Beyond Idealism: Fostering Ethical Practices Among Preservice Special Education Teachers

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Abstract
Many preservice teachers enter their training programs with preconceived ideals of the qualities of a “good” teacher. Although some qualities are admirable, these ideals are vague and can potentially lead to problematic and complicated interactions between students and teachers. Establishing professional boundaries with students and their families is necessary for healthy and ethical relationships between teachers and students. Extant research suggests teachers who make instructional decisions based on ethical principles can better teach, manage student behaviors, and work more effectively with families (Able et al., 2017; Cartledge et al., 2001; Fiedler & Van Haren, 2009). These findings underscore the importance of teaching educator ethics to preservice teachers. In this qualitative exploratory study of 36 preservice special education teachers from a university teacher preparation program in the western United States, the authors examined preservice teachers’ perceptions of learning about the Model Code of Educator Ethics (MCEE). Results of this study suggest: (1) learning about MCEE creates a paradigm shift in preservice teachers’ conceptualization of teacher and student relationships; and (2) preservice teachers benefit from ethics instruction, including opportunities to explore professional boundary parameters and strategies for establishing and maintaining healthy professional relationships with students and families.

Keywords: Educator Ethics, Preservice Teachers, Preservice Special Education Teachers, Professional Boundaries

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Introduction

Care is the foundation of the teacher-student relationship (Noddings, 2012). It is a commonly held belief that a caring teacher can motivate and encourage students to achieve academic goals (Aultman et al., 2008; Noddings, 2012). Care for students is considered a critical value that "good" teachers possess, a belief that is deeply rooted in the teacher narrative. The desire to care for students who are in need is an often-cited reason for individuals who enter the teaching profession (Fray et al., 2018; Perryman et al., 2020).

According to Aultman et al. (2008), "demonstrating an "ethic of care" in teaching suggests ethical behavior [is inherent] in the act of caring" (p. 637). Indeed, students and their families have a reasonable expectation to trust that teachers are properly teaching and caring for students in their charge. Teachers exercise considerable autonomy in their daily responsibilities and are expected to make decisions that are in the best educational interests of their students, making it imperative that teachers understand and demonstrate the "ethic of care." However, "care" is a subjective concept that can be interpreted and enacted in various ways under different settings and conditions. This ethos of "care" breeds subjectivity, and it underscores the importance of teaching preservice teachers a common language and set of collective beliefs that the profession subscribes to, known as professional ethics (Hammonds, 2020).

As teachers establish and nurture "caring" relationships with students, they will likely find themselves in situations where they must draw boundaries between themselves and their students (Bernstein-Yamashiro & Noam, 2013). As Aultman et al. (2008) suggest teachers, particularly beginning teachers, struggle with establishing and maintaining appropriate boundaries with students. It is critical for teachers to maintain a balance between their care for students and upholding their professional responsibilities. A code of ethics is one tool that teachers can use to help them maintain professional integrity in their decision-making with regard to student care. Research findings in this area suggest that a teacher's knowledge and application of professional ethics to their decision-making positively impact their practice and their ability to interact professionally with families (Able et al., 2017; Cartledge et al., 2001; Fiedler & Van Haren, 2009).

Educator Ethics

A code of ethics is a set of principles that guide professionals in their decisions and interactions with clients, colleagues, and the general public. A code of ethics is one way to make transparent the values and expectations held by teachers (Maxwell, 2017). Historically, American professional educator associations have developed ethics codes for their constituents. For example, the National Education Association's Code of Ethics for Educators was developed in 1975 (NEA, 2018) and the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation's Student Evaluation Standards was developed in 2010 (Bergman, 2018). In 2015, the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification developed the Model Code of Ethics for Educators (MCEE). The MCEE is a set of principles and values deemed critical to teachers and provides a common language and belief system that allows teachers to make complex ethical decisions (Hammonds, 2020). However, the mere existence of an ethics code is not sufficient to ensure that teachers are making ethical decisions. Teachers, particularly beginning teachers, need to learn how to apply ethics to the daily situations they encounter in the classroom (Apgar, 2018; Combes et al., 2016; Decker et al., 2022).

Teaching Professional Ethics to Preservice Teachers

There is no one definitive way to teach preservice teachers how to apply ethical principles to their decision-making process. Several approaches exist, each with its benefits and limitations (Soltis, 1986; Strike, 2003; Warnick & Silverman, 2011). As such, teacher educators are tasked with finding models that best meet the needs of their preservice teacher population. Teacher educators may find that preservice teachers benefit from a mix of several approaches. In the next section, the authors describe two promising approaches to teaching preservice teachers the application of ethics.

Pedagogically Productive Talk

Pedagogically productive talk is a discussion format that involves using relevant profession-related scenarios and examples to encourage students to engage in collaborative discourse to strengthen their ability to make professional decisions (Lefstein et al., 2020). Pedagogically productive talk provides a means for preservice teachers to discover approaches to manage and respond to ethical challenges that they are likely to face in their profession. In this model, preservice teachers learn to interpret ethical scenarios and dilemmas and to use strategies to find ethically sound courses of action (Lefstein et al., 2014). When selecting scenarios and dilemmas for discussions, it is important to use examples that are realistic and depict situations that teachers may likely encounter on the job (Soltis, 1985; Lefstein et al., 2020). For meaningful discussions and learning opportunities, it is recommended to spend more time discussing seemingly benign situations that could result in ethical breaches as opposed to sensationalized cases reported in the media (Soltis, 1986; Warnick & Silverman, 2011). Preservice teachers benefit from repeated practice in using this model as it deepens their learning in identifying potential problems and builds their skills in proactively addressing ethical issues.

Mixed Approach

Warnick and Silverman's (2011) mixed approach method is another instructional strategy that can be used to teach ethical applications for preservice teachers. This method addresses the complexities of ethical issues and balances the need to understand various philosophical underpinnings with practical ethics application to situations. It utilizes an expanded framework for case analysis to engage preservice teachers in objective ethical decision-making. The steps include: (1) collecting relevant evidence, (2) considering the perspectives of various stakeholders, (3) defining the ethical dilemma, (4) outlining potential ethical courses of action, (5) examining philosophical theories related to these potential courses of action and the downstream consequences of both actions and inactions, (6) reviewing the teacher's roles and duties, (7) locating additional sources of information, (8) justifying the most ethical course of action, and (9) planning steps for follow-up and assessing the outcome of the decision.

Given the importance of teaching preservice teachers about educator ethics and its application to establishing and maintaining professional boundaries with students, it is imperative to understand preservice teachers' perceptions of student care and setting professional boundaries.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore preservice teachers' perspectives on establishing and maintaining professional boundaries in their roles as teachers, following their training on the MCEE. The rationale for teaching the MCEE to preservice teachers in this study also has a practical purpose. The local teacher licensing board adopted the MCEE and requires all teachers, including the preservice teachers, to learn the MCEE principles as a licensure requirement. Results gleaned from this study will shape the MCEE curriculum and the development of future seminars for preservice teachers. This qualitative study was designed to answer the following research question: What are preservice teachers' perceptions about professional boundaries after learning about the Model Code of Educator Ethics (MCEE)?

Method

Thirty-six (n = 36) preservice teachers enrolled in a special education teacher preparation program in the western United States participated in this study. The majority of participants (n = 30) identified as female, with only six participants identifying as male. Participants ranged in age from 23 to 61 years old with many of the participants sharing that they were in their thirties (n = 17). Eight participants were in their twenties, seven in their forties, three in their fifties, and one participant was in their sixties. The participants represented diverse ethnic backgrounds, with the majority identifying as White (n = 9). Seven participants identified as Asian, five as Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, five as of mixed ethnic backgrounds, and one as African American. The ethnicities of the remaining nine participants were unspecified (see Appendix A for participant demographics).

Sampling Procedures

Purposeful sampling was used to identify and select study participants. Purposeful sampling enables the selection of well-informed participants with firsthand experience of the phenomenon under study, allowing for in-depth insights into the topic of interest (Patton, 2002). All preservice teachers in this study were required to attend MCEE seminars to meet program requirements, making them prime candidates to share insight into their perceptions of professional boundaries after attending MCEE seminars.

At the start of the first seminar, preservice teachers were informed of the research study and voluntarily consented to participate with the understanding that electing to participate or not had no benefit or consequence to them. Participants were informed that they could drop out at any point during the study, with no penalties. The university's Institutional Review Board approved all procedures.

Setting

Participants attended a 90-minute MCEE Zoom seminar each semester over four semesters. They spent a total of six hours in synchronous activities on Zoom and approximately eight hours of asynchronous self-directed work (e.g., assigned readings, videos) before and after each seminar. Participants had access to seminar materials (e.g., Google slides, readings) before, during, and after each seminar.

MCEE Seminar Facilitators

Three faculty members facilitated the seminars each semester. These facilitators were trained by MCEE specialists. Prior to teaching in higher education, all seminar facilitators taught PreK-12 special education in local public schools.

Seminar Focus

The objective of the MCEE seminar series was to teach participants about the MCEE and its application to teaching. To achieve this purpose, elements of the pedagogically productive talk model, in which purposeful discussions with peers and instructors about relevant, job-specific scenarios were embedded into instruction, allowing participants to develop and practice critical thinking and application skills. Over time and with practice, the intention was for them to develop a deeper understanding of ethics and learn how ethical principles are applied to help them make ethically sound decisions.

The seminar content was structured and scaffolded for participants. First, seminar facilitators introduced the five MCEE principles. Participants read relevant material and watched videos that introduced the topic. Next, facilitators taught participants how to analyze ethical scenarios. Participants were then assigned to small groups, with each group assigned to analyze an ethical scenario and come up with an ethically justifiable course of action. Each small group shared their findings with the whole class, and the faculty facilitated reflective discussions about each group's process for determining the most ethically appropriate course of action to address the various ethical scenarios. After completing each seminar, participants submitted a required reflection paper (see Appendix B for the seminar overview).

Outcome Measures

Qualitative data were collected from recorded MCEE seminar discussions and MCEE reflection papers. The recorded MCEE seminar discussions were transcribed. The MCEE seminar discussion prompts and reflection paper prompts were created based on the seminar objectives and informed by research on effective approaches to preparing preservice professionals in professional ethics.

MCEE Seminar Discussions

The seminar discussions were semi-structured and based on questions such as: (1) Why is it important to have an ethics code for educators? (2) What do these MCEE principles mean for teachers? (3) What types of risks are associated with this ethical dilemma? (4) Using the MCEE principles as a guide, how can you mitigate ethical risks? (5) How might you justify the courses of action your group recommended?

Additionally, facilitators taught participants to use a case study analysis framework to analyze and discuss ethical scenarios. The framework included questions such as: (1) What is the dilemma? (2) What MCEE principles apply to the dilemma? (3) Identify potential professional risks to the teacher, student(s), and the school community associated with the dilemma, and (4) Discuss possible responses to the dilemma that mitigate the risks by using MCEE principles (see Appendix C for the framework).

During the first three MCEE seminars, facilitators assigned participants ethical scenarios to analyze and discuss. Seminar facilitators and the authors of this paper purposefully designed and selected scenarios that best illustrated each MCEE principle. They also ensured the scenarios were relevant and job-embedded (Soltis, 1985; Lefstein et al., 2020) and did not include sensationalized cases reported in the media (Soltis, 1986; Warnick & Silverman 2011). At the final seminar, participants brought written descriptions of professional ethical dilemmas or scenarios they encountered or observed in their field experience classrooms for class discussions.

MCEE Reflection Papers

After each seminar, participants were required to submit a written reflection that addressed the following questions: (1) Describe your prior knowledge/understanding of MCEE before you attended this seminar, (2) What new MCEE information did you learn from this seminar?, and (3) Describe ways you will apply MCEE to your teaching.

Study Design and Analysis

In this exploratory qualitative study, participants were intentionally chosen to provide detailed, real-world insights based on their experiences with the topic over time (Creswell, 2007). Multiple data sources were examined to provide a comprehensive description of a shared event (i.e., MCEE seminars) as experienced by different individuals (Creswell, 2007).

The authors employed a constant comparative method of data analysis, which involves examining data to identify emerging categories until saturation is reached (Creswell, 2007). The authors followed a three-step coding process. First, they conducted open coding to identify patterns and form categories (Creswell, 2007). Second, they used axial coding to create a visual model that grouped related themes from the initial categories (Creswell, 2007; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Finally, they applied selective coding to refine and validate the relationships identified in the axial coding process (Creswell, 2007; Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Validity & Reliability

Prolonged engagement and triangulation were used as validation strategies (Creswell, 2007). The authors spent two years working closely with participants in various roles (e.g., academic advisor, course instructor, clinical supervisor). This extended relationship allowed the authors to establish rapport, and gain an understanding of the participants' culture, which helped co-create the phenomena and limit data distortions (Creswell, 2007). Triangulation was employed to validate the findings by using multiple data sources (reflections, seminar discussions), a method that draws on different types of evidence to bring a theme or perspective to light (Creswell, 2007).

To enhance the reliability of this study, the two authors utilized peer debriefing, where they reviewed the data interpretations through each phase of coding and discussed data points to reach 100% intercoder agreement. Notes were taken during peer debriefing sessions for accountability and used in the constant comparative method and selective coding phase.

Results

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore teacher candidates' perceptions about professional boundaries after learning about the MCEE with regard to the following research question: What are preservice teachers' perceptions about professional boundaries after learning about the Model Code of Educator Ethics (MCEE)?

Two major themes emerged from the data. First, preservice teachers recognized the importance of establishing and maintaining professional boundaries between themselves, their students, and their families after learning about the MCEE. Second, preservice teachers perceived that learning about the MCEE was beneficial as it offered them opportunities to explore professional boundary parameters and strategies for establishing and sustaining professional boundaries with the multiple stakeholders with whom teachers are required to engage.

Theme 1: Paradigm Shift in Conceptualization of Teacher and Stakeholder Relationships

Participants expressed that the MCEE seminars changed their perceptions about their relationships with students and their families. This paradigm shift appeared to move from feeling obligated to establish deep personal relationships with their students and families to better understanding the importance of establishing professional parameters to prevent ethical risks. Participants alluded to their perceptions of what they thought was expected of teachers, such as being available to students and families 24 hours a day and being more lenient with rules and expectations when a deep personal relationship existed with a student. For example, a participant shared that "...sometimes people within the community feel as if there should be more leniency because we are all neighbors, know each other, are good family friends, or are even blood-related." Another participant shared "I have found that a lot of students really want to know their teachers on a more personal level, but I think that can be considered as inappropriate after attending the MCEE seminar." One participant stated "I have a much clearer understanding of how important boundaries and professional responsibility is as an educator. [However] [w]ith everyone having the idea that I am available 24/7, it can be challenging to set those boundaries…."

Many participants expressed their shift in thinking from what they thought was expected of teachers to the desire to establish more professional boundaries after learning about MCEE and reflecting on their experiences.

One participant stated:

> Although I do care for them and want the best for them, and although I believe teaching to the whole student is a powerful and effective way to carry out these goals, it must also include wise boundaries like always including parents in conversations and plans with students, keeping a professional distance by resisting urges to drive a late student home or offer to tutor students outside of the school setting.

As expressed in the following participant statement, the concept of establishing clear parameters between one's personal life and professional responsibilities as a teacher began to crystallize as a result of the seminars.

> Another key point that was emphasized in the last seminar is that it is extremely important to set a boundary between our work and personal life. It seems that more severe violations occur when educators forget to set clear boundaries between our professional and personal matters. I learned in the previous seminar that we should purposefully keep those boundaries separate.

Learning about the MCEE principles seemed to give participants a solid foundation that fostered a new sense of confidence on which to base their decisions when establishing professional boundaries. For example, a participant shared "One area I will immediately begin applying the principles is through my interactions with parents and setting boundaries." Participants seemed to find comfort in being absolved from making decisions about boundary setting based on personal reasons and instead grounded their decisions based on MCEE principles that are reflective of educator professional norms. In addition to recognizing the importance of setting professional boundaries with students and their families, participants also learned strategies for developing the skills to establish and maintain professional boundaries with stakeholders.

Theme 2: Benefits of Learning Strategies for Establishing Professional Boundaries

The second theme that emerged centered around the benefits of learning how to establish and maintain professional boundaries with stakeholders. Participants perceived learning about the MCEE to be beneficial and shared that after learning about MCEE they gained the following strategies to add to their "toolbox" of establishing professional boundaries: (a) strategic communication methods with students and their families, (b) communication with colleagues to discuss potentially difficult situations; and (c) using MCEE as a framework to assess risk and make ethically justifiable decisions.

Strategic Communication

Participants valued the importance of strategic communication for establishing professional boundaries when interacting with students and their families. Using work email accounts and work phone numbers as a mode of communication, documenting communications, and explicitly communicating clear parameters to students about professional boundaries were mentioned by participants as methods for strategically communicating with students and their families in a way that honors professional responsibilities while simultaneously maintaining professional boundaries. For example, a participant said, "It is important to document forms of communication to protect yourself and to handle things right away." Another participant shared that emailing students and their families allows teachers to preserve communication while maintaining professionalism and can foster collaborative problem-solving. One participant highlighted the importance of using professional email accounts and phone numbers to establish professional boundaries as providing families with one's personal contacts can create unrealistic expectations.

> I…learned that setting boundaries is important and using your personal cell phone as communication with parents is not a good device for communication, instead [sic] using your classroom phone or your [work] email is recommended! I need[ed] to set office hours and provide my email if they ever needed it…I had to deal with various ethical situations from parents calling me after hours to students finding me on social media. I need[ed] to set boundaries and stay professional!

One participant described the strategy of sharing the MCEE with students and communicating explicitly to them the importance of professional boundaries:

> In my future classroom, I can promote the use of the MCEE into my teaching by making sure there is a very clear line between me and my students. They must know that I am only their teacher and that there are certain things that are considered out of bounds and inappropriate…Although building strong professional relationships with your students is important, they should know what is considered appropriate, too, not just the teachers.

In addition to communicating about the MCEE and the relationship boundaries with students, communicating with colleagues was another strategy that participants shared they learned from the MCEE seminars to assist them with boundary setting.

Relying on Colleague Support

The structure of the MCEE seminars created opportunities for participants to engage with their peers. Participants were put in groups and assigned an ethical scenario with the task of discussing and collaborating with their peers to arrive at ethically justifiable responses. Through this process, participants discovered that their classmates and future colleagues were invaluable resources to whom they could turn when faced with ethical dilemmas involving a range of perspectives, including stakeholders. One participant stated, "If we have an opportunity to talk with our colleagues, we can remind ourselves to learn strategies from each other on how to prevent risky situations…" Participants seemed to relish in perspective-taking, learning from one another, and building on one another's ideas as they navigated through the ethical dilemmas together. For example, one participant shared "I did gain some 'aha' moments and some gainful insights from my peers when going through the different discussion scenarios." Learning about the MCEE under conditions that encouraged collaboration with others allowed participants to have meaningful conversations about professional ethics with their peers and helped them create collegial relationships that encouraged them to continue these conversations in the future. One participant stated, "After the seminar, I buddied with a couple of new teachers to form an alliance to look out for each other when we're approaching potential ethical areas or saying something potentially unethical."

Relying on the MCEE in Decision-Making

Participants found the value in relying on the ethical norms of the teaching profession (i.e., MCEE) rather than relying on their personal morals and beliefs. A participant shared "Like most people, teachers follow their own morals or values…However, those morals could be biased and influence the way teachers make decisions." Learning about MCEE also seemed to unite the participants in using the MCEE as a guide when making decisions and modeling skills for their students.

A participant noted that:

> I didn't expect this seminar to invoke so many thoughts and feelings about how ethics is a necessary tool that we can implement in our profession. We can use the principles as guides to help us make decisions and choices to meet our personal goals of the

> teachers and people we want to be. We can use and model the principles to teach our students the skills that will help them succeed in life.

Another participant expressed the following:

> MCEE principles are not the rules but the guidance to find the right path that validates our professional identity and protects us from making unethical decisions…That is why MCEE principles are critical because it guides us to look at the problem from multiple perspectives to make appropriate decisions with ethical choices while individualizing the unique needs.

The questions posed to participants also allowed them to consider multiple perspectives and served as a framework to help with decision-making. It helped them analyze ethical scenarios and arrive at ethically justifiable decisions, which seemed to bode well with participants. The MCEE seminar questions "will help me to think through a situation. Identifying the risks will help to get clarity about it. The risks will also inform me of possible solutions…" said one participant. The ethical scenarios provided to participants helped them to reflect and leverage the MCEE principles as expressed below by a participant.

> As we learn about various scenarios and stories of how decisions can directly and indirectly affect the outcome of your circumstances, you gain the knowledge of how to make better choices. I appreciated the opportunity during the Model Code of Ethics for Educators (MCEE) seminar to reflect and think about how the different situations that we can find ourselves in can be misinterpreted or misconstrued.

These findings suggest that participants developed a more nuanced understanding of their professional responsibilities and how they may conflict with others' (e.g., parents, students) expectations. They learned strategies to uphold professional integrity and responsibilities while developing and maintaining collaborative relationships with students and families.

Discussion

As Aultman et al. (2008) shared, beginning teachers are likely to struggle with establishing and maintaining appropriate professional boundaries with families; sentiments that were expressed by the participants in this study. A reason for this may be due to the assumption that, as one participant wrote, "teachers must treat students as if they are their own [children]." Participants described situations where they gave their personal cell phone numbers to parents or they received requests from parents to tutor their child outside of school hours, which suggests these instances are not uncommon. These findings showcase the inevitable professional boundary conundrum that teachers eventually face as they are entangled in the teacher's ethos of care (Bernstein-Yamashiro & Noam, 2013) and suggest the importance of understanding the professional ethics code and having the skills to apply it to the situations they encounter in teaching.

A paradigm shift must occur for preservice teachers to understand the ethical implications of unclear boundaries. As the results of this study suggest, participants were surprised to learn about the possible ethical problems that may arise when professional boundaries become blurred. This finding is supported by the work of several scholars (Able et al., 2017; Cartledge et al., 2001; Fiedler & Van Haren, 2009), and it suggests the need for ethics instruction for preservice teachers. Providing preservice teachers with opportunities to

explore and discuss professional boundary parameters and strategies for establishing and maintaining healthy professional relationships with students and families can positively impact a teacher's instructional decisions, classroom management practices, and ability to collaborate with stakeholders ethically and professionally (Able et al., 2017; Cartledge et al., 2001; Fiedler & Van Haren, 2009).

Results of this study also suggest that preservice teachers benefit from the mixed approach and pedagogical productive discussion with their peers, as it allowed them multiple opportunities to analyze relevant, school-based scenarios for meaningful discussion and application using MCEE and guiding questions as a decision-making framework. This finding is supported by Bergman (2018) and Lefstein et al.'s (2020) research. Purposeful and intentional discussions that allow preservice teachers multiple opportunities to analyze, discuss, and apply MCEE to relevant, school-based scenarios are key in helping them understand the complexities and context-based nature of the MCEE and its application to establishing professional boundaries in their teaching practice. Preservice teachers should also have opportunities to practice their ability to view scenarios from different stakeholder perspectives that are grounded in professional ethics and identify competing tensions under various contexts. Discussions with peers who have diverse life and school experiences should be encouraged and included as part of the professional ethics instruction, as it can deepen their understanding of how to navigate ethical dilemmas that deal with boundary setting and provide them with approaches to strategically communicate, establish, and maintain professional boundaries rooted in the ethical norms of the teaching profession.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings of this study emphasize the importance of providing preservice teachers with structured opportunities to learn about professional ethics so that they can explore and practice professional boundary setting within an ethical framework. The challenges preservice teachers face with navigating personal connections with stakeholders (e.g., families, students) and understanding the potential ethical dilemmas of blurred boundaries, highlight the need for intentional ethics instruction in teacher preparation programs. Purposeful discussions grounded in pedagogically productive talk that fosters peer collaboration, and scenario-based learning can be effective tools to help preservice teachers grasp the complexities of professional ethics and boundary maintenance. By incorporating ethics training that emphasizes context-based decision-making and perspective-taking, teacher preparation programs can better prepare preservice teachers to manage the nuanced challenges of maintaining professionalism while fostering positive relationships with students, families, and other stakeholders.

Appendices

Appendix A

Overview of Participant Characteristics

Gender (*n*)	Ethnicity (*n*)	Age Range (*n*)
Female = 30 Male = 6	White = 9 Asian = 7 Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander = 5 African American = 1 Unknown = 9	Twenties = 8 Thirties = 17 Forties = 7 Fifties = 3 Sixties = 1

Appendix B

Overview of MCEE Seminar Series Design

Semester & Seminar	Duration/Format	Topics & Activities	Student Workload
1	1.5 hours/online synchronous Zoom platform; approximately 2 hours of asynchronous self-directed activities	Code-based instruction-overview of MCEE and rationale Direct instruction on MCEE Principle I-Responsibility to the Profession, Principle II-Responsibility for Professional Competence, & Principle III-Responsibility to Students Introduction to a framework for analysis of semi-structured Socratic questioning Application of framework for analysis-Pedagogically Productive Talk and case study analysis related to MCEE Principles I, II, and III	Pre seminar-read MCEE brochure, and watch Rationale for MCEE (5 minutes) During the seminar-active participant discussion Post seminar-reflection paper

2	1.5 hours/online synchronous Zoom platform; approximately 2 hours of asynchronous self-directed activities	Code-based instruction-direct instruction on MCEE Principle IV-Responsibility to the School Community & Principle V-Responsible and Ethical Use of Technology Application of framework for analysis-Pedagogically Productive Talk and case study analysis related to MCEE Principles IV and V	Pre seminar-review MCEE brochure, watch Teaching Cyber Ethics to Prospective Teachers (1 hour, 7 minutes) During the seminar-active participant discussion Post seminar-reflection paper
3	1.5 hours/online synchronous Zoom platform; approximately 2 hours of asynchronous self-directed activities	Review of MCEE Principles Application of framework for analysis and MCEE to situational risks in field-Pedagogically Productive Talk and case study analysis	Pre seminar-watch What Are Educator Ethics (22 minutes), discuss the video with colleagues or a mentor teacher, and be prepared to give a short overview of this discussion at the seminar During the seminar-active participant discussion Post seminar-reflection paper
4	1.5 hours/online synchronous Zoom platform; approximately 2 hours of asynchronous self-directed activities	Review of MCEE Principles Application of framework for analysis and MCEE to individual risks in field-Pedagogically Productive Talk and case study analysis	Pre seminar-identify possible ethical issues in day-to-day teaching, ways to minimize risks, and be prepared to share and discuss in small groups during the seminar During the seminar-active participant discussion Post seminar-reflection paper

Appendix C

Ethical Scenario Analysis Framework

IDENTIFY

1. What is the **ethical** violation in this scenario?

2. What MCEE Principles(s)/CEC ethics are in question?
    - Principle 1: Responsibility to the Profession
    - Principle 2: Responsibility for Professional Competence
    - Principle 3: Responsibility to Students
    - Principle 4: Responsibility to the School Community
    - Principle 5: Responsible and Ethical Use of Technology
    - Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Code of Ethics

3. Identify the type(s) of conflict(s) in this situation. Explain why the MCEE and/or CEC principle(s) selected above are in question considering the following types of conflicts:

    - **Law/policy violation**
    - **Conflict of interest**
    - **Non-school employment or business conflict** (paid employment that may be viewed as a conflict with values of school, education)
    - **Membership/Affiliation conflict**
    - **Misuse or abuse of position**
    - **Misuse of technology, other forms of media**
    - **Other:** _____

STAKEHOLDERS PERSPECTIVES

4. Who are the people involved in this situation?

5. Consider the different perspectives of the people involved in this scenario. What harm might occur and to whom? What might individuals gain from this situation? What might they lose in this situation? How might they want this to be resolved?

COURSE OF ACTION

6. Consider the following in making your decision:
    - **The Golden Rule:** How would I want to be treated in this situation?
    - **Rule of Benevolence:** Act in ways that produce the greatest good for the

greatest number of people OR results in the least harm to the greatest number of people
- **Rule of Universality:** Would it be acceptable if everyone did this?
- **Rule of Publicity:** Would this be acceptable if everyone knew about this?

7. Taking into account your role and responsibility as a special education teacher, how would you approach this situation? Consider the consequences and implications of your decision. Why did you choose this course of action?

Adapted from: Mackenzie, S. V., & Mackenzie, G. C. (2010). *Now what? Confronting and resolving ethical questions: A handbook for teachers*. Corwin Press.

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