

Exploring the Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession through Anishinaabe Art

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Ontario
College of
Teachers
Ordre des
enseignantes et
des enseignants
de l'Ontario

Acknowledgements

The Anishinaabe art in this teacher education resource document was created by artist Bruce K. Beardy to inspire critical awareness, reflection, inquiry and dialogue regarding the *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession*.

The Ontario College of Teachers (the College) would like to acknowledge the leadership and contributions of artist Bruce K. Beardy and Kathy Beardy. Bruce is a First Nation member of the College and a faculty member at Lakehead University in the Aboriginal Teacher Education Program. Kathy Beardy is Manager of Education Initiatives at Nishnawbe Aski Nation.



Table of Contents

1	<i>Exploring the Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession through Anishinaabe Art</i>
2	Professional Inquiry
3	The Standard of <i>Commitment to Students and Student Learning</i>
6	The Standard of <i>Leadership in Learning Communities</i>
9	The Standard of <i>Ongoing Professional Learning</i>
12	The Standard of <i>Professional Knowledge</i>
15	The Standard of <i>Professional Practice</i>
18	<i>Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession and Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession</i>
21	Reflections
22	Connections to Professional Practice
23	References

Exploring the *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession* through Anishinaabe Art

Exploring the Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession through Anishinaabe Art is a teacher education resource designed to support inquiry into the *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession*.

The *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession* provide a framework of principles that describe the professional knowledge, skills, values and practices inherent within the lived experiences of members of the Ontario teaching profession.

Educators are invited to reflect on the five standards of practice: *Commitment to Students and Student Learning, Leadership in Learning Communities, Ongoing Professional Learning, Professional Knowledge and Professional Practice* through the artistic representations included within this document.

Initial teacher education and Additional Qualifications (AQ) courses are important professional contexts for deepening understanding and exploration of the professional knowledge, skills, dispositions and practices

described in the *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession*. This resource is intended to support conversations regarding professional practice using the artistic representations of the standards that occur within these teacher education contexts. This standards-based resource may also help to support the meaningful inclusion of Anishinaabe culture, history and worldview within teacher education and professional practice. In addition, it may be used in conjunction with the standards-based resource, *Exploring the Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession through Anishinaabe Art*, which can be found on the College website at "<http://www.oct.ca/resources>"

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

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

Professional Inquiry

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

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

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

Engaging in professional inquiry is a powerful form of professional learning. Critical inquiry empowers educators in the ongoing process of refining and enhancing professional practice. As educators critically reflect on and analyze their practice through questioning and wondering, they are able to gain new insights, understandings and revisit beliefs and assumptions that underpin professional practice.

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

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

Core ethical concepts being explored in this discussion guide are embedded within the five standards of: *Commitment to Students and Student Learning, Leadership in Learning Communities, Ongoing Professional Learning, Professional Knowledge and Professional Practice.*

This discussion guide is an educative tool for fostering critical professional inquiry and dialogue related to educators’ professional knowledge, skills and practices. A *Professional Inquiry* section follows each artistic representations related to the five *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession* included in this document.

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

The Standard of Commitment to Students and Student Learning

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

(Ontario College of Teachers, 2006b)



Exploring the Standard of Commitment to Students and Student Learning

1. Explore the artist’s visual representation of the standard, *Commitment to Students and Student Learning*.
2. Create a story/narrative to convey the meaning you associate with this artistic image of *Commitment to Students and Student Learning*.
3. Discuss how this visual representation resonates with your lived experience as an educator.

The Standard of *Commitment to Students and Student Learning*

Reflect on the following description of the artist's painting which honours and celebrates the standard of *Commitment to Students and Student Learning* and then respond to the professional inquiry questions:



Artist's Reflection

The Anishinaabe woman interacts with her students and is very committed to them. As a teacher, she is a carrier of knowledge and gifts and has great influence over their individual learning. She treats each one of her students equitably and with the greatest respect. She also greatly respects, cares for and is connected to her environment and Mother Earth, which are the source of life and survival.

The dark blue spherical shape in the painting represents Mother Earth. The turtle is a representation of the land of the Anishinaabe people, in North America, also known as Turtle Island. The turtle embodies the teaching of truth and although known to be a slow moving creature, it is very stable and strong. The turtle carries all things belonging to the land where all are connected and shared.

This particular painting illustrates the teacher working with her students. She is teaching them to respect the land that was given to them and to use it wisely. In this particular illustration, a tree is being planted, and over time, the students will witness its growth.

The teacher is committed to working with her students by teaching, communicating, facilitating and observing each individual student's development. Similar to the growth of the tree, she will witness the growth of her students over time.

A young student sits in the middle and holds a birch bark basket depicting the four medicine colours. The four medicines contained in the basket are used for protecting and caring for the tree. This medicine representation, in the Anishinaabe culture, is important.

The seven people in the painting each represent one of the seven teachings within the Anishinaabe culture: wisdom, humility, love, courage, respect, honesty and truth.

All forms of life are connected, animate or inanimate. As such, the land, community, trees, eagle, raven, the sun and moon, are also connected. The eagle (migisi), considered to be the highest spiritual form of the animal, is a representation of love for the growth of the planted tree. The raven is a symbol of honesty. With this teaching, honesty must be practiced by the students in order to witness the development of the tree. The sun and the moon represent the time: day and night. The wigwams represent community.

The fish swimming in the water represent the fish clan who, in the Anishinaabe culture, are considered to be the teachers within the community and the supporters of their peer, the teacher.

They are the representation of water, the current and the flow of life.

In the Anishinaabe culture, there is a legend about a boy on the moon. An elderly woman conceived a son from a stranger. They lived in a wigwam. As the boy grew, the woman had strange dreams about her son and the light emanating from the moon. One evening in the wintertime, when the moon was full, the woman became very sick and developed a fever. The woman noticed that they were out of water and asked her son to fetch the water from the lake. As the boy prepared to go she told him not to stare at the moon. The boy questioned this. The mother told him that if he did, he would be dragged to the moon by its rays. He left to fetch the water with his pail and ladle, promising that he would not stare at the moon.

As he was making a hole in the ice for water, he couldn't resist taking quick and frequent glances at the moon out of the corner of his eye, to see what would happen. Eventually, when he noticed that nothing was happening to him, he decided to stare at the moon for a long time.

Time passed and the boy did not return so the mother decided to search for him. She could see her son's footprints leading to the lake and around the ice hole. The boy had simply disappeared. The mother looked at the moon and there she could see a figure of a boy standing on the moon holding a pail and a ladle. The Anishinaabe people see the boy holding his pail and ladle at every full moon. The boy on the moon, in the painting, is a reminder that all must respect the Anishinaabe teachings with complete honesty and truth. The students in the painting are learning the Anishinaabe teachings, and must practice these teachings with honesty and truth for a balanced and healthy lifestyle.

Professional Inquiry

1. Identify new insights and ethical understandings you gained from exploring this artist's reflection related to *Commitment to Students and Student Learning*.
2. Explore the significance of the artist's description of Anishinaabe teaching associated with the standard of practice, *Commitment to Students and Student Learning*, for your own professional practice.
3. Identify new insights and understandings gained about professional practice from engaging with the artist's written descriptions of the standard and the associated Anishinaabe teaching.

The Standard of *Leadership in Learning Communities*

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

(Ontario College of Teachers, 2006b)



Exploring the Standard of *Leadership in Learning Communities*

1. Explore the artist’s visual representation of the standard, *Leadership in Learning Communities*.
2. Create a story/narrative to convey the meaning you associate with this artistic image of *Leadership in Learning Communities*.
3. Discuss how this visual representation resonates with your lived experience as an educator.

The Standard of *Leadership in Learning Communities*

Reflect on the following description of the artist’s painting which honours and celebrates the standard of ***Leadership in Learning Communities*** and then respond to the professional inquiry questions:

Artist’s Reflection

In the Anishinaabe culture, all forms of life are connected, animate or inanimate, and treated with great respect. In the world we live in, there are many types of animals, mammals and living organisms: some small, some large and some in between, all co-existing daily. In the Anishinaabe culture, we learn from and respect each and every life form as each one contributes to our environment and survival. It is extremely important that we understand each other so that each life form can continue to exist on our planet.

A variety of life forms are connected throughout the painting: the land and trees, community, water, sky and sun. This painting also depicts the diversity of teachers from all backgrounds (fish, a mink, a bear, an eagle, ducks, a frog, a moose, a wolf, humans and a beaver). The painting portrays the ongoing collaboration and discussion of leadership roles in order to facilitate student learning.

Each of the wigwams in the painting represents an individual community. The four wigwams each have a different colour at the entrance (red, black, yellow and white), representing the medicine wheel of the Anishinaabe culture as well as the ethical standards of the Ontario College of Teachers (*Care, Respect, Trust and Integrity*).

Representatives of the four individual communities have gathered together to participate in the creation of safe, collaborative and supportive learning communities. A wolf (mahiigan), a symbol of humility, carries a wigwam on his back to represent the value of community. The wolf lives in a pack and lives for the well-being of that pack. He will go to great lengths to protect the pack. Similarly, the Anishinaabe people value community and community well-being. In the painting, the collaborative meeting is taking place in the open air, by the lake, where all thoughts for shared responsibilities, leadership and roles are being discussed. The open discussion focuses on the well-being and balance of the communities as well as on the students’ growth and learning.

The Standard of *Leadership in Learning Communities*

Professional Inquiry

1. Discuss the relevance of the Artist's Reflection related to *Leadership in Learning Communities* for your own professional practices.
2. Generate ways in which this artistic expression and associated cultural meanings of the standard of *Leadership in Learning Communities* can be integrated within the context of your professional practice.
3. Discuss the new insights you gained regarding the standard of *Leadership in Learning Communities*.
4. Explore the significance of the artist's description of being a member of a community as associated with the standard of practice, *Leadership in Learning Communities*, for your own professional practice.

The Standard of *Ongoing Professional Learning*

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

(Ontario College of Teachers, 2006b)



Exploring the Standard of *Ongoing Professional Learning*

1. Explore the artist's visual representation of the standard, *Ongoing Professional Learning*.
2. Create a story/narrative to convey the meaning you associate with this artistic image of *Ongoing Professional Learning*.
3. Discuss how this visual representation resonates with your lived experience as an educator.

The Standard of *Ongoing Professional Learning*

Reflect on the following description of the artist's painting which honours and celebrates the standard of ***Ongoing Professional Learning*** and then respond to the professional inquiry questions:

Artist's Reflection

As his peers paddle away after collaborating briefly on the journey that he is about to embark on, the teacher is standing on the hill gazing over all that is. He contemplates his journey and reflects on his gifts and teaching practice. As a carrier of knowledge and gifts, he is committed to ongoing learning to enhance his professional practice so that he may effectively teach his students and people of the community. He is ready to accept all that is to be learned, including Humility.

Humility as one of the Anishinaabe teachings tells us that being humble is to recognize and accept that we are no more important than others and that we make mistakes. In the painting, Humility is represented by a yellow bubble surrounding the teacher. It is a reminder that as teachers we do not know everything and we must reach out for guidance, direction and support from knowledge keepers, Elders and others.

The painting is a depiction of a teacher who is ready to embark on his journey of self-directed learning and research, in order to fulfill his desire to experience the Anishinaabe culture, collaborate with other teachers and community members and engage in *Ongoing Professional Learning*.

Raven is travelling with the teacher. In the Anishinaabe culture, Raven is a trickster, a scavenger and considered annoying at times. Raven has accepted his being as he is, and thus he knows honesty. He does not try to change. Raven has an important role, which is to guide the teacher.

The painting represents warmth, as well as a feeling of eagerness to move forward to experience all that is. The scenery depicts a beautiful day in which to enjoy meeting people and to learn all about the communities, wildlife, animals, waterfowl, fish, forests, lakes and rivers. As the teacher travels on his quest to enhance his knowledge, he will experience obstacles and dark treacherous weather at times. This is why Raven was chosen to accompany this teacher, to protect him from going astray and to remind him to stay on the path of honesty.

As he follows the path of his learning journey, the teacher encounters a community of leaders, Elders and respected individuals, from whom he will learn culture and gain knowledge of the four medicines (black, white, red and yellow). This medicine representation is important in the Anishinaabe culture. All forms of life are connected, animate or inanimate, and the yellow path represents the connection to all of these.



The teacher will come across a child, who is mesmerized by a fluttering butterfly. The child wants to know more about this butterfly and is ready to ask questions about it.

The teacher will encounter various animals along the way, many of whom are adult teachers to their own kind. The rabbit, for example, is examining the growth of a flower. The knowledge gained from that experience will be passed on to the young.

From these animals, he will learn teachings and gain knowledge that will enhance his role as teacher.

He will rest by the lake and appreciate the sharing and use of water by the other animals. He might decide to catch some fish by a lake to nourish his being. He might also take some time to reminisce on his journey.

As he continues along his journey, he will experience and practice the traditional values of the Anishinaabe people and show respect for all living and non-living things of the land. He will learn the Anishinaabe seven grandfather teachings. He will come across many communities or camps, where feasting, singing, drumming, dancing, teaching and storytelling will be performed in his honour. This is all part of his lifelong learning and professional growth as a teacher. He will feel good about himself and will share his journey and experiences with his students, peers, parents, friends and community members.

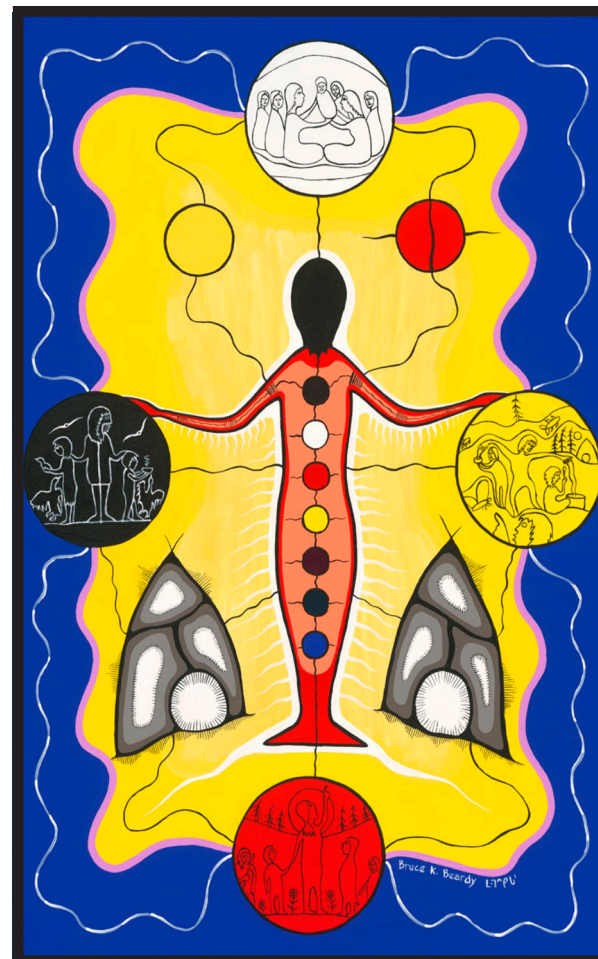
Professional Inquiry

1. Explore the significance of the teacher's "ongoing quest for knowledge and understanding of the culture within the community" for your own professional practice.
2. Discuss new insights and understandings you gained regarding this artist's expression of the standard of practice, *Ongoing Professional Learning*.
3. Explore the significance of the artist's description of the Anishinaabe teaching associated with the standard of practice, *Ongoing Professional Learning*, for your own professional practice.

The Standard of *Professional Knowledge*

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

(Ontario College of Teachers, 2006b)



Exploring the Standard of *Professional Knowledge*

1. Explore the artist’s visual representation of the standard, *Professional Knowledge*.
2. Create a story/narrative to convey the meaning you associate with this artistic image of *Professional Knowledge*.
3. Discuss how this visual representation resonates with your lived experience as an educator.

The Standard of *Professional Knowledge*

Reflect on the following description of the artist’s painting which honours and celebrates the standard of *Professional Knowledge* and then respond to the professional inquiry questions:

Artist’s Reflection

The teacher stands at the doorway of opportunity, reflecting on her journey thus far. She welcomes new opportunities and challenges. Throughout her years, she has acquired many teachings and has many gifts to offer. She is always ready to go forward, to share her knowledge and gifts with the community and her students. With open arms, she welcomes the challenges and obstacles that she will face daily, throughout the years.

The painting depicts a teacher ready to implement into practice the knowledge she has gained. She was once a student not so many years ago. Through her experiences, which have included overcoming challenges and obstacles, she has acquired many teachings that have strengthened her growth as a teacher and an individual. She is now ready to pass on her knowledge and experiences and understands that students are individuals with their own learning styles. She continually reflects on this knowledge and strives to foster student growth and development. She is committed to strengthening her professional knowledge through ongoing research and learning theory, pedagogy and curriculum, ethical standards and related policies and legislation, to practice professional judgment.

Within her body and soul, she has acquired experience through research of learning theories and practicing the Anishinaabe teachings of the seven grandfathers: Respect (black), Courage (white), Honesty (red), Humility (yellow), Love (violet), Truth (green) and Wisdom (blue). She is eager to pass on these teachings to her students and to the community. She understands that all things are connected, and like a spider, she is ready to weave all knowledge of professional practice to convey life’s teachings to her students. She is well prepared and is surrounded by the Anishinaabe world of the four medicine wheel colors and directions: black/west, white/north, yellow/east and red/south. Each medicine wheel depicted in the painting represents one of the four ethical standards: red for *Care*, black for *Respect*, yellow for *Trust* and white for *Integrity*.

The Standard of *Professional Knowledge*

Professional Inquiry

1. Explore the significance of the artist's description of the Anishinaabe teaching associated with the standard of practice, *Professional Knowledge*, for your own professional practice.
2. Discuss new insights and understandings you gained regarding this artist's expression of the standard of practice, *Professional Knowledge*.

The Standard of *Professional Practice*

“Members apply professional knowledge and experience to promote student learning. They use appropriate pedagogy, assessment and evaluation, resources and technology in planning for and responding to the needs of individual students and learning communities. Members refine their professional practice through ongoing inquiry, dialogue and reflection.”

(Ontario College of Teachers, 2006b)

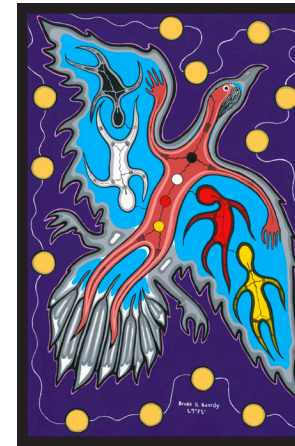


Exploring the Standard of *Professional Practice*

1. Explore the artist's visual representation of the standard, *Professional Practice*.
2. Create a story/narrative to convey the meaning you associate with this artistic image of *Professional Practice*.
3. Discuss how this visual representation resonates with your lived experience as an educator.

The Standard of *Professional Practice*

Reflect on the following description of the artist's painting which honours and celebrates the standard of ***Professional Practice*** and then respond to the professional inquiry questions:



Artist's Reflection

The teacher has taught the students well and evaluates and assesses the students' growth and development by facilitating unique learning opportunities and communicating with them.

In the Anishinaabe culture, the eagle (migisi) is considered to be the highest spiritual form of the animal and is highly respected. The flying eagle depicted in this painting represents the *Standard of Practice for the Teaching Profession – Professional Practice*.

The teacher, embedded in the eagle, has gained all knowledge of Professional Practice. The teacher has become the eagle and is carrying the four students in its wings for protection, caring and love. The teacher and the students are all connected. This medicine representation, in the Anishinaabe culture, is important. Each student represents the four medicine wheel colours which also symbolize the four ethical standards: black for *Respect*, white for *Integrity*, red for *Care*, and yellow for *Trust*.

The eagle's tail feathers and wings are equipped with all knowledge of *Professional Practice*, including the teachings of the Anishinaabe people. The eagle uses its wings like the airplane's ailerons and tail like an airplane's rudder; these provide guidance and direction. Similarly, the teacher provides leadership to the students by guiding and directing them to a balanced and healthy lifestyle. The twelve moons represent time. Like the eagle, the teacher is committed to witnessing the growth of the students and their attainment of the highest levels of education.

The painting depicts a learning opportunity for the students and the teacher. The teacher is teaching them the world of flight. The students are learning and experiencing the art of flying and all that is associated with it, such as the science of weather. They are experiencing the properties of wind, as they gracefully maneuver around the gusts of wind, gliding and diving. Within this experience they not only learn the art of flight but also witness the spectacular view of the world from the eyes of the natural teacher, the eagle.

Professional Inquiry

1. Explore the role and significance of the Elder and the eagle for fostering the standard of *Professional Practice*.
2. Discuss the relevance of the Artist's Reflection related to *Professional Practice* for your own professional practice.
3. Generate ways in which this artistic expression and the associated cultural meanings of the standard of *Professional Practice* can be integrated within the context of your professional practice.
4. Discuss the new insights you gained regarding the standard of *Professional Practice*.
5. Explore the significance of the artist's description of the Anishinaabe teaching associated with the standard of practice, *Professional Practice*, for your own professional practice.

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

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

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

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

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

- inspire a shared vision for the teaching profession
- identify the values, knowledge and skills that are distinctive to the teaching profession
- guide the professional judgment and actions of the teaching profession
- promote a common language that fosters an understanding of what it means to be a member of the teaching profession.

Ethical Standards

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

(Ontario College of Teachers, 2016, p. 7)

The *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession* are:

Care

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

Trust

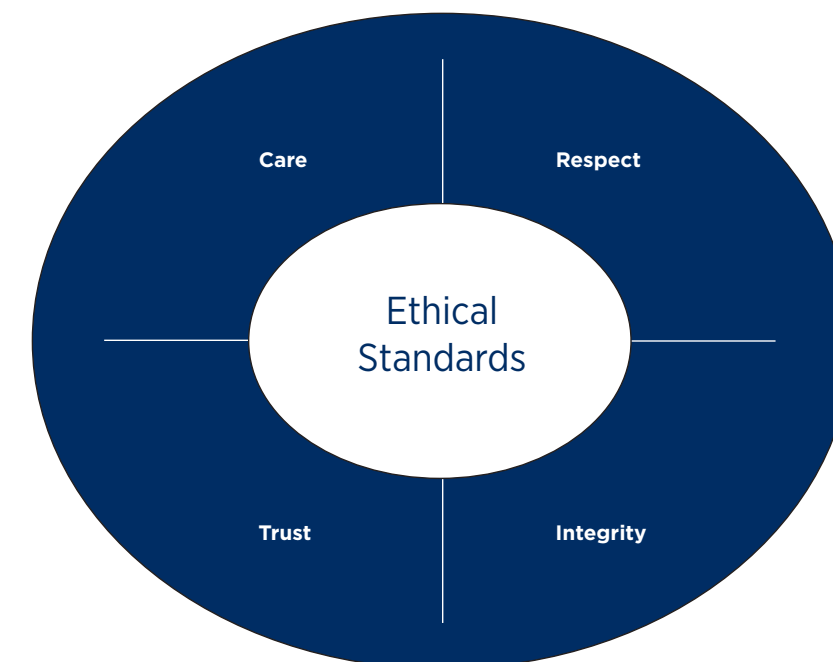
The ethical standard of *Trust* embodies fairness, openness and honesty. Members’ professional relationships with students, colleagues, parents, guardians and the public are based on trust.

Respect

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

Integrity

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







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Setting the Standard
for Great Teaching

Cette publication est également disponible en français sous le titre
Explorer les Normes d'exercice de la profession enseignante par l'art anishinaabe

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