Ethics Education in Australian Preservice Teacher Programs: A Hidden Imperative?

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Abstract: This paper provides a snapshot of the current approach to ethics education in accredited Australian pre-service teacher programs. Methods included a manual calendar search of ethics related subjects required in teacher programs using a sample of 24 Australian universities and a survey of 26 university representatives. Findings show a paucity of required standalone ethics subjects in the pre-service teacher training programs despite recent accreditation requirements by AITSL. When analysed by program type, the prevalence of an ethics related subject requirement in pre-service teacher programs revealed a concerning trend; post graduate programs, as a general rule, had a much lower prevalence of a mandatory ethics-related subject, including those subjects which are traditionally used as vehicles for embedding ethics, such as the Foundations of Education. Notwithstanding, all respondents agreed that the value of ethics in pre-service teacher programs is irrefutable. Implications for further research are discussed.

Introduction

Reported in this paper are findings of research that investigated the prevalence of ethics courses offered in accredited teacher training institutions in Australia. The impetus for this research stems from the long held societal and academic beliefs that because of its human focus teaching is, like medicine, grounded in ethical deliberations (e.g., Boon, Tobias, Baune, & Kennedy, 2009; Snook, 2003). Teachers' work is replete with considerations based on ethics: in pedagogical practices, in curricular content, in relationships with pupils, parents and colleagues, in assessment and evaluation, and so forth. And in enacting their duties teachers impart their moral values and beliefs to their charges both explicitly and implicitly. Yet much of this ethical dimension of teaching is automatic, hidden, rather than the subject of conscious reflection by the teachers (Blumenfeld-Jones, Senneville & Crawford, 2013; Bruneau, 1998; Mahony, 2009; Strike, 1989). Clearly then, since teachers must have the capacity to apply ethical reasoning, it is an undisputed imperative that ethics and ethical reasoning must be formally taught through teacher training programs. This is why, historically, teacher education in Europe, Australia and North America focused on training prospective teachers to develop their moral compass, to enable them to be moral models for their charges.

Generally speaking however, this aspect of teacher training began to recede as teacher education was taken over in the 1940s by universities. It was not till the 1980s, that the ethical dimensions of teaching began to emerge once again in academic discourse in an effort to reverse the trend in teacher training which had become increasingly concerned with the technical, skill related aspects of teaching, neglecting to devote time to the deliberation of questions about the value and purpose of education, questions grounded in ethical considerations. Over the past two decades, educational philosophers and researchers such as Gary Fenstermacher, David Hansen, Philip Jackson, Robert Nash, Hugh Sockett, Jonas Soltis and Kenneth Strike have focused attention on the moral essence of teaching (Campbell, 2008). As a case in point, Biesta (2012) argued that questions of value and purpose in increasingly complex modern classrooms must be understood in multidimensional ways which require teachers to make ethical judgements about what is educationally desirable for their charges.

Besides the acknowledged ethical basis of teaching, recent studies have shown that there is an empirically identifiable link which distinguishes effective teaching from quality teaching, stressing that good teaching is characterized by being ethically defensible, and is distinct from successful teaching, which merely shows that learning took place (Caena, 2011). The imperative for ethics education in teacher training is therefore an urgent one, yet one which our research findings indicate is invisible, or mostly hidden, in Australian teacher education programs.

The Australian Context

Teaching has always been considered to be an ethical profession taken up by individuals expected to have a strong personal moral disposition (Snook, 2003). In Australia, like elsewhere, the positioning of teachers as agents of moral action has not changed over time (Forster, 2012). It is no surprise then that an imperative to train teachers whose ethical dispositions are aligned with the long held views of teaching as an ethical and vocational profession was recently mandated by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), the body which provides accreditation for teacher training programs. Australian preservice teacher (PST) training and higher education curricula are guided by the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL) (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), 2011). For a degree program to be accredited, that is, to represent a qualification which indicates that the professional requirements of teaching have been met and that a holder of such a degree is fully qualified to commence a teaching appointment, its curriculum must meet certain minimum standards. These standards decree that preservice teachers must demonstrate proficiency in pedagogical and appropriate substantive content. Further, in graduating from an accredited program also implies that PSTs possess ethical attributes and qualities which they must demonstrate in the classroom and in their general behaviour within their community.

The standards set by AITSL explicitly stipulate that graduate teachers must: Understand the importance of working ethically, collaborating with colleagues, external professional and community representatives, and contributing to the life of the school. Teachers understand strategies for working effectively, sensitively and confidentially with parents/carers and recognise their role in their children's education. (p.6, QCT, Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), 2011)

Beyond graduation, in the classroom, Proficient Teachers must "…behave professionally and ethically in all forums" (p.6, QCT APT) and finally Highly Accomplished Teachers must "…behave ethically at all times" (p.7, AITSL, 2011) since "They represent the school and the teaching profession in the community. They are professional, ethical and respected individuals inside and outside the school" (p.7, AITSL, 2011). Through Standard 4 (Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments) AITSL also emphasise that all teachers will ensure that there is ethical use of ICTs in the classroom for learning purposes, while through Standard 7 (Engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community) preservice teachers are under an imperative to develop their ethical understanding so that when they have gained experience to be considered highly accomplished teacher professionals they will "Model exemplary ethical behaviour and exercise informed judgements in all professional dealings with students, colleagues and the community" (p.19, AITSL, 2011). These professional standards set out clear expectation about teachers' professional conduct and their ethical dispositions. They augment the importance of the regulatory codes of ethics that were in place in the various states and territories of Australia, mandated for example by the Victorian Institute of Teaching, Teachers Registration Board of South Australia, Teachers Registration Board of Tasmania, and Western Australian College of Teachers and so on. They are a particularly important development in preservice teacher training programs because concerns have been raised previously about the slow uptake or even lack of ethics education in preservice teacher programs (Glanzer & Ream, 2007; Lovat & Toomey, 2007; Newman & Pollnitz, 2005).

Glanzer and Ream (2007) claimed that preservice teacher education was seriously lagging behind the ethics boom that occurred in most other professional programs in the United States. Later, findings from a small scale study conducted at one regional Australian university (Boon, 2011) also suggested that PSTs in Australia did not believe they were adequately equipped through their degree program to meet the professional dilemmas that arose in the classroom. Participants of that study maintained that some explicit ethics training in the Bachelor of Education degree course was needed to enable them to deliberate a range of challenging ethical decisions that they had been confronted with while on professional experience. Equally they were apprehensive about the possible issues that they might face as practicing professionals, and their capacity to articulate their ethical concerns through robust debate, embedded in sound ethical knowledge. The study also conducted an audit of the subjects offered across the four-year Bachelor of Education program which the PSTs undertook, scrutinizing individual subject outlines and noting the learning objectives of each subject as well as the assessment descriptions and marking rubrics. Results of this audit showed that ethics was not taught explicitly in any of the mandatory subjects of the degree program. Instead, ethics was found to be taught explicitly and assessed in electives in first and second year Health and Physical Education (HPE) for those specialising in HPE. Those PSTs specialising in Early Childhood Education were exposed briefly to ethics in relation to teaching in this age group; however, no formal assessment was involved. Professional standards for teachers were included in most of the subject descriptors, and professional standards and behaviours were discussed before each school practicum across the second, third and fourth years, though no assessment task was in place to measure PSTs' understanding of these matters (Boon, 2011).

A previous study at the same university also revealed important gaps related to PSTs' understanding of the implications of professional ethics, highlighting the need for further investigation. That study showed significant differences between PSTs' and medical students' grasp of professional ethical issues (Boon, et al. 2009). The lack of exposure of PSTs to ethics

education became very clear, as the study also revealed startling differences in depth of reasoning in the two cohorts of students. Medical students had far more understanding of the implications of ethical practice and behaviour and the effects of their practice. Concepts such as: respect, justice and truth were well understood by these students and they had a keen sense of what they might mean in an everyday working situation. PSTs by contrast tended to focus on more superficial issues such as dress rules and punctuality. In any framework these are work related expectations rather than examples of ethical reasoning. Comparable findings were illustrated in a later study (Chapman, Forster, & Buchanan, 2013) in which PSTs had a tendency to consider legal issues impacting upon an ethical dilemma, demonstrating a latent awareness of the requirements of professional codes of ethics in teaching but, nonetheless, lacking critical reflection on these codes and rules. This was puzzling because teacher education programs in Australia contain subjects with units dealing with ethics and beliefs about teaching, classroom management, moral development and social inclusion. Perhaps as Mergler (2008) reasoned these components were not made explicit to PSTs. In short, the previous contentions about the disappearance of ethics education from teacher education programs in Australia (Lovat & Toomey, 2007; Newman & Pollnitz, 2005) as in the United States (Glanzer & Ream, 2007; Milson, 2003; Revell & Arthur, 2007) appeared to be warranted.

Apart from the studies cited above, there is limited evidence on ethics education in PST training programs in Australia, despite the growing professionalization of teaching, and the introduction of professional standards of teaching by accreditation bodies in Australia and worldwide (Drury & Baer, 2011). In the United States for example, Glanzer and Ream (2007) collected information on patterns of ethics education in PST education and found that among the education programs surveyed, a relatively small percentage contained a core required ethics subject. Additionally, Glanzer and Ream (2007) examined the professional programs offered by 156 Christian colleges and universities gathering comparative data on ethics education in nursing, business social work, journalism, engineering, computer science and teaching. They reported that one third to one half of professional programs other than teaching included at least one mandatory subject concerned with ethics, the figure dropping to 6% in the case of teacher education. We have found no comparable research in the Australian context.

Aims

The recent imperative set by AITSL in relation to professional standards pertaining to ethics presented an opportunity to examine ethics teaching in PST programs in Australia. In particular, research was needed to explore how universities in Australia prepare PSTs to understand and meet professional codes of ethics in Bachelor degree programs and other post-graduate teacher preparation courses. The research reported here was part of a larger international project that sought to re-examine Glanzer and Ream's (2007) conclusion that teacher education has "missed out on the ethics boom" in higher education (Maxwell1, et al., 2016). Research goals for this study were twofold: a) to generate a snapshot of the current provision of ethics education in Australian PST programs in light of the mandated AITSL professional standards, and b) to take a more in-depth look at issues that might impact upon the implementation of ethics subjects within programs. Therefore, focus questions also addressed the following: How do teacher educators perceive ethics content as an aspect of PST education? What institutional factors influence the implementation of core, required ethics subjects? What

do ethics instructors believe are the teaching objectives for core ethics subjects when they are implemented?

Methods
Data Collection

Data was gathered by way of a two-part, 64-item survey specifically created and housed on the online survey platform SurveyMonkey. The survey was designed for two participant groups: administrative heads of academic units offering programs leading to teacher certification, and faculty members or instructors who had taught ethics-related subjects in PST education over the previous five years. The rationale for including academic unit heads was that, given their managerial and leadership roles, they would be knowledgeable about the structure of the teacher education programs offered by their unit, sensitive to the pragmatic and practical aspects of program development, and more inclined towards a balanced (rather than discipline-specific) vision of the academic content teacher education. Ethics instructors on the other hand would bring the vantage point of teacher educators who have reflected in a sustained way on the contribution that ethics content can make to the training of future teachers, and who have been exposed to PSTs' reactions to ethics subjects. The participation of the instructor group was also essential for providing us with information about teaching and learning objectives in ethics subjects.

We addressed issues of survey validity by sending the survey to at least one expert reviewer in each of the countries involved, including Australia, and the suggested revisions were made. Prior to the validation phase, an initial version of the questionnaire was refined on the basis of the investigators' familiarity with the literature on the teaching and learning of ethics and professional values in PST education (e.g., Campbell, 2008; Carr, 2000; Coombs, 1998; Heilbronn & Foreman-Peck, 2015; Howe, 1986; Maruyama & Ueno, 2010; Snook, 2003; Strike & Soltis, 1998; Strike & Ternasky, 1993; Warnick & Silverman, 2011) and in reference to similar published surveys conducted in professional fields other than teaching. Part 1 of the survey, was concerned with information about requirements and opportunities for ethics education, resources dedicated to ethics education in teacher training, whether ethics was required or elective, and at which stage of the program ethics is taught. It also contained questions about respondents' views on the role of ethics education in PST education and on challenges to the implementation of dedicated ethics-related subjects in PST education. Part 2 of the survey, which was to be answered only by the instructor participants, asked questions about the teaching and learning objectives of subjects in professional ethics, learning activities used to teach professional ethics, instructors' qualifications, the type and quality of material (textbooks, subject manuals, journal articles, case studies, etc.) used to teach ethics to future teachers, and evaluation methods. To supplement the responses to part 2, instructor participants were asked to provide the syllabi of ethics subjects they had recently taught. In the introduction letter received by all participants, "ethics subject" was defined as any subject that had as its central focus ethics, morality or values in teaching.

Participant-reported survey responses on the frequency of a required ethics-related subject was triangulated by way of a manual search of academic calendars, following the method adopted by Hudon et al. (2013), Walther (2013) and Stephan (1999) in previous surveys on ethics education in the professions. The manual calendar search aimed to determine how common a mandatory ethics-related subject is in teacher education by collating information on

subjects that met our definition. To ensure the maximal consistency of results between the online survey and the manual calendar search, the definition of "ethics subject" we adopted for the manual search mirrored the definition provided to survey participants in the online survey's letter of introduction. Hence, we searched for program-required subjects which, judging by the title and subject description given in the university calendar, had as their primary content focus ethics, morality or values in teaching. Excluded were so-called "teachables" on moral, religious or ethics education and required ethics subjects linked to a teachable subject (e.g., a subject on applied ethics for PSTs preparing to teach philosophy or religious education). Also excluded from the manual calendar search were required courses on ethical philosophy (e.g., the ethics courses required as part of a concurrent degree in teaching and philosophy) and any mandatory subjects on research ethics. Where the subject description was ambiguous, it was included. A random sample of universities for the calendar search was selected across Australia to compensate for any self-selection bias which might have occurred through our open invitation participant recruitment strategy and to counterbalance the effect on the result of the proportionally high number of ethics instructors in the survey sample.

Data Sources

To reach the survey's target sample of academic unit heads, a contact list of academic unit heads was compiled by searching the websites of institutions offering accredited programs; institutions offering accredited programs were obtained from the AITSL website. To reach teacher educators directly involved in ethics education, in the information letter sent to academic unit heads, we asked the chief representatives to connect us with colleagues who were currently responsible for teaching ethics-related subjects in PST education. The online survey data collection period occurred in Australia during May 2015. For the manual academic calendar search, program and subject information was accessed through institutional websites. Institution-provided course information was obtained for 24 out of 37 Australian universities across all states and territories; those universities who were represented via the survey were among the 24 universities that were examined manually.

To facilitate the manual calendar search we organized the range of pre-service education programs into program categories or "blocks" which tended to have in common a shared set of mandatory core subjects. These program blocks were: Primary, Early Childhood Education (ECE), Secondary Education, Special Education, and Master's or Graduate Diploma in Teaching. Information was collected on each program block (i.e., B.Ed. primary, B.Ed. ECE, B.Ed. secondary, Master's, or Grad Dip in teaching etc.) offered by each university , on program-specific required ethics-related or other foundations subjects, and the placement of any of these subjects found on the program schedule. The findings were collated using a specially designed data collection tool housed on the SurveyMonkey platform and accessible only to the members of the research team. The manual calendar search of Australian universities ended in April 2015.

Results
Participant Information, Response Rate and Program Type

In total, we gathered 26 individual participant responses from the survey, from 8 states and territories, representing the two participant groups and varying levels of workplace seniority. The respondents represented 16 PST institutions. Representation across Australia resulted from responses from 2 universities from Western Australia, and South Australia, 1 from Victoria, Northern Territory and Tasmania respectively, 5 from New South Wales including the Australian Capital Territory, and 4 from Queensland. The response rate for the online survey by institution was 43.2 % (16/37) emanating from those institutions whose programs were accredited. Ethics instructors made up 35% or 9/26 of the respondents with the balance being made up by academic unit heads (17/26). Of these 15 were female and 11 were male (Table 1).

Work role	N (%)	Gender		Years working in higher education			
		M	F	<5	5-15	16-25	>25
Administrators	17 (65%)	7 (27%)	10 (38%)	0	5 (19%)	9 (35%)	3 (12%)
Instructors	9 (35%)	4 (15%)	5 (19%)	1 (4%)	7 (27%)	0	1 (4%)
Combined	26	11 (43%)	15 (57%)	1 (4%)	12 (46%)	9 (35%)	4 (15%)

Table 1 Respondent information

The manual calendar search revealed the proportion of program types offered for teacher training within those universities examined (Table 2); it showed that the majority of PST programs offered through the 24 institutions were devoted to training primary or early childhood educators (88%) at undergraduate and post graduate level (67%). Also a large number of post-graduate programs were devoted to secondary teacher training, comprising 25 programs in total across the 24 institutions (46% through a Graduate Diploma in Education and 58% through a Master of Teaching respectively).

Program type	N (%)*	Program block (N)
Four-year undergraduate degree leading to teacher registration in Primary or early Childhood Education	21 (88%)	I. Primary, elementary or early years education
Graduate Diploma in Education leading to teacher registration in Primary	4 (16%)	(25)
Four-year undergraduate degree leading to teacher registration in Secondary Education	10 (42%)	II. Secondary education (33)
Dual or combined undergraduate degree program leading to teacher registration in Secondary Education (e.g., B.A./B.Ed.)	12 (50%)	
Graduate Diploma in Education leading to teacher registration in Secondary	11 (46%)	
Four-year undergraduate degree in special education	1(4%)	III. Special education (1)
Master of Teaching leading to teacher registration in Primary	16 (67%)	IV. Master's in teaching
Master of Teaching leading to teacher registration in Secondary	14 (58%)	(30)

* N = number of programs offered in the 24 academic units surveyed; % = percentage of academic units offering this program type

Table 2 Categorization of education programs for the manual calendar search within the 24 institutions examined

Prevalence of a Required or Mandatory Ethics-Related Subject in PST Programs

Table 3 summarises the results of the manual calendar search for ethics related subjects by institution. The greatest proportion of institutions, (67% or 16/24) did not require PSTs to study ethics in an ethics related subject. A number of institutions (25% or 6/24) required some of their programs to include a mandatory ethics related subject but only 2 out of the 24 examined (8%) contained a mandatory ethics standalone subject in all their programs.

Manual calendar search (N = 24)		
All programs	Some programs	None
8% (2/24)	25% (6/24)	67% (16/24)

Table 3 Prevalence of a required ethics-related subject by institution

To gain a better understanding of the types of programs that included a required ethics subject in PST programs, the search was also analysed by program type via the manual calendar search. Working with the four analytic categories, primary or early childhood education, secondary education, special education and Master's in Teaching or Graduate Diploma in Education, data was gathered on how many programs had a stand-alone ethics subject on their lists of core subjects. Table 4 presents the details of the results by program type. Of note here is, alarmingly, the almost total absence of standalone ethics instruction from the postgraduate teacher training programs and the program leading to a qualification for teaching in special education. This is alarming not only because ethics instruction is mandated by AITSL but also because ethical reasoning and decision making is difficult and prospective teachers have been shown not to be very adept at it (Cummings, Dyas, Maddux, & Kochman, 2001; Boon, et al. 2009).

Program type	% of programs (N)
Primary, elementary or early years	20% (5/25)
Secondary	27% (6/22)
Special education	0% (0/1)
Graduate Diploma in Education	0% (0/11)
Masters' in Teaching	10% (3/30)
Total	16% (14/89)

Table 4 Prevalence of a required ethics-related subject by program of study

Teaching and Learning Objectives and Format of Mandatory Ethics-Related Subjects

To shed light on teaching and learning objectives of existing ethics-related subjects in ITE, Part 2 of the online survey, which was answered by ethics instructors only, presented participants with a rating matrix listing 15 possible teaching and learning objectives in a subject on the ethics of teaching and asked them to rate the importance of each item. Table 5 lists these objectives in order of most to least important according to the global mean score obtained for each. While these results do not represent statistically generalizable data because of the small number of participants, they do offer a glimpse of the views held by ethics instructors about the utility of ethics education for future teaching professionals.

The results suggested a broad consensus among instructors about the teaching and learning objectives of an ethics-related subject designed for future teachers. With only one exception, all the objectives the respondents were asked to rate achieved a global mean score of "important" or higher. The survey responses pointed towards four subject objectives as being considered particularly salient: help students develop their own personal philosophy of education, help students clarify their values, raise awareness of the demands of teacher professionalism and developing sensitivity to ethical issues in a context, all based on the reflective practices currently widely advocated for excellence in teaching practice. As indicated by mean ratings, the subject objectives that participants regarded as the least important were learning about the academic literature on the ethics of teaching, and becoming familiar with philosophical theories of normative ethics.

Rank[a]		Mean	S.D.
1	Help students develop their own personal philosophy of education	1.00[a]	.00
2	Help students clarify their values	1.00[a]	00
3	Understand teachers' professional obligations (e.g., to evaluate fairly, to engage in continuing professional development)	1.13[a]	.35
4	Develop sensitivity to ethical issues in context	1.13[a]	.35
5	Acquaint students with the local legal and regulatory context of teaching (e.g., applicable laws and legal frameworks, codes of ethics)	1.13[a]	.35
6	Develop ethical reasoning skills	1.25[a]	.46
7	Promote the professional values of teaching (e.g., human development, getting a fair chance)	1.25[a]	.46
8	Raise students' awareness about teacher professionalism	1.25[a]	.46
9	Encourage students to become ethically better people	1.34[a]	.74
10	Develop professional qualities (e.g., honest, fairness, empathy)	1.38[a]	.52
11	Provide ethically meaningful experiences (e.g., watching a film or reading literature that deals with ethical issues in teaching)	1.63[a]	.52
12	Familiarize students with ethically-relevant concepts in teaching (e.g., in loco parentis, racial discrimination, professional incompetence)	1.63[a]	.74
13	Improve communication skills	2.00[a]	.76
14	Learn about the literature on the ethics of teaching	2.75	.46
15	Learn about theories of normative ethics (e.g., deontologism, consequentialism)	2.75	1.04

a Based on mean ranking on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = "very important" to 5 = "not important")
b One ethics instructor (1/9) omitted to respond to these questions

Table 5 Teaching and learning objectives of introductory ethics subjects (N = 8[b])

Views about Ethics Education and its Influences on PST Professional Development

The online survey asked participants to indicate their level of agreement with 10 statements on the importance of ethics education in PST education. This question was meant to gauge participants' views on how the planned teaching of ethics, exposure to ethical role modelling, and institutional culture contribute to students' ethical development as professionals. Overall, academic unit heads and ethics instructors concurred that ethics is an important aspect of pre-service teacher education and that an ethics-related subject can have a positive impact on students' ethical behaviour and development as teachers (Table 6). A statistically significant difference of opinion was found over one issue that of the inclusion of a mandatory ethics subject in PST programs. Ethics instructors tended to give greater support to the view that an introductory ethics subject should be a requirement of PST programs ($p < .05$). Nevertheless,

both groups tended to disagree with the statement that the ethics instruction received by their PSTs was inadequate; suggesting that they believe ethics instruction is supported through their programs. Of interest too was the response to the question "Greater emphasis should be placed on applicants' ethical qualities in the student admissions process' which drew neutral answers from both sets of respondents.

	All participants (26)		Academic unit heads (17)		Ethics instructors (9)		Independent t-test results		
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	*t*	*df*	*Sig.(p)*
No matter whether ethics is taught as integrated curriculum or in dedicated subjects, ethics is an important aspect of the pre-service teaching curriculum.	4.69[a]	.47	4.65[a]	.49	4.78[a]	.44	-.66	24	.51
At least one introductory ethics subject should be mandatory for all students enrolled in a teacher education program.	3.88[a]	.99	3.58[a]	1.00	4.44[a]	.73	-2.26	24	.03[c]
Ethics subjects have no significant effect on students' ethical behaviour as professionals.	2.00[b]	.75	2.06	.83	1.89[b]	.20	.54	24	.59
Ethics subjects can have a significant effect on students' professional development as teachers.	4.12[a]	.59	4.18[a]	.64	4.00[a]	.50	.72	24	.48
It is important to take into consideration applicants' ethical qualities in the student admissions process.	3.54[a]	.65	3.41	.62	3.78[a]	.67	-1.40	24	.18
Professional role models (practicum supervisors, associate teachers, colleagues, etc.) have a greater effect on students' ethical development as teachers than learning about ethics in subjects.	3.65[a]	.85	3.88[a]	.93	3.22	.44	2.00	24	.06
The instruction in ethics that the students in our pre-service teacher education programs receive is inadequate.	2.69	.84	2.65	.71	2.77	1.09	-.37	24	.18
The institutional culture of our teacher education programs is favourable to students' ethical development as teachers.	3.96[a]	.53	4.06[a]	.43	3.78[a]	.67	1.31	24	.20
Greater emphasis should be placed on applicants' ethical qualities in the student admissions process.	3.16	.61	3.06	.65	3.33	.17	-1.09	24	.29

[a] A one-sample t-test revealed that the mean is statistically superior to 3 ("Neutral") at *p* < .05.
[b] A one-sample t-test revealed that the mean is statistically inferior to 3 ("Neutral") at *p* < .05.
[c] Value of less than .05 indicates a statistically significant difference between the two groups' responses

Table 6 Views on ethics education and ethical influences in pre-service teacher education

Institutional Obstacles to the Implementation of Standalone Ethics Subjects

To determine participants' perceptions about the institutional factors that affect the inclusion of standalone ethics subjects into PST programs, the survey prompted responses on 10 potential impediments to the implementation of a required ethics-related subject (Table 7). The one reason endorsed strongly was lack of time in program schedules, although administrators and

ethics instructors' opinions differed significantly on this point ($p < .01$) with ethics instructors less likely to strongly agree that this is a legitimate reason. Given that ethics instruction is mandated by AITSL, the accrediting body for teacher education in Australia, this is a curious result and begs the question how PST programs are designed to address the AITSL requirement.

	All participants			Academic unit heads		Ethics instructors		Independent t-test results		
	Mean[d]	N	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	t	df	Sig. (p)
Lack of time in program schedules	4.15[a]	26	1.01	4.53[a]	.51	3.44	1.33	3.00	24	.01[c]
Faculty members unavailable	2.77	26	1.24	2.76	1.09	2.78	1.56	-.03	24	.98
Qualified instructors unavailable	2.65	26	1.13	2.53	.94	2.89	1.45	-.77	24	.45
Financial resources unavailable to hire qualified instructors	2.69	26	1.23	2.53	1.07	3.00	1.50	-.93	24	.36
No established curriculum to follow	2.58	26	.95	2.76	1.03	2.22[b]	.67	1.42	24	.17
No financial resources available to develop new subjects or curriculum	2.81	26	1.13	2.76	1.09	2.89	1.27	-.26	24	.80
Resistance from faculty	2.31[b]	26	1.09	1.94[b]	.66	3.00	1.41	-2.63	24	.02[c]
Resistance from administration	2.31[b]	26	1.09	1.88[b]	.70	3.11	1.27	-3.21	24	.00[c]
Resistance from third-party trustee institutions (e.g., professional association or government bodies)	2.38[b]	26	1.02	2.06[b]	.75	3.00	1.22	-2.44	24	0.02[c]
Resistance from students	2.15[b]	26	.92	2.12[b]	.70	2.22[b]	1.30	-.27	24	.79

[a] A one-sample t-test revealed that the mean is statistically superior to 3 ("Neutral") at $p < .05$.
[b] A one-sample t-test revealed that the mean is statistically inferior to 3 ("Neutral") at $p < .05$.
[c] Value of less than .05 indicates a statistically significant difference between the two groups' responses
[d] The questions' response format was coded Strongly agree 5 through to Strongly disagree 1).

Table 7 Perspectives on institutional obstacles to the implementation of a required ethics subject

Stand-Alone Ethics Subjects: Why they are Uncommon in PST Education

Participants were asked to rank their level of agreement with 11 literature-derived hypothetical explanations that might explain why a required ethics-related subject is less common in PST education than in other professional programs such as medicine because we wanted to tease out the possible reasons for Glanzer and Ream's (2007) findings, as well as results from previous Australian based studies (Boon, 2011; Boon, et al 2009). Results indicated that participant groups did not significantly differ in their responses to the questions (Table 8), with both groups endorsing the view that the tradition within teacher education to deal with ethics as integrated curriculum was the most important reason for precluding the addition of ethics standalone subjects; the other reason participants agreed with was the increasingly crowded curriculum mandated for the programs. All the other factors were endorsed with a mean rating of neutral or lower (Table 8).

	All participants			Academic unit heads		Ethics instructors		Independent t-test results		
	Mean	N	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	t	df	Sig. (p)
There is a tradition in the field of teacher education to deal with ethics as integrated curriculum.	3.88[a]	26	.82	3.94a	.90	3.78a	.67	.48	24	.64
There has been intense competition over the years to introduce more and more content onto the pre-service teacher curriculum and ethics has just not been a priority.	3.77[a]	26	.16	3.76a	.83	3.78a	.83	-.04	24	.97
Local trustee institutions (e.g., professional or governmental bodies) have not put any pressure on education schools or provided incentives to offer students specific instruction in ethics.	3.08	26	.98	2.94	1.09	3.33	.71	-.97	24	.34
Offering a mandatory ethics subject would require a faculty-wide agreement about the ethical obligations and responsibilities of teachers, and it is unrealistic to think that we could all agree about this.	2.46[b]	26	.81	2.41b	.80	2.56	.88	-.42	24	.68
Teacher education is just slow to adopt new curriculum and keep abreast of trends in higher education.	2.31[b]	26	.79	2.23[b]	.75	2.44[b]	.88	-.64	24	.53
The link between the ethics of teaching and what students need to know to teach well is too tenuous to warrant a whole subject.	2.16[b]	26	.95	2.23b	.97	1.89b	.93	.88	24	.39
Offering students specific instruction in ethics may be necessary in fields that need to repair or maintain their relationship of trust with the public, but teaching does not generally have a problem with public trust.	2.15[b]	26	.97	2.29b	1.10	1.89b	.60	1.02	24	.32
The topic of ethics in teaching is not rich or interesting enough to warrant a whole subject.	1.88[b]	26	.99	1.94b	.97	1.78b	1.09	.39	24	.70
Ethical scandals are rare in teaching.	1.81[b]	26	.75	1.88[b]	.78	1.67[b]	.71	.69	24	.50
Ethics is too personal and subjective to be taught as part of pre-service teacher education.	1.81[b]	26	.15	1.94b	.75	1.56b	.73	1.26	24	.22
Complex and emerging ethical issues are rare in teaching.	1.77[b]	26	.65	1.88b	.60	1.56b	.73	1.23	24	.23

[a] A one-sample t-test revealed that the mean is statistically superior to 3 ("Neutral") at $p < .05$.
[b] A one-sample t-test revealed that the mean is statistically inferior to 3 ("Neutral") at $p < .05$.
[c] Value of less than .05 indicates a statistically significant difference between the two groups' responses

Table 8   Why standalone ethics subjects are less common in PST education

The Integration of Ethics into the PST Education Curriculum

To explore the extent to which academic programs weave ethics education into subjects other than standalone ethics ones, the survey asked whether the topic of ethics in teaching was integrated into other mandatory subjects or whether it was to be taught in combination with another topic. Typical responses included:

As stated previously the ethics component is embedded in the whole course so there is a mismatch between the questionnaire and our reality;
Ethics are embedded across various units of study;
The development of professional ethics and responsibilities is integrated throughout our professional development units, with a strong focus in the final year.

Since it is common for PST programs to include subjects that are embedded in moral philosophy and professionalism, (a view confirmed by the respondents' responses, Table 8), the calendar search was expanded to examine what other related subjects were mandated within the programs offered. Therefore subjects based on the social foundations of education were also examined since they are most often the vehicles where ethics is likely to be highlighted and expounded. These are tabulated in Table 9.

The vast majority of programs surveyed included a subject on Multicultural Education (64%) with Sociology of Education being the second most frequently required subject (28%) across all programs. Most Primary/Early Childhood programs included either a subject on The Foundations of Education or Educational Law or the Sociology of Education or the Philosophy of Education, although 20% (5/25) of these programs only stipulated Multicultural Education as a required core subject. These choices no doubt reflect the contingencies of the population of Australia, a highly multicultural society, traditionally motivated by a high level of liberal politics within education circles. Moreover, until recently, history had all but disappeared from Australian school curricula which might explain its absence from the PST programs as well. Foundations of Education subjects typically investigate schooling and teachers' work and social justice framed by various approaches to educational inquiry. Issues in education, such as equity, social sustainability and Indigenous education might also be scrutinized in such subjects, and therefore moral philosophy and professional ethics emerge as integrated themes to the extent that individual instructors emphasize these. In short, such subjects are designed to provide PSTs with an awareness of the contributions of history, philosophy, psychology, and sociology to the understanding of education and the practice of teaching. A very similar trend was observed in Secondary Education programs, including those encompassed within Graduate Diploma courses. Special Education was only surveyed through one program but the results there parallel those in the other courses. In the Masters' programs however, there is a relative absence of mandatory subjects through which ethics can be integrated, since a likely significant 30% (9/30) of courses operate without any suitable channel through which to integrate ethics.

	Primary, elementary or early years education (25)[a]		Secondary education inc. Grad Dip (33)[a]		Special education (1)[a]		Master's in teaching (30)[a]		Combined program types
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	Mean
Educational law	8%	2	9%	3	0%	0	3%	1	8% (7/89)
Sociology of education	40%	10	33%	11	0%	0	13%	4	28% (25/89)
Educational foundations	28%	7	12%	4	100%	1	10%	3	17% (15/89)
History of education	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0% (0/89)
Multicultural education	100%	25	58%	19	100%	1	40%	12	64% (57/89)
Philosophy of education	4%	1	6%	2	0%	0	3%	1	5% (4/89)

[a] Bracketed number indicates the total number of programs per program type surveyed

Table 9   Secondary data on required, core subjects based on social foundations in PST education

Discussion

This paper has provided a timely snapshot of the current handling of ethics education in Australian PST programs. The most striking results of this research are the findings that there is a paucity of standalone ethics subjects offered in the PST training programs despite the accreditation requirements of AITSL. Moreover, when analysed by program type, the frequency of an ethics subject requirement in PST programs reveal a trend that could be cause for concern. It emerged from the manual calendar search that post graduate programs as a general rule, had a much lower frequency of a mandatory ethics-related subject. And even if it is the case that ethics education is presumed to be embedded in other mandatory subjects, such as Foundations of Education or Multicultural Education, these programs contained a much lower frequency of these foundational subjects potentially suggesting a deficiency of ethics training in those programs. For example, Sociology of Teaching subjects were mandated in 40% and 33% of primary/early childhood education and secondary education degrees respectively but only 13% of Masters' in Education; a Multicultural Education subject was mandated in 100% and 58% of primary/early childhood education and secondary education degrees respectively, but only in 40% of Masters' in Education programs. The tendency for post-graduate programs to prioritize the more technical aspects of teaching (classroom management, assessment, pedagogical practices, etc.) at the expense of general foundational courses like Sociology of Education, Multicultural Education, Philosophy of Education and Professional Ethics, can lead to these prospective teachers missing out on the crucial opportunities for professional socialization that such subjects can provide.

At this point it is important to reflect on some distinctions between foundational courses like Sociology of Education, Philosophy of Education or Multicultural Education and to consider their purpose and in what ways they prepare PSTs and their teaching capacities, since these are separate although connected issues; one dealing with dispositional characteristics, the other with more technical pedagogical issues. It is not difficult to perceive that the value of courses in the Philosophy of Education and Professional Ethics might lie in helping PSTs to become more

critical thinkers, to develop more finely honed reasoning skills, rather than to more generally help them align their practice to professional standards. Philosophy of Education courses can help PSTs reflect and critically deconstruct the learning aims of other mandated courses, such as Multicultural Education, Inclusive Education or Education for Sustainability. Biesta (2012) argued that educational processes and practices have three purposes: qualification, socialisation and subjectification. Through qualification students are helped to gain knowledge and skills; socialization enables students to become part of existing social, cultural and political orders and traditions and helps novices to be enculturated into particular professional roles; subjectification, is a complex concept that refers to one's subjectivity and their awareness of human freedom to choose, the opposite of a socialisation function. It is the latter, subjectification, which Biesta (2012) argued must not be neglected through teacher training programs because at the intersection of the three purposes of education lies the potential for conflict or synergy. For example, Biestra (2012) explained potential synergy occurs when vocational education effectively imparts skills and socialises students into professional responsibility. Alternatively, potential conflict can arise when assessment pressures, a function of qualification, impact upon subjectification, leading to competition to be privileged over cooperation. Reflections such as these are a critical aspect of ethical practice and an important factor to consider when designing PST education programs.

More recently in PST training ethics education has been commonly developed in context, through integrated curriculum (Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2013). While it might be argued, as indeed some respondents in this study reported, that ethics education is consistently and sufficiently addressed through integrated curricula present in required, core subjects that address multicultural education, the sociology of education and the like, it is difficult to imagine that the AITSL standards which explicitly address ethics are being systematically and explicitly developed and assessed through these vehicles in Australian PST programs. Nor is it likely that they address the more finely nuanced ethical reasoning capacities that are required to discern conflict arising in educational practice. Recent Australian research demonstrated this point. In a study responding to a call for education programs to respond to ethics and/or values education, Christian (2014) examined whether PSTs' understanding of ethics and values education had improved over a semester during which PSTs had to write a unit of work for Australian schools which focused on values as part of their assessment. Embedded in the task was an awareness of ethical issues. Results of the study through a survey analysis of PSTs ethical understanding and deliberation signalled that significant gaps remained in PSTs' ethics understanding (Christian, 2014). Christian (2014) concluded that PSTs must be given greater and more explicit opportunities to study so that they can examine their views and understanding of ethics, echoing earlier similar calls (Bullough, 2011; Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2011). Without specific and complex case studies with which PSTs can grapple, through which they can deliberate potential professional responses critically, and which can reveal to them their own beliefs and philosophy of teaching it is no wonder that they fall back to legalistic and superficial features for their decision making (Chapman et al. 2013; Boon, et al. 2009; Boon, 2011).

In presuming that ethics is delivered and understood through integrated curricula within specific subjects, there is a risk that matters of ethics will become diluted within the broader substantive context or be taught by instructors who lack the necessary familiarity with ethics education and professional ethics (Campbell, 2008; 2011; 2013). In 2011 Elizabeth Campbell analysed documentary evidence describing core subjects and PST programs at several Canadian universities, and conducted interviews with over 60 PSTs and teacher educators to gain a better

understanding of ethics delivery in PST programs. She concluded that when ethics is taught as integrated curriculum, its delivery is patchy and unequal across programs. On the other hand, research has shown that at least at the level of cognition, explicit ethics training can raise the ability of PSTs to deliberate moral reasoning issues (Cummings, Maddux, Maples, & Torres-Rivera, 2004).

Despite questions about the best way to deliver ethics education its importance was recognised by respondents, all of whom agreed that "No matter whether ethics is taught as integrated curriculum or in dedicated subjects, ethics is an important aspect of the pre-service teaching curriculum". There was also strong agreement about the instrumentality of ethics content in PST programs based on responses to the question: "Ethics subjects can have a significant effect on students' professional development as teachers", and participants generally agreed that resistance from neither faculty, administration, nor third-party trustee institutions presented significant obstacles to the implementation of ethics subjects. Crucially, both ethics instructors and academic unit heads agreed, indicating that the value of ethics in teaching is irrefutable across the sector. According to all participants, the key challenge to increasing ethics content was the competition with other teaching and learning content for space on program schedules. Likewise there is every reason to believe that respondents would concur that it is the role of teacher educators to ensure that PSTs are fully conversant with all required professional ethical standards and also that they are adequately prepared to teach in environments that might present serious moral dilemmas (Chapman, et al. 2013). To date however, explicit and problematized attention to ethical practice and ethical knowledge seems to be somewhat either absent from, or hidden within other imperatives, in Australian teacher education programs.

Implications for Further Research

Results of this research indicate that ethics teaching is relatively rare in PST programs in Australia. As a result it is difficult to know precisely what objectives pertaining to ethics PSTs are expected to master in order for the mandated AITSL professional ethics to be fulfilled in accredited programs. Related to this is the question of how ethics education is best delivered, through standalone subjects or via embedding into other foundational subjects. There are therefore several gaps in the literature that need to be addressed. Although different opinions are frequently exchanged in the scholarly literature about the efficacy of the standalone versus integrated curriculum models for delivering ethics content in terms of their capacity to advance teacher professionalism, the empirical evidence surrounding this issue is scant. Nevertheless, there is no disagreement that ethics underpin the teaching profession and must be integral to any training program.   Sanger and Osguthorpe (2011) argued that allowing pre-service teachers to critically examine their own teacher beliefs and philosophy of education is essential in preparing them to be educators. This examination of beliefs is crucial for both clarification and internalisation as well as for preparing PSTs to meet their professional duties. It echoes Aristotle, who first used the term ethics and maintained that educating the mind without educating the heart was no education at all.

If PSTs, who are called upon to have an ethic of care for their students, to provide a safe environment for learning and so on, are not given sufficient time to examine their beliefs and professional ethics before formally entering the classroom, it is possible that they will rely on legalistic and superficial frameworks to manage their behaviour and responses in the classroom,

with the danger of aligning their beliefs to acceptable views merely to be politically correct. These might be sufficient for some of the time but we do not know if they adequately address the finer ethical understanding that is required to deal with more complex issues arising from embedded stereotypes and prejudices that individuals are sometimes even subconsciously subject to, for example, in relation to those students with disabilities, those from a different ethnic background, or those from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds. Therefore, it is important that further research is conducted to examine whether, and how best, such imperatives are addressed in the PST training programs. It might be that ethics education that is embedded in foundational subjects is as good if not better than when developed through a standalone ethics subject. It might be that both modes of teaching ethics are equally effective for some students but not for others, for example for mature age students compared to younger students, for males compared to females, for science and mathematics specialists compared to social science specialists and so on.   Future research must address how best to train PSTs to contemplate and respond to authentic ethical dilemmas. Implicit in this pursuit is research that extends to PST educators' ethical understanding and ethical reasoning development and how that links to their capacity to best teach ethics to PSTs and practicing teachers. Reliance on a simple reference to professional standards is likely to be an inadequate approach as previous research has demonstrated (Boon, 2011; Boon, et al. 2009; Campbell, 2011).

Limitations

The main methodological drawbacks of online surveys are the self-reported nature of the data and non-random sampling (Fowler, 2002). Efforts were made to verify the precision of participants' responses regarding the frequency of required ethics-related subjects in PST programs, but some degree of participant self-selection was to be expected. Academics regularly receive requests to participate in online surveys and it can be assumed that those who have a particular investment or interest in the theme of the research will be more likely to respond to the invitation and take the time out of their busy schedules to complete the survey. But it should also be noted that while the results reported are based perforce on a non-probabilistic sample and their generalizability to the overall population of teacher educators is limited, they are representative of 43% of universities geographically spread across Australia.

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