitude is
138 something very difficult. The attitude you find from your
139 colleague, the attitude you find from the learners but as an
140 ethical educator, how do you behave in such circumstances?
141 It is very important to be professional at all levels, at all
142 times. How would you act yourself professionally or ethically
143 during those trying times? It is also because your values and
144 your norms, where you are coming from and what is your
145 understanding and what you did in your undergraduate
146 certificate as you were alluding to also check at our
147 undergraduate level, what is our basic understanding
148 because we were taught such issues about what can
149 happen during the work time because in any business
150 organisation, there will always be work related politics but in

180 P6: Back at varsity, there is this module that we did called
181 Education Studies and then there we were taught about the
182 role of the teacher in the classroom that your role is not only
183 to go teach. You know when we did methodology of history,
184 my lecturer there used to stress the part of "who" in the
185 lesson plan. She said a lot, my lecturer did not want us to
186 focus on any part as we did with "who" because she
187 stressed that there is no way that you can teach very well
188 when you do not know your learners. So she stressed that
189 you need to know them, know their background, know where
190 they are coming from, know your learners because you can
191 come there and be an excellent teacher but when you do not
192 know them, they cannot receive this information because
193 you do not know the things that they go through, you do not
194 know what happened to them before they came to school on
195 that particular day so she stressed, you know. It is not
196 possible that you can know each and every one. This came
197 from this home, this one have a But you need to try as
198 teacher to understand the environment in which you are
199 working at, you need to understand where your learners are
200 coming from because she stressed that is only when you will
201 be able to make decisions that will benefit these learners,
202 when you fully understand them and you know them. Now
203 when we were doing this module, Education Studies that is
204 when they taught that a teacher is not only a teacher. You
205 have so many roles that you play, you can be a teacher in
206 period one and you are psychologist in the next period and
207 you are a doctor in the next period. You have so many things
208 that you need to do, it is not an easy job because there are
209 so many things that you are focusing on and you need be
210 there at all times. These learners depend on you entirely for

151 those conflicts, you must always side yourself in a position of
152 functional conflict and not a dysfunctional conflict because
153 we encourage and we welcome the functional conflict that
154 seeks to support the interest of us being in that particular
155 environment.

156 P: Okay, I hear you. I actually want to go to the decision
157 making but I think maybe let us start with this first so that I
158 get that gist. Let me just go to the second question. What
159 ethics training did you receive in your undergraduate
160 training? These are your BEd degrees when you were
161 studying. Do you remember any sort of content that was
162 specifically dedicated to ethics or maybe when you were
163 studying whatever modules, they spoke of ethics?

164 P2: In my case, I was trained in my undergraduate years on
165 professional ethics using management which was vocational
166 module. So on that module, they touched on the importance
167 of adhering to the prescriptions of the South African Council
168 of Educators as an educator. So basically the content was
169 speaking about the code of conduct of the educator as to
170 say what is expected of me as an educator on the school
171 premises and also in the community because it also goes to
172 the extent of the community that as educators, we are
173 required to play pastoral role as one of the colleagues as
174 already alluded. It goes to the extent that we also identify the
175 learners with needs and therefore we do not take advantage
176 of such situations. So the training that I received in my
177 undergraduate was that one under management which
178 spoke to SACE, so that is the only training that I received.

179 P: Anyone else?

211 the duration of their stay here at school, they cannot go
212 anywhere, they cannot jump the gate and attend to whatever
213 it is that they are faced with so they will come to you as an
214 adult, they will come to you as their teacher and you need to
215 try, you need to motivate, you need to counsel so what sir
216 said there about knowing your learners and being able to
217 motivate them is actually very important.

218 P: So can I ask something, so in the, you said it was
219 Education?

220 P6: Education Studies

221 P: So in Education Studies, it was something like, you did
222 not have a module, I mean a unit specifically described as
223 ethics? It was something that, through that module, it was
224 always emphasized? Whatever topic you were doing or
225 section you were doing?

226 P6: Yes, it was on teacher development. It was on you as a
227 teacher and even Teaching Studies was also talking about
228 that. We had a module called Education Studies and we had
229 a module called Teaching Studies. Teaching Studies was
230 about you in the classroom and also, it was a module
231 whereby they mentioned all these roles that you need to play
232 and then with Education Studies, it was a background of
233 theorists, people like Piaget who stressed what is it that you
234 need to do, like things that you need to do as a teacher.
235 Your role in the classroom, your role in the school
236 environment also.

237 P: It sounds like they would integrate it in the different
238 modules.

239 P6: Yes, yes.

240 P: Thank you so much. Anyone else who remembers or do
241 you not remember sir? Do you not remember what you
242 studied *qfww* so, I think again it also speaks to how then you
243 experienced the training. Uh, *maybe* for some. *maybe* it is
244 "I do not know .. *because* I do not remember what we did"
245 but yeah okay no it is fine. So now I will just skip and go to
246 question four for the sake of time. *Uhm*, can you please
247 describe any ethical decisions that you have been required
248 to make as a teacher? Just on a daily basis. Any decision
249 that you have had to make.

250 P2: Thank you ma'am, uh one of the decisions that I am
251 required to make as a teacher on a daily basis is to conduct
252 myself in a way that enhances the teaching profession as a
253 whole and secondly, *exercise* authority with compassion but
254 then the most important one is to equip these learners with
255 skills to be able to bestow in the country's workplace
256 tomorrow so basically it is that. Thank you.

257 P1: I also have another example.

258 P: Okay sure.

259 P1: I once hear, there was this lady in this school, she was
260 our [inaudible], in the year 2020, she sometimes used to go
261 to the district, she thought that maybe I went to the district
262 and she organised for R100 and that is our tariff as we
263 normally get as an allowance if you used your own private
264 transport and when she gave me I realised that I do not
265 remember any trip that I have took and I brought it back that
266 R100 I never used it. I think that one is a good example of
267 me being ethical.

299 and find from HODs and Life Orientation and see if we can
300 try to arrange the social worker, meeting up with the social
301 workers even though that the learners request that keep this
302 confidential, you cannot disclose such and all that stuff.

303 P: *Mmm*.

304 P3: Ma'am I think with regards to the example that you gave,
305 I think more than anything else remember that our theme is
306 ethics right? Now which means that *uhm* doing, separating
307 between *right* and *wrong* so I think in certain circumstances
308 when you make such decisions, you need to consider the
309 best interest of the learner. It is not about you as an
310 individual but uh I think you need to take into consideration
311 the best interest of the learner and then if *maybe* it is
312 something that has to do with the colleague then also you
313 need to ensure that every decision that you take benefits the
314 entire institution not an individual. I think sir mentioned it
315 earlier, like inclusivity, one of the most important things when
316 you are about to make decisions. I mean you are caught in
317 between in such a situation but what is it that needs to guide
318 you, the best interest of the learner.

319 P: May I ask? What you are highlighting now? What informs
320 you when you say best interest of the learner, is that a
321 personal thing you believe or is it something you were
322 trained to understand that it is the best interest of the
323 learner?

324 P3: Okay, I will take from what I believe in. I normally
325 mention the fact that I do not know whether I am privileged
326 or blessed or what to be working in an institution like this, I
327 am born in *Daveyton* and I work in *Daveyton* so one of the
328 other things that comes to mind every day is that when I

268 P: Of you making an ethical decision at that point, yes. Are
269 there any ethical decisions that you have to make? Let us
270 say for example, with regards with learners. So maybe now
271 for example, you have this child coming to you and saying sir
272 this is happening at home, my uncle molested me,
273 somebody is doing this and they say to you, do not tell
274 anyone and now you have to make a decision *qfww* I have
275 responsibility like you say you have a pastoral role, you have
276 to be a parent as well, you cannot let this child continue
277 being exposed to being molested at home but at the same
278 time, this child is trusting you to not say anything so let us
279 say you said "I will not say anything" and you are being
280 honest because you consider that important but then it so
281 happens that for example, you told this child that you are not
282 going to say anything but you are also concerned that I need
283 to do something about this so you see here, you have to
284 make an extremely difficult ethical decision. So is there no
285 ethical decision that you have to make with regards to
286 maybe learners or colleagues? Maybe you see a colleague –
287 just things you have had to question, that okay I need to
288 make a decision, is it right to do that or is it wrong? Have you
289 never had to make ethical decisions?

290 P5: I think have been making quite of them from the
291 beginning of the year where three to four learners they have
292 been absent and I have to make some effort and try to
293 contact the parents and find out what is going on with these
294 learners and try to do a follow up because they are lagging
295 behind on task submission and task finishing and all that
296 stuff. Another one, the recent one is that the learner, she
297 even told me that "I was about to terminate my life" and all
298 that stuff and I tried by means to disclose such information

329 come to work I am going to contribute positively, not to the
330 school per se but to the entire community of *Daveyton*. So it
331 will sadden me to see maybe one of my learners maybe
332 being a beggar in the street when they have passed through
333 these hands of mine so that is why I am saying that
334 everything that you will be doing as teachers from my side, it
335 will be the best interest of the learner and ensuring that –
336 remember they come from different family backgrounds,
337 most of them are coming from humbled backgrounds so as a
338 teacher, whenever I go to class, I try my level best to
339 contribute positively to those learners so that in the near
340 future, they should be able to develop in all aspects. So
341 everything I am doing is for the benefit of the community.

342 P: This sounds very much like what sir said, you have what
343 you are trained but you also have your own set of morals
344 that inform you.

345 P4: I have had an experience regarding *learners, net*? They
346 were teasing one another and in that case the ethical
347 decision that I make is to do what? Is to teach them and
348 remind them of the global ethics, the global values so they
349 stop teasing one another and know that we need to respect
350 one another and stuff like that. That is one thing I have done.

351 P: Any other, anyone else?

352 P1: When you touch the point of learners being molested
353 mostly at home. I think we cannot reference to what can
354 happen at home, this can anywhere as we speak right now
355 currently there is a trend of learners bullying one another.

356 P: Yes

357 P1: You also remind me of the few terms of the story of
358 Anna O by Sigmund Freud. I do not know if you remember
359 that one, the case of the iceberg. I am also a psychologist by
360 profession in other matters [laughs]. Well what I recall, there
361 is a learner who reported a case but this one was more of
362 her boyfriend, you know these learners when they are
363 young, they are not ready to make some decisions and this
364 gentleman or this boyfriend whatsoever was forcing the
365 learner to make decisions. So you know those cases for us
366 as males, sometimes it becomes difficult to advise and when
367 the learners asks you not to talk out now you always become
368 afraid because if I keep this confidential to myself I do not
369 know when it comes tomorrow, at what angle will it come
370 maybe then it will be as if I was taking advantage myself
371 because I can listen because nowadays it is a problem to
372 even listen so I had to create a case for her and we talked
373 with this ma'am so so, you can be able to talk to you as
374 females and you will be having an understanding and
375 fortunately, she was assisted very shortly. So in other
376 means, we do experience such cases. Thank you so much.

377 P: So I would like to ask, can pose you a question sir? So if
378 you were for example were to experience something like
379 that. How would you make that decision? What would make
380 you decide what is the best route to take? So let us say you
381 get a learner who says this is the situation with my boyfriend
382 but do not tell anyone. What would you decide to do for an
383 example?

384 P7: I think this goes back to what sir already said, it goes
385 back to the thing that you have to decide what is what best
386 for the learner because sure the learner may come to me

418 enough to deal with such issues therefore it would be proper
419 for me maybe to refer the learner to the relevant person who
420 can be able to assist because I do not want to be caught in a
421 situation whereby "also P3 knows our secret" because they
422 may take advantage tomorrow and say "you knew about this
423 and you kept quiet" maybe you had ulterior motives so as
424 much as we need to protect the interest of the learner but
425 you also need to protect yourself under such situations. I
426 think we all agree on one thing, such issues that maybe if a
427 girl child comes to telling me about menstruation cycles, I am
428 not well equipped so an ethical thing to do will be go to a
429 female teacher and ask her to intervene.

430 P: Okay I hear you. So I am going to, so, if I jump around
431 with the questions, I am just sometimes guided by some of
432 the things you are saying. Okay so, for those who did
433 receive training, like ma'am you vividly remember and you
434 also remember. In any decision you have had to make right?
435 How do you think that training equipped you to be able to
436 make ethical decisions? Or do you feel it equipped you at
437 all? Maybe you were trained and it did not help you at all, the
438 decisions you made were things you made personally based
439 on your own moral compass. So how did the training equip
440 to be able to make those decisions?

441 P2: To answer you in short, I will go back and refer as I work
442 closely with the school social worker, the training has
443 assisted me as the I assumed the office last year, I was
444 taught the sensitivity of cases to say that the cases are not
445 the same, bullying and rape cannot be handled or mediated
446 the same so we were trained to advise the learners that if
447 they want to see the social worker, they must not divulge to

387 and say sir, one, two three has happened please do not tell
388 anyone. So me, obviously, there nothing – maybe there is
389 cruelty and nothing I can do about that and I need to take the
390 matter further so that justice or, that the child can be treated
391 well. If I am going to sit with a matter then that means it will
392 continue happening. So if that thing I decide, I have to make
393 sure that I have, as sir explained, whatever decision I take is
394 to benefit the child and it should not be that if the learner told
395 me to keep quiet and I keep quiet. So you see, it says that I
396 am not truthful and actually I am saying no, since told me
397 that your boyfriend hits or molests you and I keep quiet, then
398 it means my silence means that yes the boyfriend is right, he
399 must continue and do that so I must make sure that when a
400 child comes and says do not tell anyone, I must make sure
401 that whatever I decision I make will benefit the child. Yes the
402 child can be angry that "I told sir not to tell anyone" but at the
403 end of the day the child would have been helped.

404 P3: I want to just reiterate on what my colleague has already
405 mentioned to say that somewhere, somehow you will find
406 that it is a trap. The learners can also take advantage of
407 maybe you being a good listener or you being good to them
408 so somewhere somehow, I think it is proper for us maybe as
409 – especially in a situation whereby we cannot deal with
410 certain issue because we are talking integrity, we talking
411 honesty, we talking ethics. Maybe I might not be well trained
412 when it comes to the psychological part and so on and so
413 on, maybe I did another qualification then so I might not
414 have maybe the relevant psychological background that can
415 assist that learner and me pretending as if I can help that
416 learner and keep quiet and so on, it will be unethical
417 because now I am lying to myself, I know that I not capable

448 me to say that "sir I have been raped by my uncle" but
449 advise them to say, I am having a psychosocial issue or I am
450 having a family matter. So that I also do not interfere with the
451 confidentiality of the learner but according to the constitution
452 of the country, we have privacy as one of our rights but in
453 section 36, which is limitations, we are allowed to limit the
454 right of privacy on the grounds that it reasonable and
455 justifiable to say that "my child, you are saying you want to
456 see the social worker, you have been done one, two, three,
457 four, five but I must also validate the authenticity of the case,
458 so there are channels that we were trained to use in that
459 regard, with us we work closely with the social worker and
460 nurses, I think you have seen the nurses with blue uniform.
461 Those are our school nurses so we have been trained to
462 approach those necessary stakeholders in such cases.

463 P: Okay, so I want to ask you ma'am. How did the equip you
464 to make ethical decisions?

465 P6: Well the training assisted me to know – because when I
466 went to varsity for the first time, I thought I am going there to
467 train to be a teacher and I thought that coming back, I am
468 just going to go to class, my duty there but back in varsity I
469 was told that there is so many things I need to be, so I was
470 told that I need to understand and treat my learners
471 accordingly and to be accessible, you know these learners
472 need you to be accessible so you cannot just say "I am a
473 teacher, I do not care what is happening if you are raped or
474 whatever, it is not my problem", you need to be accessible
475 so that they can come to you and you can treat their cases
476 with respect and confidentiality and if it is a case you cannot
477 handle, know who to tell and you know where to go but still

478 treating that case with respect and confidentiality so I was –
479 my training taught me that going there, I am going in a place
480 whereby I need to go and try and heal souls that are broken
481 and I am not just going there to just hold chalk and that is it
482 so I need to be as accessible as I can and to respect these
483 learners so that they can – so that I can receive the same
484 respect because sometimes you go there, you demand
485 attention, you demand respect but you do not give any and it
486 becomes difficult for them to respect as well because you
487 are just there and you have created this wall between you
488 and them so I was told you must not build any walls between
489 me and my learners.

490 P: So do you feel that training was enough? It was
491 adequate? It equipped you sufficiently to be able to face the
492 ethical decisions that you have to make here in the school as
493 a practising teacher?

494 P6: No it was not enough, some of the decisions I am
495 making them as I go along, based on... [taps chest] but I
496 always need to tap back on what I was taught.

497 P: Do you also feel it was not enough? The training you got?
498 Do you feel it was adequate? For you to make decisions
499 now?

500 P2: I feel it was enough because they alluded to the
501 consequence of not adhering to those ethics, I will give you
502 one typical example of me busy divulging a learners'
503 performance, "this learner got this mark", telling my
504 colleagues or other learners, it is not allowed according to
505 the ethical training we have received so I think it was
506 sufficient because it taught me the consequences, it applied
507 the consequences of failure to adhere – these are

538 the organic like somewhere, somehow how do we deal with
539 issues? I deal with issues the township way, speak and
540 understand, that is not prescribed in the training so
541 sometimes "look here one, two, three is not on" [Speaks
542 slang used in the community]. You see at some stage you
543 are able to communicate with learners like that which is not
544 in the training part of it so in short I am saying, the training
545 can never be enough because the circumstances are
546 changing every now and then and you might find that it was
547 prescribed in 1990 and but now we are in a different decade.

548 P: Just to clarify, by organic you mean your own personal?
549 Your own personal values or?

550 P3: Understanding, yes.

551 P5: So based on what is being spoken by P3, you need to
552 keep in mind that the training is global, it is more like we are
553 trained for a model C school but when you go to the
554 township it functions differently, even different schools, going
555 back to *practicals* *neh*? Different schools have different
556 school policies so they function differently. That training
557 cannot answer to every one so it depends on you as a
558 human, okay fine these are the values, how does the school
559 operate then how does the school policy, how do you
560 cooperate with the school policy in order to solve other
561 issues before you make your own... so that at least there is a
562 procedure that you need to follow.

563 P7: I just wanted to say what sir just said, when you look at
564 the training, it focuses on model C schools and if you look

508 consequences. We can go with necessary disciplinary
509 measures or we are confiscating your SACE licence which I
510 think is more than enough for a person not to.

511 P: So can I ask quickly, for those who maybe do not recall
512 specifically what training you may have gotten, do you think
513 – considering now you are a teacher, everybody has these
514 high expectations of teachers, if you do something wrong
515 now, obviously guaranteed it will be in the paper, a teacher
516 did this – like you said you have to protect yourself at what
517 angle because there is sensitivity around that so they put
518 you on a moral standard as teachers, do you feel you wish
519 you could have gotten more training to understand how
520 make certain decisions or do you feel it is fine, you did not
521 have to be trained and you can make those decisions on
522 your own?

523 P3: In answering that, I like the manner in which you phrased
524 this question, to say was it enough? Somewhere, somehow
525 you will realise that the training on its own is not enough
526 because according to the manner in which the training has
527 taken place, it is more like a "one shoe fits all", we are using
528 the same principles and yet the circumstances are different.
529 So there is where sometimes you realise that not only the
530 academic intelligence can solve and deal with particular
531 problems but also the organic intelligence comes into play.
532 Somewhere, somehow, I do not think that the training can be
533 enough because the situation that the teacher is faced with
534 in Limpopo cannot be the same, they may look the same but
535 they are not the same so somewhere, somehow that is why I
536 am saying, *uhm* maybe instead of applying the academic
537 which you got from the training, somewhere you need to use

565 we teach in "*Yizo Yizo*"¹ situations. So the way they taught
566 us that a child in class when they make a noise, you just say
567 "sorry, sit down you making noise", does not work here you
568 see? So the training focuses on one side on model C
569 schools then we on this side have our own ways of dealing
570 with things, maybe using township language because they
571 tell you okay "use appropriate language when speaking to
572 learners" you see? But sometimes you need to say "no
573 brother, wait" [speaks in slang used in the community]. It is
574 something we learned along the way, we were not taught.

575 P: You already answering what I wanted to ask actually.
576 Then what are teachers' future ethics training needs? Or
577 what do you recommend in terms of how teachers should be
578 trained? And I am already hearing that it must be – okay as
579 much as you are saying it is not enough, it is valuable that it
580 be context specific. It cannot be training that only
581 accommodates certain circumstances like you say, it would
582 have to fit in here right, then what other recommendations do
583 you have in terms of how teachers should be trained so that
584 when they are faced with things like that, a teacher can
585 easily make a decision that how can I reprimand this child,
586 how do I do this without necessarily being in situations that
587 makes them vulnerable to be seen as unethical. How else
588 can they be trained if we were to say, we want to work on a
589 training of some sort.

590 P1: Firstly, we are living in changing environment, a person
591 who is not looking for a change, that person cannot be part

¹ *Yizo Yizo* was a television drama series that was based on a school located in a township. This series depicted the issue of gangs, drugs, rape and misbehaviour from learners, as well as other psychosocial issues that were occurring within the school.

592 of nation building. I have heard colleagues outlining the
593 issue of being sufficient or not being sufficient, when you
594 look at the case of ethics, it is an easiest topic but in my
595 feeling and in my understanding, within those people who
596 are training, there is no so much attention on it based on the
597 real matters as the colleagues were outlining. Even myself, I
598 am still voting with those that it was never enough because
599 why I am saying so, because you must also remember that
600 during the university times, you only focusing like a learner
601 here, most of us are focusing on getting the degree, that is
602 what rings in your mind based on the time that you have and
603 you also look at your age and what is happening in the real
604 world so you want to graduate. Few people who are in
605 universities with the understanding of the university can be
606 able to practice what they learn from universities so that they
607 can be able to demonstrate themselves within the society,
608 you see some people who have for example learned
609 financial skills, those are small skills but even today they fail
610 to make decisions financially, do you understand? But they
611 are in a financial department, do you understand? So even
612 in this business of ethics, when you look at the ethics, you
613 find people they act wrong while they know what is expected
614 of them in actual fact, we must not be fearful and take a
615 stand to say it is not welcome of us to be found, maybe I am
616 having an affair with a learner, we must be vocal on that one,
617 something that I must not be expected of, you can expect
618 me for example by mistake of the punishment that I made to
619 a learner but not in an issue of trying to humiliate the learner
620 do you understand? But all those things are dependent on
621 the understanding and the level of that environment where
622 you are working. Now to comment on the main issues that

653 will never be enough as time changes so we have to adjust
654 as teachers, that is how I see it that training we will never
655 say, it is enough now. Like it can never be enough. As we
656 just need to adjust and other things we must live ourselves,
657 like sir said at university they do not teach you that you say
658 to a child "behave like this" [uses slang] but this what we
659 have taught ourselves now and it works for us a lot of the
660 times so you never say – because at times some things you
661 were taught do not work, things of the township work in the
662 township, speak in slang with learners in the class you see?
663 So these for model C, "sorry, excuse me, sit down", being
664 soft on learners, it does not work for us. We have to
665 approach it in a township manner you see? But in
666 approaching it in a township way, it is not to say that children
667 should now feel that this person is fighting with us you see?
668 But you must build that relationship with the children, we get
669 along but they know that sir got us because everything else
670 we have learned shame.

671 P5: With the ethical training, I will also add that it is equally
672 important to note that it will not be enough but what I
673 recommend is that – to be short and precise – is to remain
674 calm for the educators with whatever situation they are
675 dealing with at the present moment – is to remain calm while
676 taking extra precautions in terms of controlling the emotions
677 when dealing with the certain issue in the classroom and
678 also try by all means to reduce favouritism and keep it
679 consistent on how we work out those hiccups that usually
680 take place in the classroom format.

681 P: I just want to ask you, so now when you say this was for
682 the teachers, do you also feel the same way that the training

623 can be added to comment within our syllabus including the
624 policy that the education department is developing, we must
625 also look at the direct issues that are impacting teachers in
626 the classrooms, if you are able to diagnose those matters.
627 We will be able to identify ourselves the position and our
628 responsibilities because what happens? You find a person is
629 acting on emotions other than acting professionally because
630 in a classroom environment, it is more than welcome that
631 you will find those learners who will think they are superior
632 over the educators, should the educator is less educated on
633 ethic than it becomes easy for an educator to take
634 unnecessary decisions of which can cost the educator the
635 future of the educator so that is what I am saying that within
636 the development of our workshops, we must also look at the
637 social life on how do we integrate the learner and the
638 educators.

639 P: I just want to make sure I do not take anyone's time, if
640 you still feel you can, I would appreciate if you can still stay,
641 maybe stay five minutes but if you want to, if it is pressing
642 and you need to leave, you can let me know as long as a
643 consent form is signed. Is everyone okay? Just an extra five,
644 thank you.

645 P7: Just to add on what sir has said, also we are living in
646 changing times, so I think to be honest, the training can
647 never be enough so us as educators, you know as an
648 educator you are a life-long learner because with us our
649 training was never enough but we somehow managed to
650 adjust because we learn as time goes by so I think those
651 that follow us we can then say okay here is training you can
652 received that can cover everyone, Model C, the township...it

683 that happens in undergraduate degrees, do you think there
684 is anything those programmes can do to prepare teachers to
685 be trained on ethics properly?

686 P5: I think some of them were forming a base so to say, it is
687 just skeleton as you are in the workplace you have to work
688 very hard to improve and add – and to even eliminate some
689 that you see is not properly working for you and carry on with
690 those that you think they are working for you as we are still
691 in the coaching fraternity, in the classroom, coaching and
692 building up the learners so to say.

693 P: I hear you, thank you.

694 P3: From what P5 has already alluded to, he says we need
695 to remain calm. Maybe it is due to my limited knowledge in
696 terms of teaching and so on I do not know, I feel that one of
697 the other things that should be integrated into this training, it
698 will also be on emotional intelligence, sometimes as
699 teachers we are confronted with situations whereby you may
700 end up losing it. Like for example, if a boy child can stand up
701 and then slaps me, emotional intelligence will be for me not
702 retaliate and it not easy, especially if you have not been
703 trained on that maybe that is one of the other things that
704 maybe going forward they need to look at it, to say we also
705 need to include that aspect of emotional intelligence to say
706 like even if you are under an enormous amount of pressure,
707 you still do the right thing, even if somewhere, somehow
708 your reputation will be affected, you remain calm and you do
709 the right thing under such conditions and then secondly,
710 maybe to also include the indigenous knowledge system
711 because like I said earlier on, it is not a "one shoe fits all"
712 even under maybe the department of health, under the

713 conditions that we are in now, we have different ways of
714 dealing with this **COVID**, other will be suggesting
715 pharmaceutical ideas, other they are going for an indigenous
716 knowledge system, so like even here we need to integrate
717 both the scientific and the indigenous knowledge system so
718 that we can be able to accommodate everyone, I mean in
719 education we have schools in the deep **deep** rural areas, so
720 whenever you are talking the scientific language it is
721 something else to them so I think the training should also
722 include that aspect of the indigenous knowledge system.

723 P: What do you recommend sir?

724 P2: With regards to the need, I will pose this one to the
725 department as I have already alluded to the sufficiency of
726 this training earlier on. This one goes to the department, to
727 say that on the university level, that I say it is sufficient, on
728 the university level as Mr **Nkomo** has already mentioned, it is
729 a skeleton, it is a foundation, so the department must look
730 into the issue of its' feeders, the community feeders of their
731 school, to look into the community and train its employee
732 and educators on basis on the feeders. To say if you are
733 coming to work at the school, our feeder community is an
734 informal settlement, so we give you ethical training on how to
735 deal with learners from informal settlements, instead of
736 having to integrate this content at the university level
737 because there remember there are diverse in terms of the
738 environment that we will go into so I think it goes back to the
739 department because they can be able to keep abreast with
740 the changing environmental needs of that community, we
741 are able to support these learners we, must support thus
742 efficiency and efficacy can take place. Thank you.

774 It is part of the constitution, it is part of the norms of the
775 society that needs us to get in and develop all those issues
776 so I believe in future, we are about to develop a system that
777 is accommodative for everyone, it must be an issue that is
778 developing parents at home, developing who are mothers
779 and fathers, of those learners before it comes to school.
780 Teachers in previous years, because of the constitution that
781 we have and the educational system that we have, it is still
782 responding to the past and not the present because in the
783 past, they were having a belief that us as learners, we will
784 come to school with respect and respect our teachers. It was
785 going to be those few individual who are chaotic at school,
786 but in our days you find the entire school having one
787 perception, why is it so? Because there is a lag on the
788 parent level because educators might not be that much
789 emotionally intelligent, they might not know that much in
790 terms of being ethical within their work but you will also find
791 that educators, are educated, as they are here, they are
792 protecting their bread on the table for their families. Then
793 how about these learners who do not even think of their
794 educators, we had a learner who just got into the office of
795 the educator and came opening like this [opens jacket to
796 illustrate intimidation] you see? Then what is the educator
797 going to say? The educator was alone in the office, then they
798 are to suspend the educator and then the educator will have
799 that name for the rest of his years in the system. Mr **Bivela**
800 did this and this of which is not true, because some of them,
801 they are agents of others within the sector. You find a
802 learner will fight the battle of Miss **Dlamini** during my work
803 time then it becomes difficult for me to work and even now, I
804 am afraid to explain things in the class because I do not

743 P1: In closing, I wish to say that when two countries are
744 fighting, right as we speak we have Palestine and Israel, if
745 you look at those cases, you cannot teach one country on
746 how to behave and you do not teach another country, so
747 now in our case, we are only focusing on the behavioural
748 tool of the teacher towards the learner but you are not going
749 to change the attitude of the learners on a daily basis of
750 which is going to come in numbers, those problems so also
751 here I wish to be radical on this one by contributing positively
752 because I am having a strong hope that one of the these
753 researches that we are supporting here, one day it will be
754 published and many people will benefit so in that case, I
755 wish also to indicate that now we having a problem of always
756 having to respond on social media, learners fail to follow the
757 simple, mere protocols within the schools. They fail to meet
758 their educators, they fail to meet their class representatives,
759 [inaudible] is no longer taking responsibility but you will find a
760 learner is on Facebook saying something about **Bivela**, you
761 find a learner saying something on Twitter about Mr **Bivela**,
762 then that one becomes a problem and automatically the
763 teacher's emotions are raised because at the end of the day,
764 we are family members. We are brothers, we are mothers
765 and so forth outside, so I also believe that there is a gap of
766 the indigenous knowledge, now it is only the educational
767 sector that is supporting the system of education and
768 supporting the learners, parents at home they are no longer
769 taking responsibility, for us, in our cultural norms, we raised
770 in an understanding that if I get into a bus, the bus is full and
771 then I have a chair and I see my mom or grandfather, not of
772 biological, I stand up for that person but nowadays you
773 cannot find all those things, then where could it have went?

805 know what I am touching is going to be discriminatory to
806 somebody you understand? So for me, I will be honest with
807 you, I do not motivate in the class in the work, I give
808 examples we can laugh based on the examples that are part
809 of the system because I am afraid of some things. I am
810 going to say something, it is against your culture, if you
811 remember being ethical also touches on my integrity, it also
812 touches on me being selflessness, of me being responsible
813 so if I am being responsible to these learners, I must also
814 involve myself in recreational activities as we are doing with
815 colleagues, I must also touch myself on the community
816 outreach, we used to take papers as learners during our time
817 but can we take one of these learners in our days and say
818 they will pick papers? You are going to find yourself in the
819 media, so we are having a very serious problem so I wish
820 that one can be said because in the policy of education, if I
821 am interested of something here at school, I cannot just
822 broadcast it, it says it is the education department that can
823 come in with the media and broadcast that thing but for them
824 it is easy to entertain learners when they are broadcasting
825 anything about us but how about ourselves? We are not
826 protected. I cannot just post anything about a learner, I post
827 what I see and is within the limitations and I can still protect
828 myself, I cannot post something that is going to challenge
829 me in the near future, do you understand? Thank you.

830 P: I just have one more question. Sir do you still want to say
831 something?

832 P5: No

833 P: Okay, thank you so much for your time and just extending
834 yourself beyond the time we agreed. I just have a quick

835 question, it can just be a quick thing. So I am interested, I
836 find it interesting that there is not enough training but you still
837 – I am not saying you do not experience challenges but you
838 still able to answer in terms of what to do when you have to
839 make a decision, you know that to be honest and all these
840 things, so I think what I am trying to understand is that is
841 there any training you receiving maybe outside of the
842 undergraduate degree, are you having any sort of in-service
843 training, any workshops or anything like that speaks to
844 ethics?

845 [shakes heads]

846 P: Have you never had that? Nothing?

847 P1: Honestly, no we attend only training that is specific to
848 content training. I do not remember the one that – it is
849 content specific.

850 P7: Just to add, it is not training, sometimes we are just
851 talking "you know there is a learner who did this, and you
852 know a learner who does this, deal with the learner like that"
853 you see? It is not like we mislead each other and say "no
854 you must slap the learner" no but we advise each other that
855 "you know, since you are new when a learner does this, you
856 deal with them in this way" so the male teachers that are
857 older are the ones who show us so it is not like it is training,
858 people sit down, maybe we just have a conversation.

859 P3: It is informal.

860 P5: We also get informal but partially formally, with the SMT
861 (school management team), sometimes the SMT used to
862 highlight on how you can – for the educators especially the
863 educators that are new in the system, they used to highlight

864 on how we can handle such and they used to provide that I
865 can call it a mini coaching on how to handle such situations,
866 that as well it used to help in terms of how to deal with
867 certain situations for the educators in class in case learners
868 they did something, stuff.

869 P: Do they give you examples of what to do or?

870 P5: Usually they emphasize on what is right, yah and also
871 prioritising to protect your job as well also do that coaching
872 on that, yes.

873 P3: I think that ma'am we are not getting that but what
874 happens is we normally try to empower ourselves as much
875 as we can because ethics like we said it talks about you
876 being able to distinguish between what is right and wrong
877 and I think Mr *Buyele*, has already touched on the issue of
878 culture, our black culture teaches us certain things that this
879 and that cannot be done so I think we try to rely on that, and
880 also different religions, I am a Christian like Christianity is
881 about right, it is about ethics and so on. So somewhere,
882 somehow when I am confronted with certain situations, I use
883 those principles that maybe through my religion or through
884 the culture we are following, it helps us and we also try to
885 integrate it with what is in the constitution and what is in the
886 South African Council of Educators manual so that we try to
887 do that so that we can always be safer and better and I am
888 still repeating on the issue of emotional intelligence, it is so
889 important because if we – and it is not something you can be
890 taught per se but it is something you need to learn along the
891 process, so through experience, through maybe, exposure
892 and so on, you are able to learn to say like even if a child
893 can confront me and draws a fist, I need not to retaliate the

894 way maybe he or she is expecting me to do it and the reality
895 of the matter is if we were to get 50/50 with a learner, he will
896 never win that fight but based on emotional intelligence, I will
897 decide to refrain from entertaining such, it is one of the
898 things I feel it helps us to keep going because like P1 has
899 said, it is not easy but we help one another and to go
900 forward. Thank you.

901 P: Just to say, thank you. You can leave if you wish to leave.
902 I am still interested, so I will stand here for as long as you
903 have something to say, please do not feel obligated to stay.

904 P5: I think I wanted to add in terms of when you say the
905 ethical training is not that much important, also sometimes
906 we do an integration whereby we gauge the learners'
907 psychosocial strength based on traditions, Africans, let's say
908 Africans do not allow the wearing of hats in classrooms and
909 all these things and there are things that are not part and
910 parcel of being taught in the tertiary level, I was just adding
911 to what mister alluded.

912 P3: You are talking back to the integration of, yes, because
913 in certain schools, like I teach SIB, fortunately or
914 unfortunately, I have been exposed to so many schools even
915 the model C and so on so the learners will come to class
916 wearing hats, now "what is it now gents? Why are you
917 wearing hats?" No but, it is a norm here, there is nothing
918 wrong. So that there where you see that within the training
919 there are discrepancies that maybe needs to be addressed
920 especially bringing in this indigenous knowledge to say that
921 this are norms however, in certain circumstances they will be
922 like this because P2 mentioned that maybe it is responsibility
923 of the department to do maybe capacitate for educators of

924 the school to say, you are getting learners from this but I
925 mean as a teacher you can be employed at this school for
926 three months, after three months, you are employed in the
927 model C so it means it will be too much for you to adapt to all
928 those but if they taught from university, at least we are using
929 – and it should be more on African rather the international
930 because I mean if you check, out of the 52 teachers who are
931 at this school today, how many of those aspire to go
932 internationally, I mean it is less than 1% so those are things
933 we need to take into consideration so that – we need to go to
934 the university and adjust there.

935 P2: Thank you, to add on that, if I still recall very well, your
936 question asked about the sufficiency or the training we
937 received since employment, we have not received any
938 training since I have been employed however, I have made
939 aware to consult necessary guidelines, which is our primary
940 guidelines, which is the policies and the acts, to say there in
941 chapter 2 of the constitution, in section 28, it speaks of the
942 best interest of the child, so me acting ethically means I will
943 consider the best interest of the child so ma'am to conclude
944 on that, with regards to the training after university level, I
945 still maintain that the department must assist in this regard
946 because due to the interest of time, on the university level
947 and the content which must be unpacked, so that you are
948 fully prepared for the workplace, they cannot teach to that
949 extend to say we are going to teach you how to act ethically
950 in the communities, on the farms, teach you ethically how do
951 you present yourself ethically in model C schools or
952 townships schools, it is going to be as sir said, it is still going
953 to be a overload to 1, to have to assimilate all these things at
954 the university level, that is why I say I think it is best if the

955 department also intervenes in this regard, to say we have
956 newly appointed educators, this is – these are the
957 challenges are experiencing in this community of ours, they
958 have a diagnostic analysis, we will touch on those things
959 which are specifically challenging us as a school or
960 department or as a district thus, as I mentioned, for
961 efficiency, for production purposes, so that we do not teach
962 you how to act ethically on the rural areas wherein you will
963 be working the township, you capitalise on the area which
964 you are employed, if you are employed in this district of ours,
965 it means you are our person and we always stress it out,
966 teachers we need marks, those marks, that performance,
967 where does it come from, it comes from me being ethical in
968 the classroom because if I do not act ethically, it means that
969 also these learners are not going to act ethically and they
970 are not ethical, attitude and behaviour towards the subject
971 and you know already the conditions of passing the subject, I
972 think it is best for the department to involve or include all
973 stakeholders in this as Mr **Giyela** already alluded that they
974 advise the parents to not interfere with the smooth running of
975 the school, we teach about them about ethics as well, we
976 outline the consequences of not acting ethically, we also go
977 back to learners, to learners we stress it out that they need
978 to act in a way that subjects to a norm of proper conduct, to
979 say these are consequences if you do not adhere to the
980 norm of proper conduct as P1 as already alluded that I
981 might be ethical, I know what is there for me to lose, that is
982 why I am being ethical so this person does not what is there
983 for him to lose that is why he is not ethical so and also to the
984 department to provide tranquil environment, wherein patriotic
985 educators and learners can be developed so I think going

986 forward, that is what we need from the department. Thank
987 you.

988 P: Thank you so much.

• inadequate training & still feeling ill equipped
ethics training received in undergraduate training

- majority no training, then about two have training
- (2) Modules
 - vocational module (part of module where there is a prescription of SACE)
 - teaching studies education studies

↓
about teacher development, spoke of the roles of the teacher integrated through these modules (of right and wrong).

↓
ie. playing beyond the teacher role, emphasis on the background of learners.

In-service training as a form of training
informal

- guiding as teachers (each other)
"You deal with learner in this way and that way", show each other how they can approach an ethical situation
- Semi-formal
 - providing by the school management team - shows teachers how to deal with certain ethical situations.

• training continued?

- training is considered as adequate. (not identifiable)

What is causing this?

- training is global but circumstances are different
- it is not enough
- does not teachers on the real matters that are affecting teachers.

How can training be improved

- include content on emotional intelligence
- include indigenous knowledge system
- real examples of what teachers go through.

Ethical decisions that teachers have to make / ethical dilemmas

• learner ^{discloses} exposes information to teacher but refuses for teacher to report

• Teachers are often uncertain / confused on what to do - do respect learners? or keep ~~the~~ expose learner to more harm if it is a sensitive matter?



what if the matter is exposed how it be received by parents and school?

especially as a male teacher.

• balancing to be supportive, a good listener but needing to protect yourself so it does not look like you taking advantage of the learner.

• also considering what the silence implies?

if you keep learners secret and the wrong lesson or believe you are enclosing what they are going through

What is guiding ethical decision making / resolving the ethical dilemmas

- constitution
- personal values
- ~~back~~ culture / cultural beliefs
- religious views
- best interest of the learner!

Teachers' understanding of ethical conduct

- refrains from sexual harassment
- adheres to the prescriptions of the council of education
- responsible inside and outside class
- understanding of what is right and wrong based on understanding of code of conduct.
- guided by personal moral principles
- well prepared for class
- does right even when others are doing wrong.
- extends themselves beyond the delivery of content.
ie also does not take advantage of learner vulnerability
- not depriving learners of a right to education. (following policy)
- understanding learners make mistakes
- focuses on teaching and learning
- Acts professionally with colleagues - related to attitude and how to respond to attitude.

↓
conflictual conflict

---ooOoo---