

Whitcomb, J. A. (2002). Composing Dilemma Cases: an opportunity to understand moral dimensions of teaching. *Teaching Education*, 13(2), 179-201. Posted with the permission of Taylor & Francis. <http://www.tandf.co.uk>

Composing Dilemma Cases: an opportunity to understand moral dimensions of teaching

JENNIFER A. WHITCOMB

University of Colorado, Boulder, CO 80309, USA

ABSTRACT *The present study examines the role that case writing plays in how teacher candidates understand a teacher's moral agency. Teacher candidates' understanding of moral agency emerges from their ability to negotiate between commonplaces of their internal states (e.g., beliefs, emotions, intentions, questions) and Schwab's commonplaces of schooling (e.g., learners, teacher, subject matter, and milieu/context). Thirty-five case texts were analyzed using discourse analysis. Three textual features were examined systematically: basic story structure, the narrator's discourse, and references to colleague's comments. Analysis suggests that, through case writing, teacher candidates develop understandings about the moral character and consequences of the teacher/learner relationship, they begin to attend to some but not all of Schwab's external commonplaces, and they demonstrate and reflect on the moral dispositions expected of teachers. Analysis also points to shortcomings in the case writing process and suggests ways to improve teacher educators' case writing pedagogy.*

In the present article, I consider how the experience of crafting dilemma cases creates opportunities for teacher candidates to develop a more complex understanding of the moral dimensions of teaching practice. I argue that teacher candidates' understanding of moral dimensions emerges from their ability to negotiate between the commonplaces of their internal states (i.e., beliefs, emotions, intentions, questions) and Schwab's (1973) commonplaces of schooling (i.e., learners, teacher, subject matter, and context).¹ Through these negotiations, teacher candidates begin to work out a theory of self that embraces the moral. This theory of self develops when teacher candidates evaluate their actions and decisions in light of what is right, appropriate, wise, and/or fair. Through such evaluations, teacher candidates work out a response to basic questions: Who do I *want to be* in the presence of the youth entrusted to me? And, who *am* I in the presence of these youth? Often the most powerful learning occurs when teacher candidates reconcile conflicts between their normative and actual self.

The present article presents analysis of 35 teacher candidates' dilemma cases,

which were orally presented and then written as one of several culminating assessments in a teacher preparation program. I sought evidence within the case texts for how the teacher's interpretations of and reflections on their lived experience led to a sharper understanding of the moral complexities of teaching practice. Analysis of the case texts in turn prompted my own reflection regarding case writing as a pedagogical tool in teacher education. This article has five parts. In the initial section, I outline my opening premises regarding the teacher as moral agent and why constructing narratives is a pedagogical strategy that is well suited for learning about teaching as a moral endeavor. In the second, I describe the pedagogical context in which the teacher candidates of this study composed their dilemma case texts. I go on in the third section to present a conceptual framework for analyzing the discourse of the case texts. In the fourth, I analyze the texts and summarize key learning evidenced in the texts. Finally, in the last section, I reflect on the case writing pedagogy that was implemented.

Opening Premises

The Importance of Moral Dimensions of Teaching

Many scholars of teaching have observed with insight and eloquence that teaching is a moral endeavor (Ball & Wilson, 1996; Clark, 1990; Cutforth, 1999; Dewey, 1909; Fenstermacher, 1990; Goodman & Lesnick, 2001; Hansen, 1995, 1999, 2001; Jackson, 1968; Lampert, 1985; Sirotnik, 1990; Sizer & Sizer, 1999; Tom, 1984; Valli, 1990). They distinguish between teachers as moral educators and as moral agents. The former emphasizes those occasions when teachers engage students in experiences designed to teach moral precepts (e.g., teaching about good and evil during a study of the Holocaust, or teaching youth to resolve conflicts with classmates in constructive ways); meanwhile, the latter underscores the manner in which teachers manage their authority (i.e., their position of social and institutional power within the classroom and school). That both are significant is not disputed; this study, however, focuses on the latter conception, the teacher as a moral agent.

Perhaps the most central theme in explicating how teachers manage their authority is how they form their relationships primarily with students, and secondarily with parents and colleagues. Clark writes, "At its core, teaching is a matter of human relationships. Human relationships, whatever else they may be, are moral in character and consequence" (1990, p. 265). Case writing is an opportunity to explore the moral character and consequences associated with the teacher/learner relationship. Commonplace actions such as how the teacher selects meaningful curriculum and inclusive or responsive pedagogy reacts to seemingly disengaged or detached students; enforces, ignores, or defies school policies and norms; negotiates conflicts over the curriculum selected or assignments given; involves students in democratic dialog; responds to moments of criticism or defiance; carries out assessments; or chooses to transgress—all are morally laden moments. All involve complex choices where the "right" route is not always evident. New teachers need opportuni-

ties to grasp this complexity and the consequences of these choices. In both the ordinary and extraordinary moments of practice, who we *are* in the presence of children and youth is most often what they take with them. Sizer and Sizer (1999) remind us that the students are indeed *watching*.

This vision of teaching as a moral endeavor is not always reflected in some of the most recent public discussions of teaching. Increasing calls for teachers to “produce” learning gains/outcomes on the part of their students threaten to diminish the teacher’s role to merely a figure who adds “value” to the child’s store of knowledge. Although I engage in certain rhetorical flourishes, I do so to point out that when an undue emphasis is placed on narrow measures of academic performances, we run the risk of driving new teachers’ attention away from the moral dimension of practice and toward the technical. Composing and sharing dilemma cases provides opportunities for new teachers to engage in considerations of the full range of educational ends.

Case Narratives as an Avenue to Moral Dimensions of Teaching

Narrative is a form of representation that is well suited to rendering and reflecting on moral dimensions of teaching. First, narrative conflates theory and practice; it is at once the way in which we construct, or more aptly, reconstruct experiences and simultaneously make sense of them (Polkinghorne, 1991; Shulman, 1992, 1996; Sperling, 1994). Second, the properties of realistic narrative concentrate on the particulars of an experience. For example, to portray a character, to render a setting, to develop a plot—all of these text-making moves are ones that focus the teacher-author’s attention on the particularities of lived experience. Third, narration often involves shaping an interior change; that is, a common movement in narrative is one in which a character’s “lack leads to a restoration” (Montgomery, Durant, Fabb, Furniss & Mills, 2000, p. 216). In some standard narratives, the “lack” may involve a family member leaving home, a girl leaving a boy, or the hero’s ignorance; “restoration” then entails a unified family, the boy winning back the girl, the hero’s newfound wisdom. Fourth, narrative involves shaping a point of view; put simply, “point of view concerns all features of orientation: the position taken up by the speaker or author, that of the consciousnesses depicted in the text, and that implied for the reader or addressee” (Fowler, 1986, p. 9). Point of view communicates an evaluation of characters and events. Finally, narrative is a form of argument. Bruner reminds us, “stories are *the* medium for offering our excuses” (1996, p. 96). Through narrative, the teacher-author attributes blame and offers an explanation for how and why events unfolded as they did.

Cochran-Smith’s (2000) essay in which she explores a powerful experience that provoked an extended reflection on “unlearning racism” demonstrates why narrative is in fact well suited for examining moral dimensions of teaching. Cochran-Smith narrates a highly charged moment in a teacher education class. During a guest presentation in the seminar, a Puerto Rican teacher candidate stands up to declare with “passion and an anger that bordered on rage, ‘Nothing! This program does *nothing* to address issues of race!’ ” (Cochran-Smith, 2000, p. 160). This moment

triggers an extended period of reflection in which Cochran-Smith wrestles with and reconstructs her identity as a teacher-educator with deep commitments to anti-racist curriculum and to social justice. Cochran-Smith shows us how narrative is a representational form through which one creates a theory of self, a theory that explains individual responses to questions such as: Who do I want to be with and in the presence of students? How will I “manage” my role as the individual invested with social and institutional authority? How will I make decisions and choices that are fair, that I can live with, that do the least harm?

Pedagogical Context for Dilemma Case Writing

The case texts examined in the present study were developed by elementary and secondary teacher candidates enrolled in a 9-month, post-baccalaureate teacher preparation program. They were completed in the context of a three-quarter, seminar course organized around the following themes: the apprenticeship of observation and its potential to shape one’s classroom practice (Feiman-Nemser & Featherstone, 1992; Lortie, 1975), the moral dimensions of teaching (Ball & Wilson, 1996; Goodman & Lesnick, 2001; Hansen, 2001), and teaching as both a vocation (Hansen, 1995) and a learning profession (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 1999). Teacher candidates gained familiarity with case narratives through several case discussions that preceded the actual case writing assignment.

The teacher candidates composed the cases as one of several culminating reflection activities during their period of student teaching. Each candidate wrote a “dilemma case”, which was defined as first-person interpretive narrative of difficult moments in teaching. The assignment guidelines offered latitude regarding the substance of the dilemma, but they encouraged the teacher candidates to choose occasions in which a decision was made when others could have been made or when a problem arose that had multiple, sometimes competing, solutions (Cuban, 2001; Lampert, 1985). The teacher candidates were encouraged to develop cases that followed this structural outline: description of school and/or classroom context, discussion of intentions, narrative of interactions or difficulties, and a reflective epilog.

The case writing process involved both a case conference and the composing of a written dilemma narrative. The teacher candidates first orally presented their cases to a group of six colleagues in a case conference that was facilitated by a faculty member in the program.² Lasting about 20 minutes each, a case conference involved the following elements: first, teacher candidates reminded their audience of salient details of their school context; then they narrated the events of their chosen dilemma; third, their colleagues asked questions of clarification/elaboration regarding the events; finally, all participants engaged in an analysis of why events may have unfolded as they did. After the conferences, teacher candidates revised their narratives and reflections, and submitted a written version of the case to their course instructor.

In many regards, as the subsequent analysis will suggest, this case writing process was flawed, or at least insufficiently scaffolded. First, the assignment was poorly

timed. While teacher candidates developed these cases, they were also engaged in full-day, solo instruction. For some, this writing task was viewed as a welcomed opportunity to reflect on challenges; while for others, it was an academic obligation that pulled them away from their classroom and students. Second, the primary source of formative feedback came from collegial, oral comments offered in the conferences. Substantive guidance from instructors during the writing process, whether oral or written, occurred only if requested by the teacher candidate. Third, since the teacher candidates submitted only a final version of the case, the opportunity to learn from successive drafts was not made available to the teacher candidates.

Methods

Data Collection

The data source for this descriptive study was a set of 35 case texts, which were written by teacher candidates who completed my university's teacher education program in either the 1999–2000 or 2000–2001 academic year. The case writing process already described was followed in each year. The set of 35 case texts is a random sample of case texts produced by teacher candidates in these two academic years. Before analysis, the names of the teacher candidates were removed from the case texts. The texts ranged in length from approximately 1250 words to 2500 words. I focus on the texts themselves because they are a summative statement of the individual teacher candidates' grappling with their respective dilemmas. Although the conversations that unfolded in the case conferences were substantive (at least as I observed in the sessions I facilitated and as reported informally to me by the other case conference facilitators), the points that seemed most relevant to the teacher-author have been included, presumably, in the final text. There is, of course, the very real possibility that the teacher-author ignored salient critique and requests for extensions to their narrative or analysis (Whitcomb, 1997). That individuals simply wished to submit the assignment, rather than engage in further reflection and analysis, is possible. Audiotapes of the case conferences were not made largely for logistical reasons rather than conceptual reasons.

Research Questions and Analytic Framework

The purpose of my analysis was to uncover evidence in the case texts of the teacher-author's understanding or exploration of moral dimensions of his/her practice. The broad question guiding this study was: What role does case writing play in how teacher candidates come to think of themselves as moral agents? I developed the following framework for analysis of the case texts (Figure 1). The framework reflects my argument for how case writing has the potential to shape understanding of moral dimensions of teaching; as my subsequent analysis of cases will demonstrate, the act of composing a case, in and of itself, does not ensure that teacher

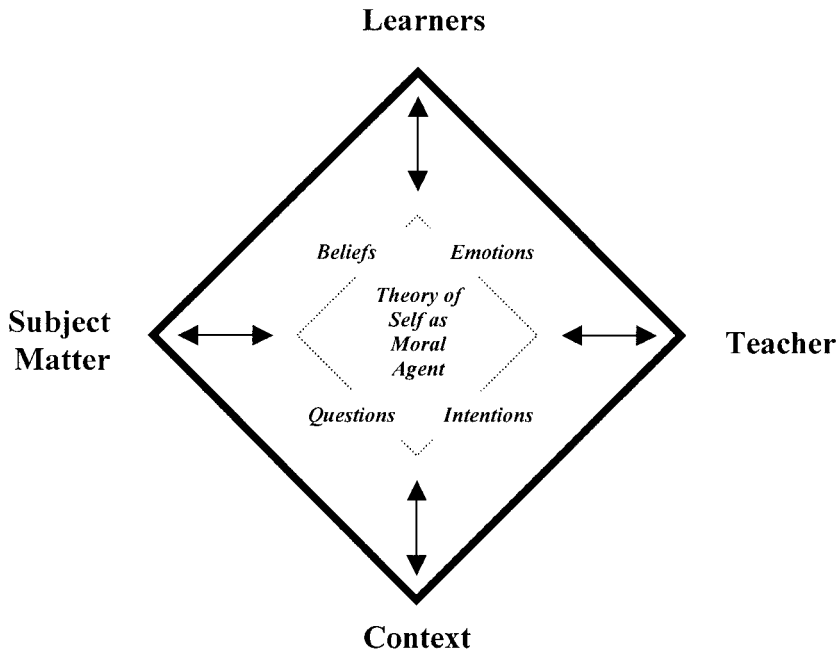


FIGURE 1. Framework for analysis.

candidates reach deep understandings. Analysis suggests the critical role that teacher educators must play if the potential of case writing is to be realized.

At the heart of the framework is the teacher's "theory of self as a moral agent". By theory, I mean the principles and knowledge that inform the teacher's interpretation of lived experience. These theories reflect both the teacher's normative views and ability to draw on a professional knowledge base for teaching (for example, Ball & Cohen, 1999). For example, one principle that novice teachers often assert is that *the teacher must be fair to all children*. Developing a supple understanding of how to apply this principle involves considerations of one's moral agency. I draw on the plot of one of the study's case texts to illustrate my point. In this text, a fifth-grade boy had been identified as "special needs" at his previous school. However, when he moved to a new school, the parents insisted their son be placed in a regular classroom and receive no instructional adaptations or supplements. The teacher candidate believed that fair treatment meant equal treatment; thus, she treated this child as if he were typical of the other fifth graders in her class. She also stated that she wanted to "benefit his needs". When the child disengaged from lessons and stopped turning in work, the teacher candidate became frustrated and angry. She faced a moral dilemma: Did she significantly adapt her instruction and assessment to meet the child's unique needs, and thus violate her principle of "fair means equal"? Or, did she ask the child to complete assignments he did not understand, thereby upholding her principle, but effectively ensuring his failure in her class? To complicate matters, the cooperating teacher pressed the teacher candidate to con-

tinue to “fail” the child so that the parents realized that their child required special support.

How to respond to this child is a dilemma that involves consideration of the teacher’s moral agency. Resolving the dilemma provides an opportunity to discern answers to the questions such as: How am I benefiting this child’s needs? Am I contributing to this child’s failure? Is that fair to him? What is the nature of his learning difficulties? What are the other children in the class learning by observing this child repeatedly struggle to do his work? If I make adaptations for this child, do I need to make adaptations for all? Is it simpler to require the child to do the assignments expected of the others? What is my responsibility to honor the parents’ wishes? If I disagree with my cooperating teacher’s position on this matter, how forcefully do I articulate my position? Working out an informed stance with regard to this principle involves applying knowledge of children, learning theory, and pedagogy. But more importantly, because the teacher is the architect of the classroom world, the aforementioned questions relate to larger questions: What is the wise choice of action? Who am I and who do I want to be in the presence of this child? I suggest that a theory of self, as rendered in narrative, emerges when the individual perceives with “fine attention and good deliberation”³ the relationships between commonplaces of his/her internal states (i.e., beliefs, emotions, intentions, questions) and commonplaces of the external world (i.e., learners, teacher, context, and subject matter).

The inner diamond in the analytical framework’s diagram represents four commonplaces of an individual’s internal states. A broad literature regarding teacher cognition informs the selection of these four commonplaces (for example, Putnam & Borko, 1997; Wilson & Berne, 1999). Beliefs serve as powerful perceptual filters, shaping how the teacher candidate perceives and interprets lived experience (Borko & Putnam, 1996; Calderhead, 1996). Emotions signal the importance of an experience; they play a role in perception of events and, additionally, in problem-solving (Frijda, 1988; Salovey & Meyer, 1990). Intentions refer to a teacher’s purposes and motives. Finally, questions, both direct and indirect, illustrate a teacher candidate’s active processing of the meaning of an experience. Collectively, these four commonplaces help to tease out how the teacher-author perceives and reflects on experience.

The outer diamond of the framework’s diagram outlines Schwab’s (1973) four commonplaces. A comprehensive analysis of an event involves consideration of all four. That is, given the complexity of a dilemma, each of the commonplaces plays a role in explaining why a situation arises and/or unfolds in the manner that it does. Attending to and deliberating on the ways in which each commonplace affects events is, I argue, a moral responsibility of teachers.

The process of narrating experiences provides the teacher-authors opportunities to refine their theory of moral agency. The linguistic features of narrative serve as a heuristic for rendering, analyzing, and understanding moral dimensions of teaching. The double-arrows in the framework’s diagram refer, then, to those properties of narrative that the teacher-authors use to deliberate between aspects of their internal states and the particulars of events. I used the tools of discourse analysis to study

properties of narrative, such as story structure and features of the narrator's discourse.

Levels of Analysis

The first level of narrative analysis involved systematic review of the basic story structure within each case text. A driving force of narrative is the movement from relative tranquility to rupture, to action, to a restoration of calm. This particular structural outline follows Russian narratologist, Propp's, structural analysis of Russian fairytales. Toolan summarizes Propp's framework: "... [the Russian fairytale's structure] is one in which an initial state of equilibrium is disturbed by various forces of turbulence. This turbulence brings disequilibrium and upheaval before some sort of action (perhaps an intervention) leads to the restoration of a modified version of the original equilibrium" (1988, p. 8). Although these case texts are clearly not Russian fairytales, the general schema or story structure does apply in most case texts. For each case text I wrote a *précis*, which I determined primarily by identifying dynamic verbs.⁴ Using this *précis*, I analyzed the content of the basic plot structures, looking for patterns in how the teacher-authors named sources of rupture or disequilibrium and how they framed restoration.

Second, I analyzed the narrator's discourse, which merits systematic attention because the narrator serves an important evaluative function in narrative. These first-person case texts, in which the narrator is a participating character, are marked by *internal* narration. Fowler explains, "*Internal* narration is, then, narration from a point of view within a character's consciousness, manifesting his or her feelings about and evaluations of the events and characters of the story" (1986, p. 135). Through the narrator, the teacher-author articulates his/her stance toward events. I focused on two key discourse features of internal narration, modality and direct questions. According to Fowler, "Modality is the grammar of explicit comment, the means by which people express their degree of commitment to the truth of the propositions they utter, and their view on the desirability or otherwise of the states of affairs referred to" (1986, p. 131). I looked for modal forms of expression such as modal auxiliaries (e.g., may, might, must, will, shall), modal adverbs (certainly, probably, perhaps, etc.), evaluative adjectives and adverbs (lucky, fortunate, regrettably, etc.), verbs of knowledge and evaluation (e.g., seem, believe, guess, know), and generic sentences in which the narrator articulates or announces propositions claiming universal truth. These forms of modal expression indicate the teacher-author's degree of certainty with regard to interpretations. This feature of the narrator's discourse indicates the teacher-author's interpretation or understanding of the events narrated. The use of direct questions is a feature found in the genre of a case: The questions indicate the teacher candidate's active attempts to make sense of events. The narrator's voice, then, provides key insights into the teacher candidate's cognition.

The third level of analysis entailed an examination of the explicit references the teacher-author made to colleagues' comments. Such comments were typically made in the concluding section of the text. I studied them because they offered, in

effect, a check on the narrator. That the first-person narrator, who is a central actor in the events retold, may be unreliable is a given. The narrator may well distort or ignore some events. The explicit mention of colleagues' commentary revealed the teacher-author's examination of events from other readers' perspectives.

Analysis of Case Texts and the Case Writing Process

I begin this section with an in-depth analysis of three of the 35 cases, which were selected because they illustrate patterns found in many of the cases. After displaying the data, I offer a cross-case analysis. I conclude this section with a critique of the case writing process. In presenting each précis, I observe the following conventions. Direct quotations from the case text are italicized. Subject/dynamic verb combinations that form the structural skeleton of the case's plot are underlined. Important modal expressions are indicated with bold text. Any remaining text in normal font reflects my summary of essential details of the case. Sentences are numbered for ease in referencing the text. In each précis, pseudonyms are used.

Case 1: "A Lesson in Limits"

In "A Lesson in Limits," a young female secondary teacher candidate, who has been student teaching in an upper division world history class for eight weeks, becomes enraged when a male student's *rude comments* are directed toward her. The high school is located in a working/middle-class neighborhood and is tracked academically. This world history class is a "general" level, required course. The following is the précis.

I felt that I had established a positive rapport with my students (1). I knew that they were a group of students who contained high amounts of energy (2). I resorted to a seating chart, which amazingly enough worked to calm them down to a manageable level (3). I wanted so desperately to regain "popularity" with my students that I allowed myself to connect with them too much and thus found it difficult to enforce discipline (4). I had planned a test review for the class, in the form of a Jeopardy game (5). The review was important since most of the class had failed the last exam (6). Upon finding out they would play a game for the review, the class energy hit the roof (7). While sitting on a tabletop next to Steve, I commented on his friend's revealing tank top, expressing my concern that it was inappropriate for school (8). Steve chimed in, "Oh, Ms. Jones, you know you like it" (9). Then, Steve seemed to critique my outfit, commenting on everything from my shoes to my watch (10). Initially, I laughed off his rude comments (11). After several minutes, though, it hit me, and I felt the anger inside me build (12). I looked at him with an icy look (13). Finally, I explained in a harsh tone that he could go to the principal's office and explain to him why talking to me was more important than listening to a test review (14). Steve was well aware that he had pushed too far and he immediately began to apologize (15). Subsequently, I did not kick him out of class, but I

regret not doing so (16). I felt weak, like I had somehow been defeated by a seventeen-year-old jerk of a student (17).

In this case, the teacher candidate's moral dilemma centers on developing principles regarding how to form an appropriate relationship with her class, as the line between the role of colleague and authority figure is negotiated. She implies a commonly held principle, namely that a teacher must have a *rapport* or relationship with students before she can engage them in learning. Her case shows how she comes to understand the complex ways in which power differentials affect that relationship. In her précis, she establishes an initial state of equilibrium by noting her perception that she had established a productive classroom environment (sentences 1–3). The rupture occurs when Steve chides her (sentences 9 and 10), which results in her outrage followed by a direct confrontation and a threat to banish him (sentences 12–14). The case is tentatively resolved when the student apologizes and the teacher permits the student to remain (sentences 15 and 16).

The narrator's voice illuminates the teacher candidate's internal states. First, the repetition of the verb *feel* (sentences 1, 12, and 17) traces the arc of her emotional experience as she progresses from satisfaction to anger to defeat. In the final sentence, she casts herself as the victim who "*felt weak, somehow defeated by a seventeen-year-old jerk of a student*" (sentence 17). The modal adverb *somehow* indicates her mild incredulity and lack of understanding. Verbs of knowledge and evaluation reveal some of her working assumptions and beliefs. For example, the verb *knew* (sentence 2) indicates her firmly held assumption that it is her role or responsibility to respond to and rein in the students' high energy in order to engage them academically. The modal adverbs, *desperately* (sentence 4) and *amazingly enough* (sentence 3), reveal her intention, or desire, to be viewed favorably by her students and her genuine surprise at their positive response to the seating chart, a conventional method of maintaining order. Collectively, these reveal her struggle with how to realize her normative teacher image (i.e., a teacher who has established a respectful relationship with students, one that promotes both a productive learning environment and a sense of playful orderliness).

Although the narrator's voice punctuates the narrative, or "interactions/difficulties" portion of the case, it dominates the "reflections" section of the case, when the teacher candidate explicitly wrestles with her regret over the interactions with Steve. She *struggles* to make sense of the event.

After the incident with Steve, I struggled with my response to it for days (18). I would go from being angry to confused (19). What had set Steve off? (20) He was usually a great student who made intelligent comments and asked interesting questions (21). Occasionally, he would talk to his friends, but I never had a major problem with him until that day (22). I later discovered that Steve suffered from ADD [attention deficit disorder], and I could see how that might affect his ability to stop teasing before it went too far (23). When I thought back to the incident with Steve, I remembered how it seemed that he was unable to stop himself once he was on a verbal roll (24) ... When I told my story to my fellow TEP [teacher education program] students, many of them thought that Steve's

comment “You know you like it” was sexual harassment (25). Hearing how other student teachers perceived that comment hit me like a ton of bricks (26). I had always thought of myself as a teacher, not a female [teacher-author’s emphasis] teacher who would be subjected to the rude comments of a student (27) ... I wish I had established in my mind boundaries concerning what is appropriate and inappropriate student behavior that is directed at me personally (28). I thought I knew what I would tolerate, and what I would not, but the incident with Steve showed me that I needed to fully understand what my exceptions were regarding student behavior, if I expected them to know (29).

In her reflection, the teacher candidate acknowledges her emotional turmoil (sentences 18 and 19), thus suggesting that she writes, in part, to resolve her anguish. She suggests that she is the victim who has been betrayed by a student who has turned on her (sentences 21 and 22). Her single question “*What set him off?*” (sentence 20) indicates that, from her point of view, Steve bears the blame. In seeking to understand Steve and his possible motives, she offers a single explanation: “*Steve suffered from ADD*” (sentence 23). She retroactively fits in previous observations to support this interpretation (sentences 23 and 24); although the modal auxiliaries *could see* and *might affect* and the verb *seem* suggest that she is not wholly convinced of this explanation. She takes some responsibility for the events when she concludes that she wishes “*she had established in my mind boundaries concerning what is appropriate and inappropriate*” (sentence 28). She distills her learning to a generic principle, “*I needed to fully understand what my exceptions were of student behavior if I expected them to know*” (sentence 29). The verb *need* signals her recognition that an internal change is required on her part and that her self-knowledge was inadequate. She also implies that, without such reflection, she will not be wholly fair with her students. As the title “A Lesson in Limits” suggests, she acknowledges that, as the one vested with institutional authority, she cannot assume the role of friend and that she has to envision her boundaries. Her colleagues raise a provocative point, one that clearly stretches her in an alternative direction and that leads her to acknowledge how her gender affects how students perceive her and, by extension, how she interacts with students. Much of the narrative’s tension arises from the discrepancy between who she wants to be, a collegial authority figure, with who she is, an offended individual. What emerges from this reflection is a subtle movement from blaming the student to sharing the blame with him.

Although the teacher-author arrives at an important moral insight, what strikes me, as an outside reader of this case, is that the teacher candidate is poised to probe the event more comprehensively and to take a more critical stance toward her beliefs and intentions. With more direction from teacher educators and/or her colleagues, she might have explored possible role(s) that all four commonplaces played in the way events unfolded. For example, regarding school or classroom context: How did the cooperating teacher establish her relationship as an authority figure with the students? Was the teacher candidate seeking to redefine the norms, and if so in what ways? Regarding the subject matter, why did most of the students fail the previous examination? How might their prior failure figure in their playfulness during a review

for this upcoming test? Why choose Jeopardy as a format for the review? How might the review format have shaped a rambunctious classroom tenor? With regard to the teacher, she seems unaware that her actions, *sitting on the table* and *commenting* about one of the girl's inappropriate dress, may have set the stage for Steve to engage in banter with her. Does she realize how she may have provided a crucial miscue? Were other students engaging in similar banter? Did she attend to Steve's remarks because he was nearby? What insights might have arisen had she reflected more critically on her assumptions and intentions. Did her desire to be *popular* with her students lead her astray? Will the principle she arrives at (sentence 29) serve her well in the future? In short, the teacher educator might have created opportunities for this teacher candidate to evaluate the interactions more comprehensively and more critically.

Case 2: "Kylie Comes to Class"

Like a "Lesson in Limits", this next case examines how a female teacher struggles with an individual child. In "Kylie Comes to Class", a third-grade elementary school teacher finds that her orderly routine during literacy instruction is disrupted when a new student, who has been diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and is taking medication for this, joins the class mid-year. The teacher candidate describes the school community as a "*fairly affluent community*". The school uses a basal textbook series for literacy, and the teacher candidate structures her literacy block into whole class activities, small group discussions of texts, individual tutoring, and teacher-assigned independent practice. When children have completed all "*must do's, they may choose from a variety of activities such as listening centers or reading a 'just right' book*". The following is the précis.

I expect each of the students to be independently involved in a learning activity and to complete assignments by doing best work

(1). ***For the most part, my expectations were very appropriate*** for the students in my class (2). On the first day that Kylie joined the class, *I noticed* that Kylie was not ***exactly*** fitting in with the rest of the students in that she was often "*in her own world*" (3). *Kylie found* small objects to manipulate, or simply got out of her seat (4). *I discovered* that *Kylie has been diagnosed* with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and is currently on medication for this disorder (5). Reading ***seems*** to be the most difficult time for her, as she cannot concentrate on her work while there are so many other happenings around the classroom (6). First, *I tried* to help her stay on task through redirection and praise for on task behavior (7). I started to ***become*** frustrated at her lack of response to simple redirection (8). I ***knew*** she needed intervention, and her lack of attention was beginning to distract the other children (9). *I began to try* different things, starting with an old set of headphones to help her block out distractions (10). This *strategy worked* for about two weeks, until *Kylie began to play* with the headphone's cord (11). Next, *I tried* to break Kylie's assignments into smaller parts (12). ***I was running*** out of ideas, so *I asked* Kylie what might help her concentrate better on her work (13). *Kylie replied* that she didn't know (14). *I*

then asked my colleagues for help (15). One suggested structuring a desk in another part of the room for Kylie to work when she felt herself becoming distracted, a technique that **seemed** to help for short periods of time (16). I continue to search for new methods to help Kylie (17).

In this case précis, the teacher struggles with the principle of how to support the learning of a child who has identifiable special needs. Both veteran and new teachers alike often struggle with how to establish a learning environment that allows each child to flourish, particularly when the teacher's vision of a classroom is a good fit for most, but not all, students. In developing the narrative, she establishes equilibrium by describing her clear and *appropriate expectations* for how students will work during literacy block (sentences 1 and 2). She identifies Kylie, and her inability to fit in, as the source of rupture (sentences 3 and 4). As in a "Lesson in Limits", the teacher candidate searches for a causal explanation, which she arrives at by *discovering* that "Kylie has ADHD" (sentence 5). The plot line traces the teacher candidate's quest for the winning intervention (sentences 7–16). It ends with an ambiguous conclusion; namely, the search for the appropriate method continues (sentence 17).

Through the dynamic verbs *noticed* (sentence 3), *discovered* (sentence 5), *tried* (sentences 7, 10, and 12), *asked* (sentence 15), and *continued* (sentence 17), the teacher candidate fashions a self-image of a doggedly persistent teacher, determined to find the right *strategy* or *technique*. Verbs of knowledge direct us toward some of this teacher candidate's emotional states and beliefs. As with a "Lesson in Limits", the dominant emotion is *frustration* (sentence 8). The conflict emerges because the student does not fit the teacher's expectations, which she confidently evaluates as *very appropriate*, although the modal phrase *for the most part* undercuts her certainty (sentence 2). The verb *know* (sentence 9) suggests that she locates the source of the dilemma in the child and that her primary motive is to restore order by fixing the child.

In her reflection, the teacher candidate wrestles with the narrative's ambiguous conclusion. She writes:

After a great deal of reflection, I have not yet found the answer of what will work all of the time (18). Throughout my time with Kylie, I expected there to be a clear solution and a "fix all" for her problems, and when there was not, I became quickly discouraged (19). I kept trying to find a quick fix for her, when I needed to find something that could have a lasting effect on her scholastic abilities (20). I need to recognize the importance of flexing and adapting ideas when it becomes necessary (21). Some suggestions will work, while others may not (22). This lesson was an important reminder of the need to grow and adapt my ideas consistently for a changing classroom and students (23). This is not a problem that will disappear overnight (24). It will take time and patience for Kylie (25). This dilemma is also an important reminder to use a combination of approaches from a variety of sources to help the situation (26). This experience has reiterated for me the benefit of utilizing colleagues and how their aid can be vital in a situation (27). After discussing my dilemma with my colleagues, I was able to develop new solutions to Kylie's problem (28). For example, one person suggested

that I could tape a piece of material or textured cloth to her desk (29). It is thought that the extra sense of touch would help Kylie to use her other senses to focus on the lesson being taught (30). Overall, I feel this dilemma has helped to demonstrate to me the need to look beyond the short-term symptoms of a child's special needs and to look to the long-term solutions necessary to accomplish the daily work assigned (31). This has also taught me to have patience in dealing with situations that appear to be solved only to resurface and have to face them again (32).

The narrator's voice announces the lessons learned from this experience in a series of propositions uttered with conviction (sentences 21–27, 31 and 32). Like the teacher in “Lesson in Limits”, the narrator uses the word *need* (sentences 20, 21, 23, and 31) to communicate a subtle internal change (i.e., that in addition to persistence, she must also show patience and tolerate some ambiguity). Through the narrator's voice, the teacher-author constructs herself as virtuous, expresses approval with her actions, and affirms her commitment to play the role of the determined teacher who works diligently on the child's behalf. For instance, the adverb *yet* (sentence 18) indicates her commitment to her belief that the problem is real and that a workable solution exists; she implies that it is her responsibility to find the appropriate response. Her reference to her colleagues' ideas (sentences 29 and 30) suggests that she engages them in her quest to find an instrumental solution that may fix the child. In summary, through the narrator's voice, the teacher candidate reinforces her self-depiction as the heroically persistent teacher; she affirms moral virtues implicit in the role of the teacher. In comparison with the teacher in the “Lesson in Limits” case, this teacher acknowledges little tension between her normative and actual self.

Like the teacher-author of a “Lesson in Limits”, this teacher candidate's text suggests that she is ready to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the situation and critical evaluation of her actions and intentions. For example, with more focused scaffolding, the teacher educator might have pressed her to examine the depth of characterization that she has employed to render the learner, Kylie. What role does the definitional label, ADHD, play in her understanding of Kylie's motives and actions? How does her knowledge of exceptional learners provide insight into interpreting and responding to Kylie? By examining subject matter, the teacher might have questioned Kylie's readiness for the curriculum and her approach to differentiation. By examining the context with more care, she might have evaluated her expectations about the classroom environment. Additionally, the teacher educator might have urged the teacher candidate to develop a more evaluative stance with regard to her strategies. The teacher candidate seems to argue that if she tries enough different strategies or techniques at the problem, something will work (sentence 26); through guided discussion, the teacher educator might have helped her to clarify her criteria for selecting and evaluating each strategy or approach. In summary, in this case, the teacher candidate manages to set up a serious dilemma, for responding in a moral way to Kylie involves both a teacher's commitment to developing a genuine understanding of this learner and an aware-

ness of how the teacher's actions impact Kylie. In this case, the teacher candidate affirms those moral virtues expected of her as a teacher; however, based on the textual evidence, the teacher candidate has not yet deepened her knowledge of the learner who is at the heart of her dilemma. Developing the case to include such insights might have been possible with more substantive feedback or scaffolding from the teacher educator.

Case 3: "How Big is a Foot?"

"How Big Is a Foot?" also takes place in an elementary classroom and addresses a conflict that a teacher experiences with a particular child. However, in this case, the teacher's struggle emerges when she realizes that the content of her mathematics curriculum has an unintended harmful affect on one student. "How Big Is a Foot?" takes place in an urban elementary school, where approximately 35% of the students are enrolled in a free and reduced lunch program. The focal child in this case, Liz, lives with her aunt because her "mother was in jail and is now in a half-way house trying to overcome substance abuse". Here is the précis of this third case.

We were about to begin Chapter 11, Measurement, which started with exploring nonstandard units (1). Upon reading the teacher's edition, I became excited to find a lesson based on Rolf Myller's "How Big Is a Foot?" because this math and literature lesson was featured in a book by Marilyn Burns that I read in my math methods class (2). My intention was to follow the lesson in the same way as was presented in the book (3). [Note: A key event in this children's story involves a king who throws an apprentice into jail because he inaccurately measures a bed for the queen.] I read part of the story to the class; then, we talked about the apprentice's problem, and each student wrote a letter to the apprentice offering advice (4). Unfortunately, I was so caught up in teaching the math lesson, I hadn't stopped to think about Liz and what effect the story might have on her (5). When Liz turned her paper in to me, she had an angry look on her face (6). Although she completed the assignment, I realized at that point that she was upset and was probably thinking about her mother (7). After the math lesson, I met with Liz to go over the Chapter 10 math test, which Liz had scored poorly on (8). As we were going through the problems, Liz would erase what she had written, correct her answer, and slam down her pencil on the desk (9). I asked Liz if she was mad about the test, or if she was mad at me, and would she tell me what was bothering her? (10) Liz was totally silent (11). Later on in the afternoon, right before the students were going to gym, Liz left me a message on the chalkboard (12). It said: Dear Ms. Johnson, I'm sorry Ms. Johnson for not talking its because I got abondond 2X's [sic] (13). That night I began thinking about Liz and her situation (14). My lesson had obviously affected Liz in a very negative way (15). I wondered what I should do about it (16). I spoke to my advisor and my cooperating teacher, who recommended I share Liz's note with her aunt (17). The following day, Liz's aunt came for an hour-long conversation (18).

In “How Big Is a Foot?”, the moral dilemma centers on how a decision to engage children in the lesson’s content goes awry. The teacher works from the principle that to build mathematical understanding involves awakening curiosity and interest by connecting children to concepts in vivid, memorable ways. However, in this case, rather than activate the children’s imagination through a literary text, the lesson’s content instead stirs up painful, raw memories and experiences. The narrative’s initial state of equilibrium is communicated when the teacher candidate introduces her curriculum selection: she establishes her familiarity with the lesson and its credibility by naming the mathematics educator who developed it (sentences 2 and 3). The rupture occurs when Liz displays her anger (sentences 6 and 9). The teacher responds by seeking to reconnect with Liz (sentence 10). Liz’s apology (sentence 13) prompts additional reflection (sentences 14–17), and the narrative concludes somewhat indeterminately with a meeting between the teacher and Liz’s aunt (sentence 18).

The narrator plays a more intrusive role in this précis. Through the narrator, the teacher-author conveys an emotional progression from enthusiasm about the lesson (sentence 2) to dismay and regret (sentences 5 and 15). Verbs of knowledge reveal the teacher candidate’s preoccupation with her impact on Liz; for example, *was so caught up* (sentence 5), *hadn’t stopped to think* (sentence 5), *realize* (sentence 7), *began thinking* (sentence 14), *wondered* (sentence 16). Unlike the previous two cases where the students have been the antagonists, in this case the teacher candidate casts herself as the antagonist when she blames herself for heeding the siren call of the mathematics lesson and failing to anticipate its potential impact on Liz. The modal adverbs *unfortunately* (sentence 5) and *obviously* and *very* (sentence 15) illustrate the intensity with which she blames herself. The teacher candidate implies a core belief that a teacher must not harm children. In the concluding “reflection” segment of the case, the teacher candidate explores her conflicted response to this lesson.

On the one hand, I enjoyed teaching the math lesson (19). The story was a fun way to introduce measurements and the importance of measuring in standard units (20). Additionally, it gave me an opportunity to talk with Liz and her aunt that I might not have had if I hadn’t taught the lesson (21). On the other hand, this lesson was hurtful to a child whose mother had been in jail (22). I should have given some thought as to the affect it would have on Liz before I presented the lesson (23). My dilemma is, if I had another situation similar to this one, or had the opportunity to teach the lesson over again, should I? (24) Is it being insensitive to put academic needs ahead of affective needs? (25) After reviewing the positive and negative aspects of the lesson with my colleagues, I would continue to teach this lesson to other second grade classes (26). However, they were in agreement that it is difficult to anticipate the affective needs of children in the class when implementing instruction (27). Also, if I had a chance to do it over again, I should take Liz aside and talk to her about the lesson beforehand (28). If she felt that she didn’t want to participate in the story and writing portion, then I should give her the option of not participating in this part of the lesson (29). I believe this is a good strategy, and in the future, I will try to be more

proactive in my approach to dealing with the affective needs of individual learners
(30)

Through the evaluative construction *one hand/other hand* (sentences 19 and 22), as narrator, the teacher-author explicitly balances the perceived benefits of the lesson with its apparently *hurtful* (sentence 22) impact on one learner. The language suggests the image of the scales of justice, as she weighs seemingly irreconcilable positions; namely, using a story to invite most of the students into a difficult mathematical concept while simultaneously alienating one student with whom the teacher has worked to build a trusting relationship. By using the modal auxiliaries *should have/should* (sentences 23, 24, 28, and 29), the teacher candidate confesses her lack of foresight or unsound judgment; this choice of words indicates a more powerful internal change than the other two teacher-authors' use of the word *need*. Like a "Lesson in Limits", the teacher candidate poses questions (sentences 24 and 25); although, in this case, the questions are more explicitly moral in character, for they frame the teacher candidate's evaluation of her purposes and the impact of her actions on others. The teacher candidate's second question (sentence 24) reflects an understanding of the unique fusion of a teacher's moral and intellectual responsibilities (i.e., that a teacher must simultaneously care for the learner's growing intellect and character) (Ball & Wilson, 1996; Hansen, 1999; Sizer & Sizer, 1999). The author's colleagues, like those in "Kylie Comes to Class", primarily reinforce the teacher candidate's interpretation of events and they offer a potential response if a comparable situation appears. In this sense, they are more in keeping with the instrumental focus seen in "Kylie Comes to Class". The teacher candidate seems to construct her narrative as a cautionary tale regarding learner-centered instruction; she constructs an argument through which she communicates her regret. In a certain sense, she seems to write to atone for her betrayal of this one student. Thus, the power of her learning comes as she reconciles who she wants to be, a learner-centered and caring teacher, with who she was in this sequence of events.

In contrast to the first two cases presented, "How Big Is a Foot?" does provide a more comprehensive and critical examination of a particular event, largely because the teacher candidate considers explicitly three of the four commonplaces (learner, teacher, and subject matter). She is also the most explicitly self-critical of the three cases presented. Even so, possibilities for a teacher educator to extend her analysis are evident. For instance, in addition to exploring the moment through the lens of maintaining the learner/teacher relationship, the teacher candidate might have considered her beliefs regarding how children engage in subject matter or how children learn the mathematical concept of non-standard units.

Cross-Case Analysis

The aforementioned three cases were selected for analysis because they were representative of broad patterns found in the complete data set of 35 case texts. An initial observation is that all three case narratives detail fairly typical events; that is, veterans and teacher educators will probably recognize the experiences narrated.

But, what does all this fine-grained textual analysis tell us about how teacher candidates come to understand their moral agency? In this section, I argue that the previous analyses of narrative structure, the narrator's voice, and colleagues' comments point to three ways in which composing texts promotes understanding of moral agency. First, as the candidates structure and people their narratives, they deepen their understanding of the moral character and consequences of their relationship with learners (Clark, 1990). Second, as they render the particulars of the experience and develop accounts for why specific events unfolded, they begin to see how multiple factors shape the conflicts in their narratives; although grasping the full range of factors may require more rigorous scaffolding from teacher educators. Third, through the narrator's voice, they identify and evaluate their abilities to enact moral dispositions expected of a teacher.

Understanding Teacher/Learner Relationships. Crafting narrative helps the teacher candidates focus on and understand the moral character and consequences of their relationship with particular learners. That the plot structure of nearly every case in the data set pivots around conflict or tension in a specific teacher/learner relationship signals the importance this relationship has in the teacher candidate's mind. The narrative's emotional epicenter is a rush of frustration, anger, and/or regret over particular interactions with a child/youth (e.g., Steve's *rude comments*, Kylie's inability to focus, and Liz's message on the chalkboard). These incidents provoke powerful emotions because the teacher candidates recognize that they do not always live up to their vision of themselves (e.g., as fair, caring, resourceful, composed individuals). For example, in "How Big Is a Foot", the teacher candidate uses the case to puzzle through the tension that arises when her intention to engage Liz's intellectual imagination goes awry and actually hurts the child. Through constructing the narrative, the teacher candidates begin to recognize the potential impact of nearly every teacher remark or action. For instance, in "Lesson in Limits", the teacher's off-hand comment about a student's dress appears to initiate a sequence of events that leads to open confrontation. Finally, the teacher candidates come to recognize and affirm their commitment to the tremendous effort involved in connecting with and supporting students, as Kylie's teacher concludes in her case.

A second way that developing case narratives fosters understanding of the teacher/learner relationship comes from text-making move of characterization. Because case writing requires the teacher-authors to render individuals as characters, it invites them to portray the other players (in these cases primarily learners) with some psychological depth. In most cases, however, the teacher-authors were more likely to cast individuals in archetypal roles, which in turn sheds light on teachers' beliefs about the role(s) of learners and teachers. For example, while all of the cases include an antagonist, in general the teacher-author assigned this role to the student(s), a pattern illustrated in "Lesson in Limits" and "Kylie Comes to Class". Although occasionally the teacher cast herself as the antagonist (see "How Big Is a Foot"), a more common pattern was to see the teacher cast herself as either victim (see "Lesson in Limits") or as hero (see "Kylie Comes to Class"). Writers seek to oblige

readers' expectations. Because readers expect antagonists and they seem to be satisfied with relatively simplistic foes, I wonder do teachers run the danger of oversimplification when they cast students as the antagonists? Do teachers draw on pre-existing "labels" as a part of this process; for example, in the cases of "Lesson in Limits" and "Kylie Comes to Class", does the descriptive ADD/ADHD label forestall a close examination of the unique psychological motives and attributes of these players? When teachers cast the student as victim, does that demonstrate the moral virtue of compassion? Teacher educators might play a role in ensuring that oversimplification does not occur. They may help teacher candidates identify the roles implicit in their characterization of key players and then prompt them to reflect on the appropriateness of those roles. They may encourage teacher candidates to draw on their knowledge base of teaching to extend their interpretation. They may press teacher candidates to consider the motivations of key players.

Attention to the External Commonplaces. I argued earlier in this article that it is a teacher's moral responsibility to attend to and deliberate on the complex of factors that shape dilemmas, and I have drawn on Schwab's commonplaces (1973) as a framework for doing so. As my earlier textual analysis suggests, the teacher candidates tend to tackle two out of the four commonplaces, the teacher and the learner. That they minimize how both the subject matter and classroom or school contexts (e.g., norms, values, structural features) influence the difficulties narrated is most probably a function of how the teacher educators failed to scaffold such considerations. The narratives in the data set create the opportunity for the narrator to reflect explicitly about these commonplaces, but the teacher candidates may need guidance from others to consider how they interact in a classroom or teacher/learner relationship. The teacher candidates' apparent tendency to downplay context may also stem from a core belief that they cannot influence the culture/organization of a school or the curriculum framework; while this may be accurate in many situations, teacher educators ought to help new teachers perceive how features of context and subject matter do indeed shape events.

Demonstrating Moral Dispositions. A final outcome of case writing is that it presses teacher candidates to demonstrate and/or reflect on the moral dispositions expected of teachers. Given that all cases are written in the first person, the teacher candidates are at once a central character and the narrator who interjects evaluative statements both in the narrative of interactions and difficulties and also more explicitly in the reflective epilogue to the case. In the three cases analyzed and the remaining data set, the narrator is a lively presence, providing the most direct link to the teacher candidate's cognition or sense making. As the explication of the three sample cases has shown, modal expressions and questions voiced through the narrator's discourse indicate the teacher's point of view toward the events narrated. This point of view connects to the teacher's grasp of those moral dispositions expected of teachers.

First, through the narrator's commentary, teacher candidates demonstrate what Hansen has called "open-mindedness" or "a posture [that] means being willing to pull up the peg, so to speak, to drop an initial impression and to look again" (1999, p. 184). For example, one feature of the narrator's discourse is modal adverbs (e.g., *very*, *somewhat*, *obviously*), which convey the teacher-author's degree of commitment to an interpretation or to a belief. As such, they often indicate positions that may be open for negotiation. In "Kylie Comes to Class", for instance, the teacher candidate's statement "*For the most part, my expectations were very appropriate*" implies a contradictory message: *very* suggests strong commitment, while *for the most part* indicates a willingness to modulate or contextualize this opinion.

Second, through the narrator's evaluative commentary, teacher candidates may take responsibility for their role in both creating and/or resolving difficulties. All three cases show the teacher candidates doing so as they offer a summative proposition at the end of the case; these statements present, in essence, the teacher candidate's "moral of the story". For example, in "Kylie Comes to Class", the teacher closes her case with the statement "*Overall, I feel this dilemma has helped to demonstrate to me the need to look beyond the short-term symptoms of a child's special needs and to look to the long-term solutions necessary to accomplish the daily work assigned. This has also taught me to have patience in dealing with situations that appear to be solved only to resurface and have to face them again*". A common pattern across these statements is an emphasis on self-awareness or self-knowledge; that is, the teacher candidates tend to stress the importance of moral virtues rather than drawing on formal knowledge base for teaching. The urge to bring closure to the case in this fashion may be the result of the teacher-author's intention to meet the convention of a personal narrative. On the one hand, such statements provide an opportunity for the teacher to synthesize the most important "lesson" of the event(s) narrated; on the other hand, however, such statements may forestall a knowledge-based distillation. Kylie, for instance, needs a teacher who has both a willingness to search for solutions, but also an ability to use the existing knowledge base to identify and evaluate approaches. In this case, then, we see an example of an occasion for the teacher educator to extend the teacher candidate's knowledge base regarding learners with special needs.

This cross-case analysis points out ways in which the teacher candidates managed to understand aspects of moral agency as they engaged in the act of composing cases; however, in both the cases explicated in this paper as well as those in the entire data set, there were opportunities for the teacher candidates to extend the initial understandings displayed. In the next section, I outline ways in which the case writing pedagogy of the teacher educators might be improved to ensure that teacher-authors do in fact develop the deeper understandings that are seeded in the case texts.

Final Reflection: some implications for case writing pedagogy

Since completing the data analysis for the present paper, I have worked with the

program faculty to consider the implications and to reflect on our case writing pedagogy. In this concluding section of the paper, I share three changes we have made to improve the case writing process; namely, restructuring the timeline for case writing, providing more scaffolding particularly with regard to analytical feedback to initial drafts, and guiding teacher candidates' collegial responses.

First, we restructured the timing of the case writing assignment to allow more time for the writer to make sense of events and to deliberate over the instructor and colleagues' feedback. We now launch the case writing process earlier in the field experience/academic year. We can do this in part because we lengthened our field experience, thus ensuring that teacher candidates have sufficient experience in classrooms before composing cases. By starting earlier, we can encourage teacher candidates to wait for an emotionally drenched experience to occur. Also, the teacher-authors now develop their cases in a series of steps. We encourage them to draft the description of context and narrative of interactions/difficulties as soon as the event occurs; then we ask them to wait a week or so before writing an initial interpretation/reflection. At this point, they submit the case draft to their instructor who provides formative feedback. After making initial revisions, the teacher candidate participates in a structured case conference with colleagues. Finally, after the case conference, the teacher candidate makes final revisions to the case and composes an epilog.

Second, we are more deliberate in scaffolding the case writing process. This scaffolding begins with explicit discussions of the purposes and processes for reading/discussing published cases. Thus, long before the case writing process unfolds, we develop an explicit conceptual framework for moral agency that structures the discussion of published cases; finally, that same framework is invoked when teacher candidates' cases become the curriculum. Through the development of an analytical rubric, we have focused the instructor's feedback to the initial draft. We are more explicit in our questioning about both the internal and external commonplaces. For instance, we engage the author in a discussion about how his/her emotional states, key players' psychological states/motives, implicit assumptions/values/beliefs shape the actions narrated. We push the author to consider ways in which all four external commonplaces may have some explanatory power in interpreting the difficulties. We encourage the teacher candidate to elaborate the narrator's voice (e.g., to examine the degree of certainty displayed in modal statements and to weave in more questions).

Third, through guidelines and focal questions, we more tightly structure the collegial feedback process to ensure that teacher candidates address the moral implications of their colleague's dilemma. We urge them to hold off on offering alternative solutions until they have spent time identifying and exploring the central moral tension embedded in the case and to ponder the multiple factors that may be contributing to it.

In closing, the present study demonstrates several ways in which case writing experiences may foster an understanding of teacher's moral agency. It also points out, however, that more can be done by teacher educators to maximize the potential of case writing as a pedagogy in teacher education.

Acknowledgments

The author wishes to thank Joan Armon, Arnetha Ball, Nick Cutforth, Linda Darling-Hammond, Karen Hammerness, Gary Lichenstein, Lee Shulman, Amy Smith, and Barri Tinkler for helpful commentary on earlier versions of this paper. Any errors or imperfections found in this final version belong to the author alone.

Notes

1. In my reference to Schwab's commonplaces, I replace Schwab's term *milieu* with *context*.
2. The faculty members in this teacher preparation program are all, with the exception of this article's author, adjunct faculty. Most are practicing or recently retired educators. Faculty members are hired based on their record of outstanding practice in classrooms and schools and their commitment to work with new teachers.
3. The language of this phrase is taken from literary critic/philosopher Martha Nussbaum (1990), who elegantly synthesizes Henry James's ideas about the relationship between form and function in an artful novel. Nussbaum writes, "James belie[ves] that fine attention and good deliberation require a highly complex, nuanced perception of, and emotional response to, the concrete features of one's own context, including particular persons and relationships" (1990, p. 7).
4. Toolan explains, "English verbs can be divided into two broad classes, the stative and the dynamic. Stative verbs describe states of affairs, or unconscious processes of cognition or perception (e.g., be, seem, see, know). Dynamic verbs depict events and active processes, and even mental processes where these imply some degree of conscious involvement on the part of the processor (e.g., run, smile, watch, learn)" (1988, p. 266).

References

- BALL, D. & COHEN, D. (1999). Developing practice, developing practitioners: toward a practice-based theory of professional education. In L. DARLING-HAMMOND & G. SYKES (Eds.), *Teaching as the Learning Profession: handbook of policy and practice* (pp. 3–32). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- BALL, D. & WILSON, S. (1996). Integrity in teaching: recognizing the fusion of the moral and the intellectual. *American Educational Research Journal*, 33, 155–192.
- BORKO, H. & PUTNAM, R. (1996). Learning to teach. In D. BERLINER & R. CALFEE (Eds.), *Handbook of Educational Psychology* (pp. 673–708). New York: Macmillan.
- BRUNER, J. (1996). *The Culture of Education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- CALDERHEAD, J. (1996). Teachers: beliefs and knowledge. In D.C. BERLINER & R.C. CALFEE (Eds.), *Handbook of Educational Psychology* (pp. 709–725). New York: Macmillan.
- CLARK, C. (1990). The teacher and the taught: moral transactions in the classroom. In J. GOODLAD, R. SODER, K. SIROTNIK (Eds.), *The Moral Dimensions of Teaching* (pp. 251–265). San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.
- COCHRAN-SMITH, M. (2000). Blind vision: unlearning racism in teacher education. *Harvard Educational Review*, 70(2), 157–190.
- CUBAN, L. (2001). *How Can I Fix It? Finding solutions and managing dilemmas*. New York, Teachers College.
- CUTFORTH, N. (1999). Reconciling the moral and technical dimensions of teaching: moving beyond notions of good and bad pedagogy. *Journal for a Just and Caring Education*, 5(4), 386–405.
- DARLING-HAMMOND, L. & SYKES, G. (Eds.) (1999). *Teaching as a Learning Profession: handbook of policy and practice*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

- DEWEY, J. (1909). *Moral Principles in Education*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.
- FEIMAN-NEMSER, S. & FEATHERSTONE, H. (1992). *Exploring Teaching: reinventing and introductory course*. New York: Teachers College.
- FENSTERMACHER, G. (1990). Some moral considerations on teaching as profession. In J. GOODLAD, R. SODER & K. SIROTNIK (Eds.), *The Moral Dimensions of Teaching* (pp. 130–151). San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.
- FOWLER, R. (1986). *Linguistic Criticism*. Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press.
- FRIJDA, N.H. (1988). The laws of emotion. *American Psychologist*, 43, 349–358.
- GOODMAN, J. & LESNICK, H. (2001). *The Moral Stake in Education: contested premises and practices*. New York: Longman.
- HANSEN, D. (1995). *The Call to Teach*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- HANSEN, D. (1999). Understanding students. *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision*, 14(2), 171–185.
- HANSEN, D. (2001). *The Moral Heart of Teaching*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- JACKSON, P. (1968). *Life in Classrooms*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston.
- LAMPERT, M. (1985). How do teachers manage to teach? Perspectives on problems in practice. *Harvard Educational Review*, 55, 178–194.
- LORTIE, D. (1975). *Schoolteacher: a sociological study*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- MONTGOMERY, M., DURANT, A., FABB, N., FURNISS, T. & MILLS, S. (2000). *Ways of Reading: advanced reading skills for students of English literature* (2nd edition). London and New York: Routledge.
- NUSSBAUM, M. (1990). *Love's Knowledge: essays on philosophy and literature*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- POLKINGHORNE, D. (1991). Narrative and self-concept. *Journal of Narrative and Life History*, 1, 135–153.
- PUTNAM, R. & BORKO, H. (1997). Teacher learning: implications of new views of cognition. In B.J. BIDDLE, T.L. GOOD & I.F. GOODSON (Eds.), *International Handbook of Teachers & Teaching* (Vol. II, pp. 1223–1296). Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- SALOVAY, P. & MEYER, J.M. (1990). Emotional intelligence. *Imagination, Cognition, and Personality*, 9, 189–200.
- SCHWAB, J. (1973). The practical 3: translation into curriculum. *School Review*, 81(4), 501–522.
- SHULMAN, L. (1992). Toward a pedagogy of cases. In J.H. SHULMAN (Ed.), *Case Methods in Teacher Education* (pp. 1–30). New York: Teachers College Press.
- SHULMAN, L. (1996). Just in case: reflections on learning from experience. In J.A. COLBERT, P. DESBERG & K. TRIMBLE (Eds.), *The Case for Education: contemporary approaches for using case methods* (pp. 198–217). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- SIROTNIK, K. (1990). Society, schooling, teaching, and preparing to teach. In J. GOODLAD, R. SODER & K. SIROTNIK (Eds.), *The Moral Dimensions of Teaching* (pp. 296–327). San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.
- SIZER, T. & SIZER, N. (1999). *The Students are Watching*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- SPERLING, M. (1994). Moments remembered, moments displayed: narratization, metaphor, and the experience of teaching. *English Education*, 26, 142–156.
- TOM, A. (1984). *Teaching as a Moral Craft*. New York: Longman.
- TOOLAN, M.J. (1988). *Narrative: a critical linguistic introduction*. London: Routledge.
- VALLI, L. (1990). Moral approaches to reflective practice. In R.T. CLIFT, W.R. HOUSTON & M.C. PUGACH (Eds.), *Encouraging Reflective Practice in Education: an analysis of issues and programs* (pp. 39–56). New York: Teachers College.
- WHITCOMB, J. (1997). The impact of case writing on teacher learning and professional development. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Stanford University, Stanford, CA.
- WILSON, S. & BERNE, J. (1999). Teacher learning and the acquisition of professional knowledge: an examination of research on contemporary professional development. In A. IRAN-NEHAD & P.D. PEARSON (Eds.), *Review of Research in Education*, 24, 173–209.