

Ethical Dilemmas in Teaching: The Israeli Case

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore Israeli teachers' ethical dilemmas, by examining their perspectives towards the tensions that arise from competing values in their work. Twenty-two teachers participated in the study. The qualitative results indicated that teachers deal with a multiplicity of ethical tensions. We identified tensions of a more general nature and others that could be explained in light of the particular features of the Israeli context. Understanding the complexity of ethical dilemmas, especially in the Israeli context, may help to develop training programs and a code of ethics to assist the handling of teachers' ethical dilemmas.

Keywords: ethical dilemmas; ethics, code of ethics, tensions, teachers, schools

Introduction

For decades, researchers have studied with interest the ethics and ethical behaviour of individuals within organisations. Virtually all professions have ethical expectations and standards, and teaching is no exception. The literature reflects the importance of ethics in education, viewing the teacher as moral agent and the moral authority for accountable practice in this field (Sergiovanni, 1996; Tirri, 1999). This reflects the school world as ethically complex (Delatorre & Russell, 1993; Higgins, 1995; Jackson, Boostrom & Hansen, 1993; Ryan, 1993). The definition of an ethical dilemma in teaching is a problem situation, usually arising from a conflict of obligations among various relationships, in which issues of right and wrong conduct are at stake, demanding complex decisions about appropriate responses (Campbell, 2000).

By its very nature, teaching invites ethical dilemmas, due to teachers' constant need to cope with and 'educate' their charges (Noddings, 1992). The complexity of teaching, bound by time, place, content and tasks leads to numerous situations in which ethical dilemmas might arise (Van Maanen, 1995). Furthermore, teachers often find themselves juggling multiple obligations, to the institution, to their teaching colleagues and to their students (Colnerud, 1997).

Educational research has been exploring ethical issues since the mid-1980s. These studies suggest that teachers are insufficiently aware of the moral impact of their actions (Campbell, 1993; Husu & Tirri, 2001; Oser, 1991; Jackson et al., 1993, Thornberg, 2008). In this vein, educational philosophers concerned with the moral dilemmas of teaching argue that attention should be paid to the need to develop teachers' awareness of the ethical dilemmas in their teaching and to identify how they may deal with them (Colnerud, 2006).

The present study attends to this missing lens: it explores teachers' perspectives of the ethical dilemmas experienced in their daily work, by identifying the tensions between competing values and the resulting interactions. Mapping these relationships and their inherent competing values can contribute to a more informed understanding of the nature of ethical dilemmas in the Israeli educational context. This, in turn, can provide a basis for the future development of training programs and a code of ethics in the Israeli educational system. Such a code is particularly momentous for the Israeli educational context shaped by the intermittent tensions of its society, namely, between socialisation and individualism, heterogeneity and homogeneity and state-aided versus private education (Addi-Raccah, 2006; Gaziel, 2002; Yonah, 2000).

The Dilemmatic Nature of Teaching

Educational research has long been concerned with 'unpacking' the complex character of teaching as reflected in teacher planning, interactive decision-making, and the dilemmas that shape the practice of teaching (Carr, 2005; Hanson, 1992; Lampert, 2000, Lovat & Clement, 2008). Teacher planning, for example, is found to be a potential area for numerous ethical dilemmas: teachers are expected to plan for a wide variety of subjects and student populations, to decide continuously on content and on the time allocated to each topic, how to communicate it to others, and how to mediate between their own educational views and those reflected in curriculum materials (Clark & Lampert, 1986; Noddings, 1992). An intellectually profitable digression, for instance, may reduce time devoted to the mandated curriculum, creating, in fact, no optimal solutions (Shulman, 1984).

The numerous functions and roles expected of teachers converge with their fundamental sense of responsibility to provide access to various kinds of knowledge.

They also induce them to cultivate autonomous learners and culturally-sensitive citizens (Delpit, 1988), who can contribute to the success of an ever-changing, pluralistic society (Benninga et al., 2006; Zins et al., 2004).

In the process of realising these ambitious moral and intellectual expectations, educators encounter ethical dilemmas of many kinds, many of which are related to their experienced tensions between mandatory external educational policy expectations, and their own beliefs about what is best for their learners (Lovat & Clement, 2008; Mayhew & King, 2008).

Ball and Wilson (1996) argued that the moral and the intellectual are, and ought to be, fused in teaching. Specifically, they contend that questions of knowledge and understanding are usually threaded with questions of ethics, such as teachers' and classmates' treatment and respect of students' ideas, or how these ideas correspond with accepted knowledge. Ball and Wilson's (1996) influential work serves as a reminder that ethics in teaching needs to be understood as being entrenched within the complex interplay of values, beliefs and conceptions of students and subject matter.

Ethical Dilemmas in Teaching

The concept of ethics is complex and calls for deeper clarification. Ethics draws on human dispositions, attitudes and behaviours, such as valuing, selecting and acting and it is concerned with desirable actions, which deal with our relations to and responsibility for other people (Norberg & Johansson, 2007). An ethical dilemma is perceived as an inner conversation with the self concerning two or more available propositions; a choice between two or more courses of action, when obstacles on each side hinder the decision as to which course to pursue (Berlak & Berlak, 1981).

The difficulty in choosing between competing values is that there is never one absolute, right outcome. Rather, in the course of time, the choice of one option will probably result in the transgression of the other option. Since situations are unique, and one cannot deal with ethical dilemmas by choosing one principle over another. Rather, they demand new kinds of integrations, where creative solutions are sought (Cuban, 1992). In this vein, action is determined through questioning, searching and deliberation (Lyons, 1990).

The literature mentions numerous ethical dilemmas in teaching (e.g., Campbell, 2000; Colnerud, 1997; Husu & Tirri, 2001; Tirri, 1999). One of the most common is the tension between caring for the other (students, teachers) and maintaining formality (school rules, professional standards). This can occur in a situation in which a teacher has difficulty in deciding how better to care for a student or how to respond to colleagues (Colnerud, 1997; Noddings, 1992). A teacher may witness a colleague's unprofessional behaviour, yet still feel loyal to the colleague (Tirri, 1999).

A different ethical dilemma involves the tension between promoting educational processes and advancing knowledge, such as how to integrate the teaching of values across the curriculum (Barone, 2004; Thornberg, 2008). Tension between teachers' accountability to the school authorities in 'covering' the curriculum and their own moral principles, is manifest in the question as to whether or not to address certain moral dilemmas with students in specific situations (Campbell, 1997). Previous studies indicate that the dilemmatic nature of teaching needs further exploration in a context where teaching the curriculum is knowledge-centred, emphasising that teachers must help students learn to identify the underlying ethical dilemmas, and understand the different perspectives involved (Chowning, 2005; Hanegan, Price, & Peterson, 2008; Smaldino, 2008). Teachers have expressed the need to find a balance between knowledge-centred learning and moral education, which may lead to the inculcation of moral values in the formal curriculum (Smaldino, Lowther, & Russell, 2008).

The literature describes the recurrence of another ethical dilemma between the school educational agenda and students' family educational agenda. This can occur when teachers question whether the parents' actions are in the child's best interests. A dilemma of this kind would involve relationships between both teacher and student and teacher and parents (Klaassen, 2002). The majority of reported ethical dilemmas in the literature focus on teacher-student relationships. This is not surprising, as teaching embeds close teacher-student interactions (Lyons, 1990).

The Importance of Reflecting on Ethical Dilemmas in Teaching

Teachers rarely describe their actions in moral terms, and seldom engage in openly reflecting on the moral consequences of their actions (Hansen, 1993; Jackson et al., 1993). Yet, the literature on ethical dilemmas in teaching stresses the importance of teachers' reflection on their ethical dilemmas for developing an open 'school ethos' that stresses values education (Halstead & Tylor, 2000; Valli, 1990).

Hence the importance of creating spaces to encourage teachers to introspect openly and collaboratively into their 'living' dilemmas, which shape their work (Lovat & Clement, 2008).

In this vein, studies point to the value of reflection on ethical dilemmas for improving relationships at school, for managing conflicts, for creating new channels of communication with parents and the local community, for involving students in educational processes and for articulating innovative agendas of caring within the school system (Jackson et al., 1993; Taylor, 1996).

Drawing on the above, this study sought to extend our understanding of ethical dilemmas as they play out in the situated context of the Israeli school system.

Ethical Dilemmas in the Israeli Context

The Israeli education system is in a state of transition from a collectivistic to individualistic ideology. A by-product of this is a period of deep crisis, in which values and norms contradict, such as advocating equity versus promoting excellence (Dovrat Report: 28). In addition, in Israel, public sector salaries are much higher than in the education sector, for the same tenure and the same number of education years (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 2002). The nature of the transition leads to perceptions of injustice related to unfair rewards (Ben-Peretz & Kremer-Hayon, 1990), thus generating deep ethical conflicts and dilemmas.

Despite the above, only few studies in Israel have dealt with teachers' ethical dilemmas (e.g., Ben-Peretz & Kremer-Hayon, 1990; Gaziel, 1996; Maslovaty, 2000). Of those conducted, most revolve around teacher-student relationships (Ben-Peretz & Kremer-Hayon, 1990) and focus on issues of control, caring for students (Maslovaty, 2000) and the desire of teachers to propagate certain values among their students, reflective of their perception of teaching as shaping the values of future generations (ElboimDror, 1973; Gaziel, 1996). The fact that studies of Israeli ethical dilemmas are relatively scarce compared to other countries (Campbell, 2000; Colnerud, 1997; Higgins, 1995; Husu & Tirri, 2001; Lyons, 1990; Tirri, 1999) raises the need for more in-depth research into how teachers in the Israeli educational context perceive and make sense of ethical dilemmas in their work.

Focus and Questions

Previous studies indicate that many of the ethical dilemmas facing teachers are deeply embedded in daily school life (Jackson et al., 1993, Thornberg, 2008). These dilemmas demand many practical decisions,

leaving teachers little time to explore and reflect on them (Halstead, 1996). The following research questions were central to our study: What are the characteristics of Israeli teachers' ethical dilemmas? What kind of limits do teachers perceive while dealing with ethical dilemmas? What makes decision-making difficult in cases of ethical dilemmas? The code of ethics for teachers in Israel is still in a very early draft version. These study questions may provide a strong incentive to develop it further.

Method

The research goal was to map the ethical tensions involved in managing ethical dilemmas in teaching, for more effective confrontation of ethical dilemmas. In light of this, a qualitative, descriptive study was designed, based on teachers' accounts of 'ethical dilemma' events encountered in school.

Participants

The data were collected in 2007. Twenty-two teachers were interviewed (16 women, six men) in 11 schools (primary school, middle school and high school) in six out of seven regional districts as defined by the Ministry of Education. Teachers who participated worked in a variety of schools varying in size, type (state school/state religious school) and geographical distribution, which resulted in a sample representing a cross-section of practicing teachers in Israeli schools. The 11 schools and the 22 participants were selected on the basis of their willingness to take part in the study. The ratio of women to men in the study is representative of the general composition of Israeli teaching personnel (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 2005). The teachers were from different disciplinary backgrounds (e.g., English, Mathematics, Special Education) and their average age was 38.90 (S.D.=9.70) years.

Data Collection

The data examined here was collected during the academic year of 2007. Since the interviews covered sensitive issues, the author instructed the research assistants on the way to conduct the interview. The author then approached the principals of the schools and explained the study. The research assistants attended staff meetings in the various schools which agreed to participate, and informed the participating teachers that they were collecting data in order to study the characteristics of Israeli teachers' ethical dilemmas. Participants were granted full anonymity. They also received a formal letter describing the study goals and the obligation to preserve anonymity according to the Helsinki Treaty. This commitment to anonymity was a contributing factor in the teachers' willingness to volunteer for the

study and to be interviewed about their ethical dilemmas. Teachers who volunteered for the study signed an informed consent form, including specific consent to the tape-recording of the interviews. The interviews were conducted in an empty room at the school, lasted 45-50 minutes each and were tape-recorded. The tapes were destroyed upon completion of the transcription.

In the in-depth interviews, the teachers were asked to provide detailed descriptions of ethical dilemmas they encountered in their daily work. The interviews were structured around the following overall questions: Can you share with me one or more ethical dilemmas that have arisen in your workplace? Who was involved in these ethical dilemmas? Can you describe one or more teaching roles that have ethical implications? The interviewees were encouraged to share any ethical dilemmas that they had experienced at any time during their teaching careers. The strategy of obtaining verbal information from the teachers of vividly recalled events was also seen as an opportunity for teachers' active involvement in investigating their practice (Keatinge, 2002).

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted by two researchers (the authors). Participants were identified by a code number only, and information linking code numbers to individuals was destroyed upon completion of data analysis. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and processed as text. The analysis followed a series of systematic steps, as outlined by Patton (1990) and Strauss and Corbin (1998).

The *first step* entailed several holistic readings of each interview, to obtain an overall understanding of the kinds of ethical dilemmas reported. The *second step* included clustering similar experiences of ethical dilemmas and coding them into subcategories. For example, 'tension between duty to report a colleague's misconduct and the sense of duty to protect him' was based on several reported experiences by participants, related to this subcategory. In the *third step*, the content of the common subcategories was condensed and clustered into categories. For example, in this study, the subcategories of 'tension between duty to report a colleague's misconduct and the sense of duty to protect him' and 'tension between being responsible for students' well-being and remaining loyal to school standards' were grouped into the category of 'tensions between adhering to formal duties and caring for other', as both subcategories reflect the tension addressed in this category. The first subcategory is related to colleagues, while the second subcategory is related to students.

More specifically, and in line with Dahlberg, Dahlberg and Nystrom (2008) and Gadamer (2004), the interpretation process entailed recursive hermeneutic cycles of close interpretative readings, to: a) identify core characteristics of Israeli teachers' dilemmas, to attain an overall sense of the issue; b) cluster accounts of ethical dilemmas into sub-categories and c) into major categories.

Each researcher conducted the analytical process both independently and collaboratively, to identify and consolidate agreements and disagreements in interpretation (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). All participants' names were changed.

Findings

Our findings suggest that teachers' ethical dilemmas are multifaceted, particularly as each account surfaced at least two or three dilemmas. The reported ethical dilemmas encompassed four prevalent tensions: (1) Tensions between adhering to formal duties and caring for other; (2) Tensions between promoting of egalitarian processes and attention to differential needs; (3) Tensions between advancing educational processes and covering curriculum content; and (4) Tensions between supporting school norms and attending to family norms. Table 1 condenses the major categories and subcategories identified.

The findings shed light on the multiple interactions that derive from each dilemma, reflecting the complex nature of ethical dilemmas in the Israeli school system. In the following sections, we elaborate on each of these tensions.

Category 1: Tensions between adhering to formal duties and caring for others

This category dealt with the tension between behaving according to school rules, regulations and standards versus caring for students or other colleagues. Merav, an educator at a primary school, reflects a tension between her *duty to report colleagues' misconduct* and her *sense of duty to protect them*:

Sometimes, I see colleagues who behaving disrespectfully towards other teachers or, for example, taking advantage of their authority and offending teachers who are subordinate to them, intentionally or unintentionally. The question is whether or not to tell someone at the top.

In this case, the tension exists between the need to report the colleagues' misconduct to the principal, and perceptions of caring towards a colleague. The following narrative expands the meaning of this category. Iris, a Maths coordinator at a high school, reflects on the

tensions that she experiences between *responsibility for students' well-being* and *loyalty to school standards*:

A new Maths teacher joined our staff. As our work overlapped, we became friends. She made a lot of mistakes in her Maths lessons. I explained to her again and again that she needed to raise her professional standards and unfortunately, she could not meet my expectations and I had to fire her because I am responsible for what happens in the classroom and the students' well-being is my first priority.

In this narrative, Iris reflects on a tension between her professional relationship with the Maths teacher, and the obligation to end it, as her unprofessional standard of teaching was harming the students. On the other hand, they had built a caring, personal relationship, which made the dismissal particularly difficult.

Taken together, these narratives indicate that the teachers regard the colleague's treatment as harmful, according to formal school standards, but still have difficulty in confronting the colleague.

Another frequent dilemma facing Israeli teachers pertains to the tensions between promoting egalitarian processes and attending to differential needs. We elaborate on this in the following section.

Category 2: Tensions between promotion of egalitarian processes and attention to differential needs

This category deals with teachers' perceptions of the tension between different dimensions of justice: fair process (procedural justice) versus fair outcome or fair distribution of rewards (distributive justice). This category emphasised the importance of treating everybody equally. However, Shay, a high school teacher, raises the question: How do you behave fairly when the resources, time or money are limited? Should the resources be divided equally, regardless of the students' need? Or should differential allocation be used? His ethical dilemma reflects *a tension between equal distribution of resources and resource distribution according to special needs*.

On the one hand, you want to treat everyone equally. But you can't, because not everyone's situation is the same . . . so I agonise over who should receive more, who should receive less . . . how to equal this out with the other students. I encounter these kinds of issues every day.

Shay's ethical dilemma becomes stronger when interpreted against the particular Ministry policy administered in Israel. The Ministry of Education allocates an equal budget to each school according to the number of students. Such policy, however, does not take into consider-

ation any kind of differentiation as to the number of cognitively impaired or socially disadvantaged students in the school (who might need a larger budget). This raised an ethical dilemma for Shay as an educator: The educational policy is equal distribution of resources, while he believed that the Ministry of Education should consider social and achievement gaps when deciding on the allotted budget to each school.

Hilla, a special needs teacher at a primary school, raise another kind of ethical dilemma in her narrative: *the tension between collective sanctions and personal punishment*.

When a student in class refuses to leave the classroom, the dilemma is how to remove him without using force, and how to continue with the lesson so as not to harm the other students...

Hilla wishes to discipline the student by sending him out of the classroom. She feels that this is an appropriate punishment for his behaviour (distributive justice). But the student refuses. She deals with the dilemma as to whether to stop the lesson until he leaves the room, which will indirectly punish the other students on his account (procedural injustice). It seems that both Shay and Hilla devote much thought to navigating their way through conflicts that arise between different dimensions of justice.

The third dilemma category pertains to teachers' roles: focusing teaching on general educational issues, such as the articulation, formulation and implementation of core values, or focusing on the development of subject matter knowledge. Although these two dimensions are regarded as integral to any teaching act, they often create tensions and inner struggles, as teachers strive to reconcile the various accountabilities to the system.

Category 3: Tensions between advancing educational processes and covering curriculum content

This category deals with the tensions between the teacher's envisioned role as mediator of knowledge and as educator. Gil, a high school pedagogical coordinator, finds himself torn between two ideological positions: his private ideology and that reflected by the curriculum. His ethical dilemma reflects a *tension between voicing personal political ideologies and adhering to mandated curriculum ideologies*.

Ethical problems can arise from the curriculum, for example, in teaching history. Should I declare a particular political declaration to be absolutely fair . . . when I do not believe it to be so? Am I such an authority that students will follow my example? In other words when freedom of choice is at stake and you're imposing your will on the students. It depends on the integrity of each teacher and limits need to be set somewhere.

Here, the tension lies between two questions: Should Gil teach the subject in order to fulfil the requirements of the curriculum, or should he use the opportunity to discuss the political issues involved and express his own opinion? Gil is aware of his moral responsibility to the students who may follow his example. From his point of view, this is an ethical dilemma, since he is dealing with young people in a vulnerable position. Gil is aware of his power in the teacher-student relationship and the risk of using it in a manipulative way.

Avi exposes another dilemma in this category. He teaches at a high school and deliberates between *planning his teaching according to the curriculum or focusing his lesson on burning educational issues* that emerge during his lessons. Avi's dilemma is whether to carry out what he perceives as his formal designated mandate 'to teach the curriculum', or to spend 'teaching time' on exploring issues that touch upon universal values, together with his students.

How much emphasis should be put on learning? Should we deal more with education to values or more with teaching as imparting information, considering the fact that the students will need their studies in the future? Here, the dilemma is very clear to me... education to values...

Avi's narrative reflects an ethical dilemma. What is more important? Promoting values amongst students or teaching the curriculum? Although he eventually makes a decision, he is left with a feeling of uneasiness.

Both Gil's and Avi's narratives represent a common tension experienced by educators: teaching with the focus on educational processes versus teaching with a focus on knowledge outcomes, which also entails a conflict with their own consciences.

The final category – tensions between values imparted by the school versus values imparted by students' parents.

Category 4: Tensions between supporting school norms and attending to family norms

This category deals with the tension between differing perceptions

between teachers and parents as to the right way to behave, i.e., tensions between supporting school norms of behaviour versus endorsing family norms of conduct. Rivka, a Middle School educator, describes students whose home culture was not respectful of teachers, reflected in parents' constant support of their children in classroom misbehaviour situations. This behaviour was in stark contrast to Rivka's school background and upbringing, whereby teachers were respected and could expect the support of the parents in cases of students' misbehaviour.

I think that I keep all the ethical rules. More than once I came across a situation in which neither students nor parents behaved properly. For example, many students behave disrespectfully to their teachers and their parents support them . . . and sometimes even insult teachers in the presence of their children . . . and legitimise this behaviour.

Rivka's narrative highlights recurrent communication breakdowns between parents and teachers over issues of respect and conduct. On the one hand, she is critical of present-day parenthood, which encourages children's disrespectful behavior towards teachers. On the other hand, parents may criticise her for not being attentive enough to their children's needs.

Altogether, teachers' accounts from different school levels (primary school, middle school, high school), and a variety of roles (teacher, educator, coordinator) reveal the multifaceted character of ethical dilemmas in the education system. These are manifested not only in the numerous tensions that were identified between competing values, but also in the relationships that surfaced between multiple interactions (teacher-student, teacher-teacher, teacher-professional standards, teacher-school administration and teacher-parents). In most cases, teachers were not sure that they had thought or acted appropriately in relation to a particular ethical dilemma. The numerous accounts of distress, brought about by the above dilemmas, suggest the possible consideration of a code of ethics for acknowledging and openly voicing uncertainties rooted in the moral character of teachers' work (Cochran-Smith, 2006; Zeichner et al., 1998).

Figure 1 illustrates the multifaceted nature of ethical dilemmas in teaching through the competing values that surfaced in the study. The bidirectional arrows illustrate the reciprocal connections between the various competing values, such as the tension between adhering to formal duties and caring for the other or the tension between promotion of egalitarian processes and attention to differential needs.

Discussion

The multifaceted character of the ethical dilemmas that emerged from the encounter between values and interactions sheds light on the complexity of teachers' work. Teachers face tensions not only between values, but also in their interactions with the various participants in the social and professional community. These tensions are not only reflected in teachers' interactions with other people (i.e., principals, teachers, students), but also in their inner dialogues as they confront their own competing voices.

Quinn's (1988) competing values model suggests that conflicting values may contribute to organisational effectiveness. Likewise, Colnerud (2006) argues that a dynamic dialogue between two contradictory positions may be perceived as complementary instead of conflicting, enabling incorporation of both conflicting positions in real life decision making.

Although at first glance, rules might seem to prevent teachers from voicing certain ethical dilemmas, the findings of this study suggest, as Colnerud (2006) would contend, that certain rules seem fundamental to preserving basic ethical standards in teaching. In cases of difficulty in ethical judgment, these standards and rules may provide certain limits and tools for dealing with ethical dilemmas. In addition, rules can protect against corruption in cases when partiality could distort a person's judgment and may provide the basis of ethical choices for people grappling with ethical judgment.

The study indicates that teachers' ethical dilemmas are integral to curricular activity and are immersed in their instructional practice. Values education, however, dwells mostly in the hidden curriculum sphere (Narvaez, 2006). The problem with such an important aspect of educational life residing in the hidden curriculum is that it does not grant that the teachers acknowledged and that the mandate addresses such issues beyond the formal curriculum. This is despite the fact that teachers strongly believe that attention to norms and values is a "must", in order to improve the authenticity of their teaching (Klaassen, 2002). This is supported by our study, which suggests that teachers perceive that there should be no distinction between values and formal education. These findings emphasise the need for guidelines based on ethical codes for teachers, which may present a balance in the case of tensions arising between these two dimensions.

Certain dilemmas that surfaced in our study could be explained against the particularities of the Israeli context, as for example, the tension between promoting egalitarian processes and attending to dif-

ferential needs. The Israeli educational system, which is characterised by limited resources, creates a situation in which Israeli teachers are sensitive to issues of the just distribution of resources for their students. This is supported by OECD findings. For example, a recent publication, "Education at a Glance" (2006) provides evidence that the average number of students in class in Israel (26.5 in primary school education and 31.5 in middle schools) is higher than the average in the OECD countries (21.4 and 24.1, respectively).

A comparison of the average expenditure per student, in fixed international prices (in terms of Purchasing Power Parities), shows that in Israel, the average expenditure per student, at all levels of education, is lower than the average in member countries of the OECD (e.g. in secondary education, the expenditure on education per student in Israel amounted to \$5,959, and was low compared with the average of \$6,936 in the OECD countries (OECD, 2006).

The tensions identified between school and family norms can also be explained in the Israeli educational context. Demographic data indicate that Israel is regarded as more family-orientated than Western and Eastern Europe (Feldman, Shafiq & Nadam, 2001). Researchers have suggested several explanations for this, such as the close-knit character of Israeli society, which amplifies the individuals' attachment to their families (Halpern, 2001; Sharlin, 1996). Studies indicate that the Israeli family is being pulled in opposite directions by two main forces which are one that moves the family toward greater modernisation, while the other acts to strengthen traditional values, thus maintaining a vast diversity in family patterns (Lavee & Katz, 2003). This may, then, constitute a significant factor affecting the kinds of ethical dilemmas that teachers reported facing with their students' families.

The study results indicate that teachers have difficulty discussing students' misbehaviour with parents, as well as the lack of teacher-parent communication. Parents and teachers use different frames of reference in their consideration of what is important for their children. Parents are emotionally involved in their own children's upbringing, while teachers' point of reference is the functioning of the class. Therefore, as Klaassen (2002) suggests, instead of engaging in confrontation, parents and teachers should make their visions known to each other.

By contrast with previous studies conducted in Israel, which focused on ethical tensions and interactions inside the classroom (Ben-Peretz & Kremer-Hayon, 1990; Gaziel, 1996; Maslovzaty, 2000),

our findings indicate that the ethical tensions and the derived interactions transcended the classroom doors. We identified tensions outside the classroom, for example, between teachers and mandated educational policy, or between reporting a colleague's tendency to misconduct and caring for the colleague. These tensions and relationships occur at all education levels and at all educational staff levels.

We learned that although teachers struggle with difficult ethical dilemmas, they are still lacking a clear direction as to how to deal with them. The dearth of professional tools grounded in teachers' experiences leaves them to their own ethical judgment, without any guidelines. Devoid of an ethics code, it is difficult to see how teachers can confidently address the complexity of the ethical dilemmas that they experience. Our findings suggest that an ethics code for teachers can focus on finding a balance between competing values, hence empowering teachers to deal more successfully with emergent ethical dilemmas.

Conclusion and Implications

The ethical dilemmas surfaced in this study can guide teachers and teacher educators towards the development of a code of ethics, in our case, for the Israeli school system. Such a code would initially surface dilemmas that could revolve around a number of core values, serving as the preliminary dimensions for a more comprehensive code of ethics:

- Caring for the well-being of the student: promoting the capacities of all students to think and act independently and autonomously.
- Involving parents actively in their children's education: establishing honest and respectful relationships between home and school.
- Maintaining and raising professional standards: operating collegially with fellow workers to promote students' learning.
- Acting with justice: catering for the varied learning needs of diverse learners.
- Respecting the law, school rules and norms.

At present, teachers in Israel are not granted the necessary time or space in their working lives to think about the ethical dimensions of their practice. Teacher collaborations for working on ethical problems of practice are considered "luxuries", rather than essential components of their work. The study participants' high motivation and willingness to voice their dilemmas in this research context suggests the need to create teacher education programs, as part of the school ethos, for teachers to share these concerns. Such spaces need to be defined and acknowledged as an integral part of the professional landscape of

teachers' work (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995; Craig, 2002) through discussing and analysing cases of ethical dilemmas in teaching, drawn from their own experience and perspectives.

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Appendix

Table 1: Ethical dilemmas of teachers- Categories and Subcategories

Category	Subcategory - tension between:
1. Tensions between adhering to formal duties and caring for other	the duty to report colleagues' misconduct and the sense of duty to protect them responsibility for students' well-being and loyalty to school standards
2. Tensions between promotion of egalitarian processes and attention to differential needs	equal distribution of resources and resource distribution according to special needs collective sanctions and personal punishment
3. Tensions between advancing educational processes and covering curriculum content	voicing personal political ideologies and adhering to mandated curriculum ideologies planning teaching according to the curriculum and focusing lessons on burning educational issues
4. Tensions between supporting school norms and attending to family norms	

Figure 1: The multifaceted character of ethical dilemmas in teaching

