

Exploring the *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession* through Anishinaabe Art  
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Ontario  
College of  
Teachers  
Ordre des  
enseignantes et  
des enseignants  
de l'Ontario

## Acknowledgements



The College would like to acknowledge the leadership and contributions of artist Bruce K. Beardy, a First Nation member of the College and a faculty member at Lakehead University, Faculty of Education in the Aboriginal Education Department. The Anishinaabe art in this educative resource document was created by artist Bruce K. Beardy to inspire critical awareness, reflection and dialogue regarding the *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession*.

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# Exploring the *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession* through Anishinaabe Art

*Exploring the Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession through Anishinaabe Art* is an educative resource designed to support exploration into the *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession*.

Educators are invited to reflect on the ethical standards of *Care, Respect, Trust* and *Integrity* through the artistic representations included within this document.

Initial teacher education and additional qualification (AQ) courses are key professional contexts for deepening ethical understanding and sensitivity. This resource will support ethical conversations within teacher education through the use of artistic

representations of the ethical standards. This may also help to support the meaningful inclusion of Anishinaabe cultures and worldviews within teacher education and professional practice.

These artistic interpretations and expressions of the ethical standards may also help to deepen educators' understanding of the important principles that guide ethical professional practice.

It is hoped that this resource will facilitate deep professional inquiry, reflection and dialogue into the many rich ethical concepts embedded within the teaching profession's ethical standards.

# Professional Inquiry

***“Members refine their professional practice through ongoing inquiry, dialogue and reflection.”***

Professional Practice, Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession  
(Ontario College of Teachers, 2006)

This resource guide is an educative tool for fostering critical professional inquiry and dialogue related to educators’ ethical professional knowledge and understanding.

Ethical professional inquiry is a powerful form of professional learning. Engaging in critical inquiry empowers educators in the ongoing process of the refinement of professional practice. As educators critically reflect on and analyze their practice through questioning and wondering, they are able to gain new insights, understandings and beliefs.

Professional inquiry enables educators to become aware of the assumptions and beliefs that inform their decisions and actions. The inquiry process included in this resource is designed to assist educators in recognizing the importance of engaging in thoughtful ethical reflection and dialogue prior to embarking on actions and making judgments. The professional judgments and moral actions of educators are greatly enhanced through the adoption of a reflective ethical stance.

Professional inquiry assists educators in critically exploring practices that are laden and interwoven with multifaceted, complex ethical dimensions. Understanding and gaining deeper insight into these ethical dimensions can help guide the ethical thinking, decisions and actions of educators.

Exploring professional practices through the reflective questions offered in this discussion guide may help to enhance understandings related to the many rich and complex ethical concepts and issues associated with teaching and leadership.

The core ethical concepts being explored in this discussion guide are embedded within the four ethical standards of *Care, Respect, Trust* and *Integrity*.

As you reflect on the artistic representations and the artist’s statements included in this guide, consider how your ethical practice can be deepened and extended.

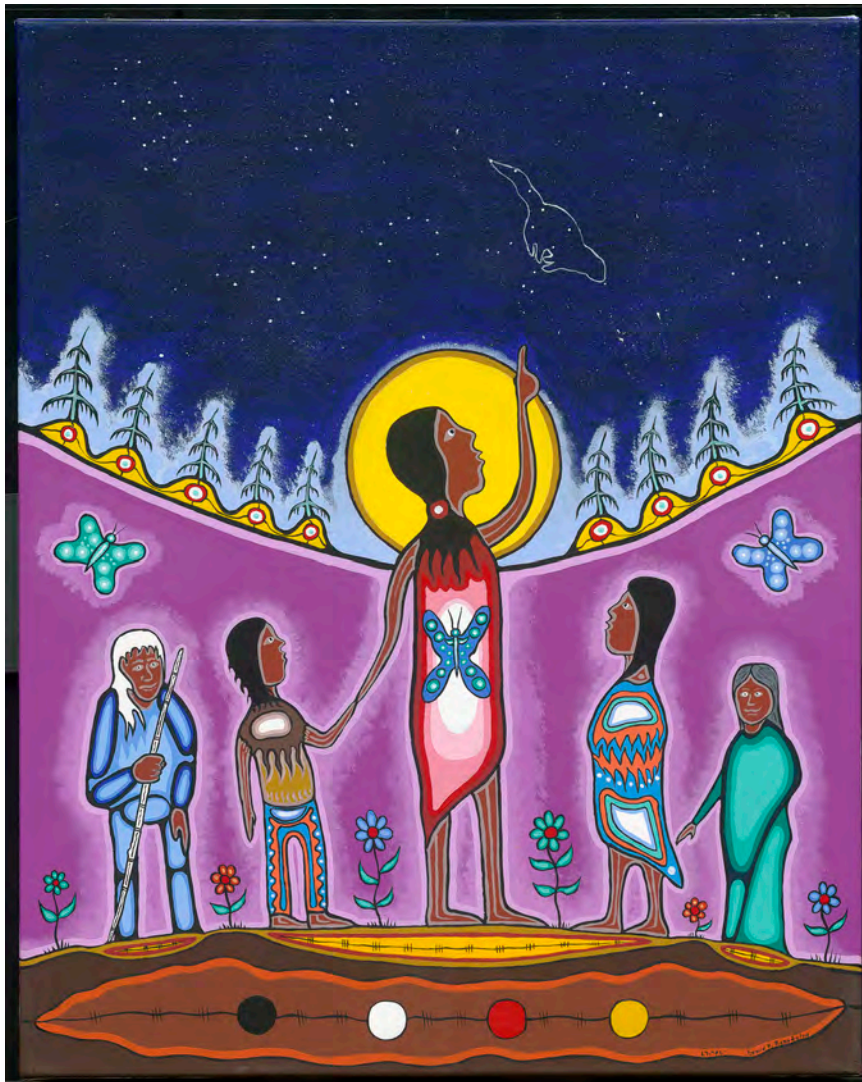


## ANISHINAABE ARTIST'S REPRESENTATIONS OF THE ETHICAL STANDARDS

# The Ethical Standard of *Care*

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

(Ontario College of Teachers, 2006)



Artist Bruce K. Beardy, OCT

### Exploring the Ethic of *Care*

1. Explore the artist's representation of the ethical standard of *Care*.
2. Create a story/narrative to convey the meaning you associate with this artistic image of *Care*.

## ANISHINAABE ARTIST'S REPRESENTATIONS OF THE ETHICAL STANDARDS

# The Ethical Standard of *Care*

Reflect on the following meaning of the artist's painting depicting the ethical standard of *Care* and then respond to the professional inquiry questions:

### Artist's Statement

The ethical standard of *Care* is represented by the Anishinaabe family. Anishinaabe families are very close to each other within a community. All work together to ensure the upbringing of the children is met with the utmost respect and a good sustainable life.

The painting tells of a group of the Anishinaabe people stargazing. A woman, the mother or the teacher, is telling her children or her students a story that was passed on to her by her parents. She begins by identifying the cluster of stars, pointing them out to her children so they can see. She tells her children of a time when there was no summer in the north. She sees the animal, a fisher or ochiig, within those clusters of stars, otherwise known as the Big Dipper in English. She briefly repeats the story, identifying the main character, the fisher, and the focus of that constellation. "The fisher is responsible for the warm weather we have," she tells her children.

Alongside the astronomy teaching are the grandparents of respect and truth, which are represented by the colours blue and green. The grandparents show support, guidance and direction. They ensure the story is told the right way and truthfully. The teacher continues to explain the story. The bend in the stars is the tail of the fisher. There were hunters that chased him when the fisher managed to bring the summer this far north. As the animal ran away, one of the hunters shot an arrow and hit the tail. As a result, there are faint traces of starlight that can be seen chasing the fisher. That is why the fisher ended up in the sky. As he was chased and shot, he jumped up to get away from his pursuers.

The scene depicted in the painting is that of a nice summer evening. The environment is serene. The butterflies bring peace, hope, grace and tranquility, as do the summer flowers blooming with colour.

The Four Sacred Medicines (black, white, red and yellow) are also embedded in the painting for each person. This medicine representation, in the Anishinaabe culture, is important. All are connected to all forms of life, animate or inanimate.

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

**Artist Bruce K. Beardy, OCT**

### Professional Inquiry Question

1. Identify new insights and ethical understandings you gained from exploring the artist's expression of the ethic of *Care*.
2. Explore the significance of the artist's expression of the ethic of *Care* for your own professional practice.

## ANISHINAABE ARTIST'S REPRESENTATIONS OF THE ETHICAL STANDARDS

# The Ethical Standard of *Respect*

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

(Ontario College of Teachers, 2006)



Artist Bruce K. Beardy, OCT

### Exploring the Ethic of *Respect*

1. Explore the artist's representation of the ethical standard of *Respect*.
2. Create a story/narrative to convey the meaning you associate with this artistic image of *Respect*.



## ANISHINAABE ARTIST'S REPRESENTATIONS OF THE ETHICAL STANDARDS

# The Ethical Standard of *Respect*

Reflect on the following description of the artist's painting depicting the ethical standard of *Respect* and then respond to the professional inquiry questions:

### Artist's Statement

The ethic of *Respect* is depicted with a family practicing the values most cherished by Anishinaabe people. A woman, who is a mother and teacher, talks to her child about the importance of love, care and respect for all living things in the environment. The mother/teacher holds the duckling and talks to her child about appreciation for all things that are living. As animals provide food and sustain the life of the Anishinaabe people, she teaches her the important value of respect, taking only what is needed and giving thanks to the animal and Creator for providing the life sustaining source. The ducks in the background are dancing and display pleasure and joy in their existence. In the Anishinaabe culture, legends tell of waterfowl engaging in pow-wows with the trickster, Nanaboshoo, in celebration of something or for the trickster's own benefit.

The man, who is a father and teacher, teaches his child the importance and value of the Anishinaabe practices. The teacher is holding a smudge bowl as he talks to his child about the traditional culture. He shares the important teachings of smudging, that the belief of spirits cleanses the whole body, mind, mental and physical health and spiritual acceptance to possess the balance of a good life. The spirits provide the balance of life.

The elder provides support, guidance, and direction to the family. He is very pleased and blesses the learners for the continued growth of these practices. The eagles are also showing their support of these traditional practices. It is often understood in the Anishinaabe culture that whenever a pow-wow or traditional activity is performed, an eagle or eagles emerge and fly in circles directly above the activity or celebration.

The environment is serene and calm with a sunset, depicting a strong connection between the wise elder, the family, and the environment. The flowers, trees, bugs and winged creatures are present and cannot be forgotten, as even the smallest animate being is part of the natural growth.

The fish within the woman is the character of a teacher. The fish clans in the Anishinaabe people are strong teachers. The eagle feather within a man is the spiritual value of the Anishinaabe traditions. The feather is the highest form of honour and respect.

The animals displayed in the people are the connection to the sustainability of Anishinaabe people. Without these animals, Anishinaabe people would not exist.

The child's hand print in the painting requests guidance, direction and teachings of the Anishinaabe values.

The Four Sacred Medicines (black, white, red and yellow) are also embedded in the painting for each person. This medicine representation, in the Anishinaabe culture, is important. All are connected to all forms of life, animate or inanimate.

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

**Artist Bruce K. Beardy, OCT**

### Professional Inquiry Questions

1. Explore the role and significance of the Elder and the eagle for fostering the ethic of *Respect*.
2. Discuss the relevance of the artist's meaning of his expression of *Respect* for your own professional practices.
3. Generate ways in which this artistic expression and associated cultural meanings of the ethic of *Respect* can be integrated within the context of your professional practice.
4. Discuss the new insights you gained regarding the ethic of *Respect*.

## ANISHINAABE ARTIST'S REPRESENTATIONS OF THE ETHICAL STANDARDS

# The Ethical Standard of *Trust*

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

(Ontario College of Teachers, 2006)



Artist Bruce K. Beardy, OCT

### Exploring the Ethic of *Trust*

1. Explore the artist's representation of the ethical standard of *Trust*.
2. Create a story/narrative to convey the meaning you associate with this artistic image of *Trust*.

## ANISHINAABE ARTIST'S REPRESENTATIONS OF THE ETHICAL STANDARDS

# The Ethical Standard of *Trust*

Reflect on the following description of the artist's painting depicting the ethical standard of *Trust* and then respond to the professional inquiry questions:

### Artist's Statement

In the centre of the painting is a representation of a teacher immersing himself in the traditional culture of the Anishinaabe people within a community. The ethical standard of *Trust* is depicted in this presentation.

There are four layers of activity in the painting. The bottom layer highlights a person, who is also a teacher of Anishinaabe culture, showing a caterpillar that transforms into a butterfly to his students of different ages and gender. The students are learning the science of the environment, which they encounter in their daily lives.

The Four Sacred Medicines (black, white, red and yellow) are also embedded in each layer of the painting. This representation of the medicines, within the Anishinaabe culture, is important, as all are connected to every form of life, animate or inanimate.

The teacher in the centre of the painting is connected to all the layers depicting his ongoing quest for knowledge and understanding of the culture within the community. He immerses himself in the traditional values of drumming and smudging. He is aware of his surroundings within nature and the environment within the community. The Anishinaabe language that is used in the community is important, as are the songs and prayers of giving thanks to the Creator.

The fish represent the flow of life, the current and the water. They are the role models and the teachers of the Anishinaabe clan system.

The top layer of the painting shows the natural forest, where the animals make their home. The animals are a part of the important eco-system; each has a role within the cycle of life as do all other living things. Everything is connected for a reason.

The teacher becomes a part of the community and appreciates the values that he learns from the Anishinaabe culture. He gains the trust of the community and in turn he trusts the community. He becomes an important contributor to the community.

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

**Artist Bruce K. Beardy, OCT**

### Professional Inquiry Questions

1. Explore the significance of the teacher's "ongoing quest for knowledge and understanding of the culture within the community" for your own ethical professional practice.
2. Inquire into the meaning of the layered images of history in this painting for your own professional practice.
3. Discuss new insights and ethical understandings you gained regarding this artist's expression of the ethic of *Trust*.

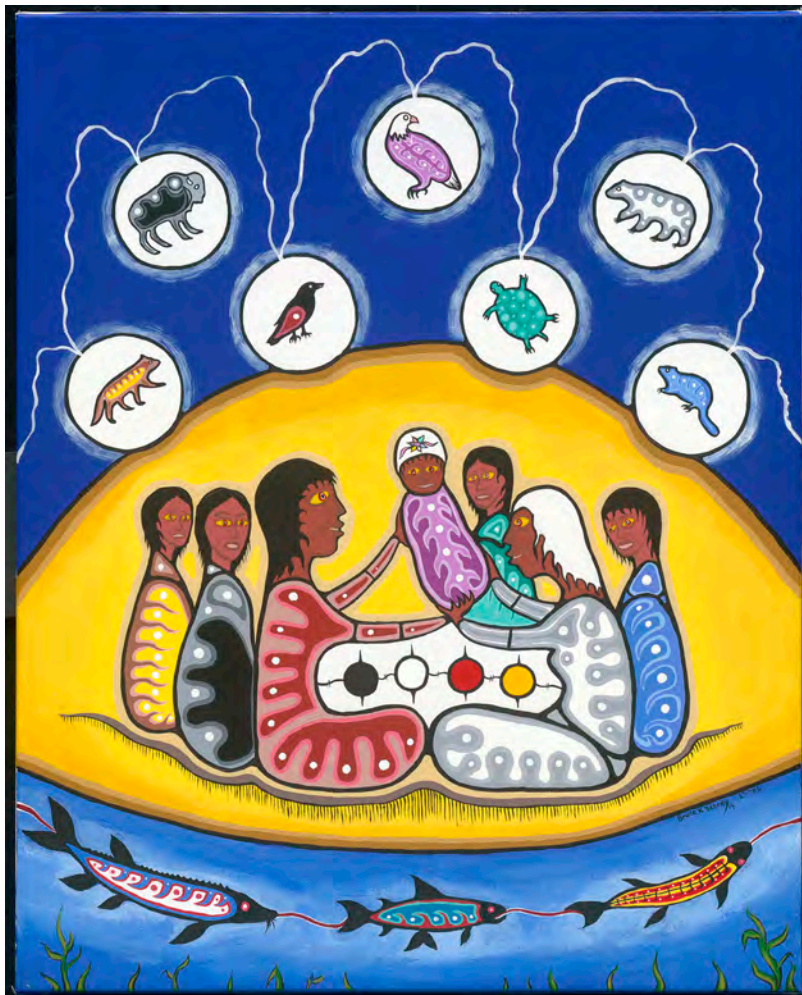


## ANISHINAABE ARTIST'S REPRESENTATIONS OF THE ETHICAL STANDARDS

# The Ethical Standard of *Integrity*

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

(Ontario College of Teachers, 2006)



Artist Bruce K. Beardy, OCT

### **Exploring the Ethic of *Integrity***

1. Explore the artist's representation of the ethical standard of *Integrity*.
2. Create a story/narrative to convey the meaning you associate with this artistic image of *Integrity*.



## ANISHINAABE ARTIST'S REPRESENTATIONS OF THE ETHICAL STANDARDS

### The Ethical Standard of *Integrity*

Reflect on the following description of the artist's painting depicting the ethical standard of *Integrity* and then respond to the professional inquiry questions:

#### Artist's Statement

The painting depicting the ethical standard of *Integrity* brings to life the seven teachings within the Anishinaabe culture: humility, honesty, respect, courage, truth, wisdom and love. All of these teachings work together in the community to help support the guidance, and direction of the child's learning, whereby the child chooses the right path for their life journey.

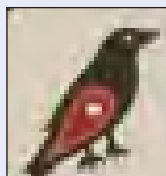
The baby is in the mossbag and is being honoured by the people representing each of the seven teachings. They are working together to provide the life teachings that will help the child in growing. The baby, as with the eagle, is the representative of love. The eagle is depicted in the painting as the only winged animal that can attain great height.

Each of the animals and colours represent the seven teachings:



#### Humility – Yellow, East, Mahiigan Wolf

Anishinaabe people value community and community well-being. Similarly, Mahiigan lives in a pack and lives for the well-being of that pack.



#### Honesty – Red, South, Raven

In the Anishinaabe culture, Raven is a trickster, a scavenger and considered annoying at times. Raven has accepted his being as he is, and thus he knows honesty. He does not try to change.



#### Respect – Black, West, Buffalo

Respect is represented by the colour black and the animal buffalo. Buffalo is sacred, shows abundance and signifies healing. In the Anishinaabe culture, the people are the care takers of the land. Respect is shown to the abundances of the land, the people take only what they need from the land and share with others if they have more than they can use.



#### Courage – White, North, Mahkwa Bear

Courage is represented by the colour white and the animal Mahkwa Bear. Mahkwa embodies courage. Mahkwa as a protector shows courage as she fights to protect her young in the face of danger and threat. In the Anishinaabe culture, Mahkwa teaches the people about the obstacles that one may encounter and to show courage by learning how to overcome the challenges and fears in our life journey.

## ANISHINAABE ARTIST'S REPRESENTATIONS OF THE ETHICAL STANDARDS



### Truth – Green, Mother Earth, Miskwaadesi Turtle

Truth is represented by the colour green and the animal Miskwaadesi Turtle. Turtle embodies truth and although it is known as a very slow moving creature, it is very stable and strong. You cannot rush a Turtle. In the Anishinaabe culture, the elders are strong in knowledge and wisdom, very understanding and patient. The elders do not rush in important decision-making but very carefully and slowly deliberate over matters to gain an understanding of the truth.



### Wisdom – Blue, Grandfather Sky, Amik Beaver

Wisdom is represented by the colour blue and the animal Amik Beaver. Amik embodies wisdom and is known as a builder, creator of a stable structure and environment for his family. In the Anishinaabe culture, Amik teaches the people wisdom, using their gifts wisely to create a stable and sustainable community.



### Love – Violet, Eagle

In the Anishinaabe culture, the eagle is considered the highest spiritual form of the animal and is highly respected.

### Clan



**Fish** – The Fish represent the clan system in the Anishinaabe culture. The sturgeon clan are considered to be the teachers within the community. They represent the water, current and flow of life.

That said, the good character, ethics, morals, righteousness, togetherness, strength and solidarity are also embedded, in addition to the Seven Teachings.

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

### Four Sacred Medicines



**Four Sacred Medicines** – The Four Sacred Medicines (black, white, red and yellow) are also embedded in the painting. This medicine representation, in the Anishinaabe culture, is important. All are connected to all forms of life, animate or inanimate.

**Artist Bruce K. Beardy, OCT**

### Professional Inquiry Questions

1. Reflect on the significance of the seven teachings within the Anishinaabe culture as described by the artist for your own professional practice.
2. Identify how these seven teachings, the Clan and the Four Sacred Medicines, can inform your ethical thinking, understanding and professional practice.
3. Discuss the new insights you gained regarding the ethic of *Integrity*.

# Reflecting on an Anishinaabe Artist's Representations of the Ethical Standards

The following reflection was evoked after one experienced Ontario educator had the opportunity to reflect on and engage with these artistic representations of the ethical standards of *Care, Respect, Trust and Integrity*:

*... Words ...*

*They were only words  
...grey...lifeless...  
symbolized in what was meant to be a pleasing  
oval that would invite us in  
Engage us in their concepts and the living them out  
in our teaching, our administering, our profession*

*Yet their greyness didn't draw me in  
I didn't remember them...I didn't even want to  
Stale, Illusive, Unmoving*

*They sat on a beautifully graphed out page trying hard to entice, encourage, engage me*

*A framework ...yet I felt no support within it...saw only words blurring my vision,  
my knowing, my believing, my living out of my teaching  
and yet...an invitation ...*

*Come, witness...paintings offered...storied into existence*

*That very morning...words changed... I...was changed with them...*

*Transformed...Enlivened...Inspired beyond imagining  
I felt the lifeblood of the images pulsing through me  
As they connected, grounded and filled me with their essences  
I became the words and they became me*

*No longer separate... no longer apart  
No longer stale or meaningless to the fibers of my being  
My blood pulsed through my body as the images were presented*

*Audience yet so much more...we were invited in to create meaning from  
the images...for ourselves  
I breathed them in ...discovering them, my own meaning created,*

*embedded within them  
Finding myself there...vibrant...expansive...alive  
Eyes wide open...heart exploding in awe...I took my time...we all took time  
sensing and feeling our way, into, out of, with, through, about and around  
the paintings  
and I will never be the same...does integrity have a form for me now?  
Respect?...Care?...Trust?  
Commitment to students and student learning?  
Leadership in learning communities? Professional knowledge?  
Ongoing professional learning?  
Arghhhhhhhh...the very typing of the words has limited, tarnished, broken my  
connection already to the vivid images  
colour...colour swims, grounds, draws us in, holds us near and dear as story unfolds itself  
community held, social justice in practiced, honouring, living, action  
family, grandfather teachings, respected elders  
loving gentleness, immense possibilities...connection...the universe  
dancing, holding, opening, grounding  
I witnessed...experienced  
was inspired...felt...upheld...comforted and honoured  
I saw my dignity!...dignity and integrity...  
  
Mine and all of the we who embrace this  
profession...calling it ours  
no longer am I alone in my knowing of what teaching is  
and can be about  
living practice...actioned...Heart*

Dale Cimolai, OCT



# *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession and Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession*

The *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession* and the *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession*, describe the ethical stance, professional knowledge, skills and practices that educators embody within their daily practice. These standards or principles of professional practice are lived out in multiple and diverse ways reflective of the unique contexts that exist in the rich landscape of Ontario.

The ethical standards and standards of practice convey a dynamic and collective vision of ethical professionalism for the Ontario teaching profession. The standards serve as complex and interrelated insightful frameworks for exploring, inquiring and enhancing ethical professional practice. As educators individually and collectively critically explore the evolving nature of professional practice through the concepts embodied within the Standards, they are engaging in forms of professional self-regulation.

Engagement in processes of critical collaborative inquiry help to support educators in further refining the knowledge, skills and values embedded within the nine standards or principles of professional practice.

The *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession* are intended to:

- inspire members to reflect and uphold the honour and dignity of the teaching profession
- identify the ethical responsibilities and commitments in the teaching profession
- guide ethical decisions and actions in the teaching profession
- promote public trust and confidence in the teaching profession. (Ontario College of Teachers, 2012, p. 8)

# Ethical Standards

**“At the heart of a strong and effective teaching profession is a commitment to students and their learning.”**

(Ontario College of Teachers, 2012, p.7)

## The *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession* are:

### Care

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

### Respect

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

### Trust

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

### Integrity

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



(Ontario College of Teachers, 2006)

# Standards of Practice

*“The Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession provide a framework of principles that describes the knowledge, skills and values inherent in Ontario’s teaching profession.”*

(Ontario College of Teachers, 2012, p.11)

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

**Commitment to Students and Student Learning**

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

**Professional Knowledge**

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

**Professional Practice**

Members apply professional knowledge and experience to promote student learning. They use appropriate pedagogy, assessment and evaluation, resources and

technology in planning for and responding to the needs of individual students and learning communities. Members refine their professional practice through ongoing inquiry, dialogue and reflection.

**Leadership in Learning Communities**

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

**Ongoing Professional Learning**

Members recognize that a commitment to ongoing professional learning is integral to effective practice and to student learning. Professional practice and self-directed learning are informed by experience, research, collaboration and knowledge.

(Ontario College of Teachers, 2006)



## References

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*Explorer les Normes de déontologie de la profession enseignante par l'art anishinaabe.*

