

*Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 2010  
doi: 10.1111/j.1469-5812.2010.00655.x

# Emotions and Ethics: A Foucauldian framework for becoming an ethical educator

RICHARD NIESCHE & MALCOM HAASE

*Griffith Institute for Educational Research, Griffith University  
School of Education, James Cook University*

## Abstract

*This paper provides examples of how a teacher and a principal construct their 'ethical selves'. In doing so we demonstrate how Foucault's four-part ethical framework can be a scaffold with which to actively connect emotions to a personal ethical position. We argue that ethical work is and should be an ongoing and dynamic life long process rather than a more rigid adherence to a 'code of ethics' that may not meaningfully engage its adherents. We use Foucault's four-part framework of ethical practice as a framework through which an 'ethical self' can be purposely constructed. This is important work, as those who have authority over others must know how to monitor themselves against the misuse of the power of their positions.*

Keywords: ethics, emotions, Foucault, education

## Introduction

How do educators become ethical subjects? With the discursive explosion around identity and teacher identity in recent years (for example Britzman, 1994; Clarke, 2008; Gee, 2000; Hall, 1997; Wenger, 1998; Zembylas, 2002, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c) there is a need to be more specific about the 'identity work' (Clarke, 2008) that educators do in order to construct themselves as ethical subjects. In this paper we use the ethical framework developed by Foucault in his later works (Foucault, 1992, 2000a, 2000b) to demonstrate specifically how a teacher and a principal cultivate their ethical selves through a range of self-reflective practices that are deeply connected to their emotions. We view emotions as being collaboratively and publicly formed and not as individual, private and autonomous traits (Harding & Pribham, 2004; Zorn & Boler, 2007). It is therefore important to recognise the cultural dimensions of emotions (Beatty 2000a, 2000b, 2002; Hargreaves 2000, 2001, 2004) but also recognise that these cultural approaches have historically portrayed emotion as feminised weakness (Zorn & Boler, 2007). In the field of educational leadership, 'good leadership' is typically about managing emotions or making emotions invisible, and as Sachs and Blackmore (1998) point out, the power of these

discourses of rationality is that they operate as subtle discourses of control. These discourses are clearly in operation through the two case studies illustrated in this paper.

By drawing on Foucault we argue for the necessity of those who have authority over others, such as teachers and principals, to be wary against the misuse of the power of their positions. We see 'ethical work' as a dynamic and continuing activity rather than an adherence to a system of moral codes and principles enshrined in formal policy statements. This paper is a contribution to theory and research about the everyday ethical work of educators in schools. The data for this paper are drawn from two separate research projects conducted in two separate Australian schools. Both involved the use of semi-open ended interviews with the participants, in this case, a principal (Ruth) and a teacher (Andrew). A benefit of drawing on two separate cases that originate from differing research activities is that it strengthens the argument that Foucauldian analysis and concepts are applicable to real life settings. By doing so, we illustrate the positive potential for a concept of a Foucauldian ethics to be applied in ways that can assist teachers and principals to reflect on their own subjectivity through the work they do in constituting themselves as ethical subjects. This entails working with the notion that there is no essence or nature of human beings but that subjects are constituted through a variety of practices across time (Peters, 2003).

We do not present the experiences of Ruth and Andrew as universal solutions for educational or ethical issues, nor cite them as exceptional examples. Rather, our intention is to demonstrate an approach to understanding some of the micro-practices of everyday ethical practice. This critical endeavour is a personal, flexible and dynamic undertaking that can allow educators to work towards an education for an ethical imagination and ethics of engagement (Christie 2005a, 2005b) that can be of significant value in today's world. We also acknowledge that issues of gender are important in these educators' subjectivities and the work they do on the self; however, it is outside the scope of this paper to fully attend to this issue.

### **Foucault's Notion of Ethics**

In recent years there has been a significant body of research exploring Foucault's work on ethics (for example, Bernauer & Mahon, 2005; Clarke, 2008; Infinito, 2003a, 2003b; O'Leary, 2002; Peters, 2003; Moss, 1998; Zembylas, 2002, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c). If, as O'Leary states (2002), Foucault's work could be generally described as consisting of three periods (his early work was characterised by the discursive production of knowledge; and he then moved on to examine the relations between knowledge and power), his later work was more concerned with the relationship one has with oneself in response to a range of prescribed codes of action (Foucault, 1992; 2000a). This is not to say that issues of power are no longer relevant, for Foucault still states that, 'the concern for the self is linked to the exercise of power' (Foucault, 2005, p. 36). We understand Foucault's 'new' concern with the self as being situated at the intersection of his themes of a history of subjectivity and an analysis of the forms of governmentality (Davidson, 2005). While clearly signifying a shift in his focus away from disciplinary power, Foucault also links his notion of ethics to that of governmentality so as not to delineate a complete shift. As he states:

Governmentality implies the relationship of the self to the self, and I intend this concept of governmentality to cover the whole range of practices that constitute, define, organize and instrumentalise the strategies that individuals in their freedom can use in dealing with each other. Those who try to control, determine and limit the freedom of others are themselves free individuals who have at their disposal certain instruments they can use to govern others. (Foucault, 2000b, p. 300)

Thus, Foucault is making clear the link between the relationship of the self to itself and the governing of others. This is a useful concept to understand the ethical work of both principals and teachers. Situating this notion of ethics within a framework of governmentality is important, for governmentality is concerned with not only practices of governing others but also practices of the self (Dean, 1999). Foucault argues that it is the concept of governmentality that makes it possible to bring out the freedom of the subject and its relationship to others (2000b). This, he argues, is what constitutes ethical work. It is through these active practices of the self that the subject constitutes him/herself and these practices are not invented by the individual but by society, culture, and social group (Foucault, 2000b).

In casting this shift towards the relationship of the self to itself and others, Foucault stresses this relationship as a continual *process* of negotiation that needs to be seen as important rather than the codes of behaviour themselves. For Foucault, ethics is:

A *process* in which the individual delimits that part of himself [*sic*] that will form the object of his moral practice, defines his position relative to the precept he will follow, and decides on a certain mode of being that will serve as his moral goal. And this requires him to act upon himself, to monitor, test, improve and transform himself. (Foucault, 1992, p. 28) (emphasis added)

Thus, Foucault's notion of ethics stands against any understanding of ethics that defines itself as an abstract normalising code of customary conduct (Bernauer & Mahon, 2005, p. 152). As we demonstrate in this paper, both Ruth and Andrew are constantly making decisions in relation to codes of behaviour and action as set out by governmental bodies, parental and community expectations and particular educational discourses. Not so much in a linear fashion but often in complex and conflicting ways that involve a looking back of the self in order to circumvent the often disciplinary power of educational institutions. In consideration of Foucault's work on ethics, Christie (2005b) employs a useful way of looking at Foucault's notion of ethics, for she argues that ethics is, 'A disposition of continual questioning and adjusting of thought and action in relation to notions of human good and harm. It entails work on the self and consideration of how to be and act in relation to others' (2005, p. 40). Davies (2006) also argues for a continual process of re-examining one's responsibility to and for oneself in relation to others. The importance of these notions of ethics are that they move beyond an engagement with ethics that is little more than sets of competencies or capabilities and a set of moral codes to which principals and teachers must ascribe (see for example, Education Queensland, 1997; 2006), to an activity of an educator who constructs their subjectivity through a constant activity of acting upon themselves in a process of monitoring, testing, improving and transforming (Foucault, 1992).

Using the four main aspects of Foucault's genealogy of ethics (1992), we consider in this paper the self's dynamic relationship to itself as a key notion of the way we examine teachers' and principals' work. The following are the four aspects of ethical work that Foucault puts forward:

**Ethical substance**, *that is, the way in which the individual has to constitute this or that part of himself [sic] as the prime material of his moral conduct* (Foucault, 1992, p. 26). In this paper we use this notion to refer to the part of oneself or of one's behaviour that is relevant for ethical judgement in order to achieve moral conduct. In *The Use of Pleasures* (1992), Foucault's concern was the examination of the sexual ethics of Classical Greece (O'Leary, 2002). During this era, Foucault's attention for the ethical substance was on the Greek 'aphrodisia' or the intersection of bodies, pleasures and desires. While Foucault emphasises the desires and pleasure that feelings or emotions capture, the participants in this paper, Ruth and Andrew, talk about their emotions as the part of the self that requires work. It is for this reason that we chose to examine their emotions as their ethical substance.

**Mode of subjection** *is the way in which the individual establishes his relation to the rule and recognises himself [sic] as obliged to put it into practice* (Foucault, 1992, p. 27). In other words, the way in which people are invited or incited to recognise their moral obligations. This may refer to divine law in a holy text, such as the Bible, the Koran, social customs, natural laws or rationality, or policy documents from an education authority.

**Forms of elaboration** *is the ethical work that one performs on oneself, not only in order to bring one's conduct into compliance with a given rule, but to attempt to transform oneself into the ethical subject of one's behaviour* (Foucault, 1992, p. 27). Such activities can include a range of physical and mental techniques such as self-discipline, meditation, writing and training one's body. In this paper, these are the specific acts that both Ruth and Andrew do in their work on their emotions to become moral subjects.

**Telos** *is an action that is not only moral in itself, in its singularity; it is also moral in its circumstantial integration and by virtue of the place it occupies in a pattern of conduct* (Foucault, 1992, pp. 27–28). This refers to the achievement (or striving to achieve) of a certain mode of being that contains the characteristics of an individual's notion of the ethical subject. More specifically it is the accomplishment of, or quest to achieve an accomplishment of a mastery over oneself, the sort of person one wishes to be (Foucault, 2000a; O'Farrell, 2005). In this paper, we use the notion of telos to refer to Ruth's notion of what it means to be a 'good' principal as well as Andrew's understanding of a 'respected' teacher.

Foucault argues that it is through these active practices of the self that the subject constitutes him/herself and these practices are not invented by the individual but by society, culture and social group (Foucault, 2000b). Therefore, in this paper we use Foucault's notions of ethics and practices upon the self to understand how it is possible for this particular teacher and principal to contest and respond to the proliferation of practices that can serve to discipline Ruth and Andrew. In the next section, we begin with an analysis of the way that Andrew, a male primary school teacher, constructs his self towards the aim of becoming a particular type of teacher.

## Method

As stated earlier the data in this paper are drawn from two separate research projects in two separate Australian schools. However, the striking similarities in responses between the two participants, particularly in terms of their responses to their emotions provoked our interest in exploring the issues in this paper. It was on this basis that the participants were selected. One research project involved a comparative case study analysis of two principals of Indigenous schools for the purposes of exploring how they are constituted as subjects through their work practices. This included observations of the principals at work as well as a series of three open-ended interviews with both principals and semi-structured interviews with teachers, school staff and community members. The second research project was a semi-open-ended life history research (Cole and Knowles, 2001) investigation into the experiences of male teachers with a focus on social relationships. It involved interviews and focus groups with eleven male teachers, six female teachers and two male and two female principals.

## Discussion

### *Andrew—Male Primary Teacher*

Andrew is in his early thirties, with ten years experience in primary education. He is a first generation Australian whose European parents immigrated in the post World War Two era. During his own primary schooling Andrew recalls the seeds being sown for his future career in teaching when a number of his own teachers recognised Andrew's high level of 'responsibility', his value as a 'team player' and emerging leadership skills. His commitment to pursue his ambition of becoming a teacher is demonstrated in that he studied at night school for two years after high school to gain entry to university because his high school leaving certificate fell just short of the prescribed requirement. He was fully supported by his family and friends as they considered teaching to be a 'respected' career. It seems his earlier life experiences had developed within himself a deeply entrenched emotional desire to become a teacher. As a result he felt few of the pressures experienced by many men that primary teaching is 'stigmatised' as a low status, low paid, and inappropriate profession for men (Mills, 2004; Skelton, 2001; Smith, 2004; Williams, 1995). Rather, as is often the case with poorer families, Andrew's university degree was considered as a rise in family status (Drudy *et al.*, 2005) and so he entered his career with an understanding that as a teacher he would be a responsible and 'respected' member of the community. Thus when Andrew's first very difficult teaching experiences did not meet his expectations he was deeply and emotionally affected. This caused him to reflect about how he might have to change his teaching practices to create a better alignment with his 'telos' as a teacher.

Andrew's first appointment was to a small, remote, mainly Indigenous community. This period was particularly challenging, and Andrew understood it as a time of 'sink or swim' in his teaching career. As Andrew states:

I found out fairly quickly that 'ok, it was pretty much a sink or swim kind of place to start teaching' and I think in the long run that's been fairly good to

me. My expectations were, I guess, that as a teacher you'd be respected and that kids'd look up to you and you'd have, not so much status in the community but you'd be respected within the community as well. And I found out fairly early on in that environment that, that wasn't given. You really had to earn that.

Clarke (2008) argues that identity is not pre-determined but needs to be continually renegotiated within specific contexts. Through the challenges Andrew encountered, he realised that his identity of a respected teacher was not pre-given and that to 'earn' respect it was necessary to reconsider and evaluate the self in order to move closer to the telos of a 'respected' teacher. Andrew recognised that if he were to achieve respect and become the teacher he desired to be, then he would need to engage in a range of self-forming activities on himself and his practices in relation to his students and his work. It is important to remember that we are not saying that Andrew achieves his telos by self reflection and ethical work but that he is in a position of constant contesting of the self as a 'teacher' and thus works against the notion of a self with a fixed identity.

#### *Andrew's Ethical Work*

The following transcript gives some insight into Andrew's telos of a respected teacher, a teacher who doesn't scream and shout:

I wouldn't say it was difficult, but it was certainly trickier than anything else I've had to negotiate before and kind of made up my mind after about a month and a half, two months that I was not going to be a screamer or a shouter. I wouldn't try to intimidate kids and I wouldn't let student behaviour get the better of me. I'd try not to take it personally. And that's been a challenge even today. Making sure that you don't take student behaviour personally, they're kids ...

The ethical work that Andrew does as a teacher is centred on this teacher ideal that he has; however it would be wrong to assume that there is this 'ideal identity' as a respected teacher to be achieved. While Andrew is working towards his ideal he is also leaving behind other parts of his self such as the belief that being a teacher provides automatic 'respect'. This is why it is important to see this ethical work as a process of continual questioning and reflection and going further, to take action on the self. The interview excerpt below indicates that Andrew does engage in self reflection but it also indicates how Andrew also believes that regulating one's emotions is important to his 'identity' as a teacher:

I had an incident where I got really quite angry about a particular behaviour of a student in that school. I got quite irate. I really feel like I lost my cool. I raised my voice. I felt really terrible afterwards and I felt it actually had the opposite effect of what I'd hope to achieve which was to suggest to that student that the way they had behaved was unacceptable and I didn't want to see it again.

This incident where Andrew's response resulted in a different effect from his intention, unsettled him to such an extent that he 'felt really terrible afterwards' and these feelings were a catalyst for Andrew to engage in deep self-reflection and draw his telos to the surface of his consciousness. Here, Andrew's feelings and emotions are operating as his ethical substance and are being worked upon. This is important to Andrew for, as Foucault argues, 'in our society' it is our feelings that are 'the part of ourselves which is most relevant to our morality' (Foucault, 2000a, p. 111). Through Andrew's work on his emotions he is actively constructing his subjectivity in a moral sense so as not to advertently or inadvertently abuse his position of authority as a teacher by blaming the students, thereby perpetuating a dysfunctional set of power relations.

A further example of Andrew's ethical work on his emotions can be evidenced by the following:

And from that day forward I kind of maintained that, 'Well the way forward for me is to be calm and to try to maintain a level head and to try to be objective about the way I dealt with students'. That was a really influential time for me as a teacher. I've tried to follow that through. So there's been some very early lessons learned.

Andrew's application of self-disciplinary power over his emotions, to ensure that he maintains a calm and objective disposition, helps to ensure that his exercise of power over others is not an abuse of power and is a moral and productive exercise of power in the way it encourages students to also care for their own ethical selves. The same success that Andrew experienced after reflecting and modifying his own ethical position in his first years of teaching, he deliberately endeavours to pass on to his students and expects them to adopt.

In terms of how I try and deal with student behaviour when it goes awry I think, I always try and maintain a level head, I stay calm, I try and regulate the use of pitch and tone in my voice, those types of things. I guess you'd try to convey disappointment if that's what you need to convey to kids in a calm way rather in an affronting way. Although sometimes you still use a little bluff and bluster perhaps. Oh I certainly do anyway but not in an overpowering way. It's always fairly understated I think, and I find that effective. I guess there's certainly been a move towards getting kids to be responsible for their own behaviours if that's where you're coming from. It makes it a little easier to reason, to get kids to think about the reasons for behaving in a particular way and if you can do that I think you are half way along the road to trying to get them to reflect on their behaviour ... And trying to get them to be more reflective, rather than 'Well you've stuffed up, you're going to sit on the verandah (space outside classroom) for a week, you're going to miss out on sport' and all that sort of stuff. That's what they might expect it to be dealt with but to actually to get inside, to unpack it, to be more reflective about it I think is the way to go.

This passage illustrates Andrew's expectations of his students are the same self-discipline as he expects of himself. As Foucault states (2000b, p. 288), 'And the good

ruler is precisely the one who exercises his power as it ought to be exercised, that is, simultaneously exercising his power over himself'. The strategy that Andrew adopts to have his students 'unpack it, to be more reflective' is not one of dominating his students, but rather his use of power is a strategy that can enable his students to gain a degree of 'freedom' that can be found in the capacity to self-manage one's manner of interacting with the world. Andrew's strategy to apply as little domination as possible creates an opportunity for his students to realise and develop their own ethical selves. This is a strategy that is supported in Foucault's statement:

I see nothing wrong in the practice of a person who, knowing more than others in a specific game of truth, tells those others what to do, teaches them, and transmits knowledge and techniques to them. The problem in such practices where power—which is not in itself a bad thing—must inevitably come into play is knowing how to avoid the kind of domination effects where a kid is subjected to the arbitrary and unnecessary authority of a teacher ... I believe that this problem must be framed in terms of rules of law, rational techniques of government and *ethos*, practices of the self and of freedom. (Foucault, 2000b, pp. 298–299, original italics)

Andrew's ethical work affords his students an opportunity for greater freedom to conduct their own 'ethical' work and so self-manage their own behaviours and thus have more potential to be successful in the education system. Andrew's telos that incorporates the notion that teaching should be a position that earns social respect has encouraged him to work towards an ideal through a constant monitoring of his performance of being calm, measured and objective. This ethical work in which Andrew engages with his emotions is one example of how he actively constructs his subjectivity according to a particular telos. The constant self-appraisal and self-monitoring of his own conduct ensures Andrew use of his power as a teacher is morally sound. In a similar way, Ruth, the female principal in this paper works hard to develop her telos of what it means to be a good principal and in so doing she encourages freedom to those who are under her authority to conduct their own ethical work.

#### *Ruth—Female Primary Principal*

Ruth is the principal of an Indigenous community school. She has been principal for three years and is increasingly satisfied with the way things are currently running, as there have been a number of difficulties along the way. The school has approximately 250 students coming from the local town and communities. The history of the town, like a number of Indigenous communities in Australia, is one that has been troubled. It was established as an Aboriginal settlement and many Indigenous people were forcibly removed from their families and settled here. High levels of unemployment and welfare dependency are common, with alcoholism, petrol and paint sniffing, sexual and domestic violence and abuse being issues of great concern to the community. Years of racism and discrimination are issues that the community has had to cope with and it was not so long ago that racial segregation was an issue in this community. An added difficulty for Ruth has been the step up to the principalship of a bigger school with a large casual and part time workforce.



In dealing with these complex, long-term issues, Ruth's telos of a good principal is one in which she is able to manage and even hide her emotions. Ruth actively constructs a particular subjectivity that is intimately linked to being a white, female principal of an Indigenous school, and caring for the self is tied in with a public perception that the principal needs to be seen to be calm, measured and always in control. As she states:

I think it's important that you're fairly unflappable and steady because when all hell's breaking loose, people rely on you to steady the ship. If you're someone who gets carried away with the highs and lows of the situation then you're probably not of a lot of benefit. I mean it's good to be passionate about stuff but it's important that you can be calm in a storm and you have to be confident in your own ability and your own judgements.

In this way, Ruth's emotions can be seen as a form of ethical substance and the managing and even hiding of her emotions is a form of elaboration, or ethical work that she does to construct a particular vision of what a good principal should be. In these circumstances Ruth's modes of subjection come in the form of community opinion and expectations as well as documents from government departments outlining leadership competencies and capabilities (Education Queensland, 1997, 2006). These documents, like many other similar documents in Australia and Western nations, emphasise a leadership discourse that is primarily instrumentalist in nature (Land, 1998). That is, they are filled with a range of best practice managerial competencies that operate as a disciplined subjectivity in the form of designer leadership (Gronn, 2003). For example, the *Leadership Matters* technical document cites lists of qualities and capabilities of school principals to include: courage, tough mindedness, intuition, passion, self-confidence, optimism and wisdom (Education Queensland, 2005, p. 14).

School leadership is undoubtedly an emotion filled activity and how school principals deal with and manage their emotions is an area that is often neglected in much of the literature on educational leadership (Sachs & Blackmore, 1998). The emotional demands placed on school principals by staff, students, parents, members of the community, peers and governmental and school bodies can be enormous. The multiple and often competing demands means that school principals are expected to cope in more and more efficient and effective ways. Ruth has stated that in order to cope, she does significant work outside of school hours and frequently at home. As a result, she recognises that the split between her personal and professional life can become blurred (Sachs & Blackmore, 1998). This resulting emotional burden placed on Ruth can play a significant role in her work practices and how she self regulates and monitors her emotions and behaviour at school. As Beatty argues (2007), it is necessary for the principal to maintain a focus on their daily emotional 'attunements' to be effective as a principal and that it is this process that is important to examine, not necessarily just the final 'product'.

Importantly, Ruth noted how she self-disciplines her behaviour and emotions to be seen to be 'in control', particularly in times of stress and conflict. For example, the perception that the principal is 'in control' is one that Ruth has worked hard to maintain, in the face of criticism from some parts of the local community, and this acts as a mode of subjection upon her ethical self:

I've come in here and I've purposefully kept up the façade because I was really winging it for the skill levels in some areas, in some things I felt quite confident like curriculum, kids and behaviour but for some of the people management I've left the façade up, I'm learning all the time, kind of like the duck looking serene but paddling like hell underneath. Even some of the parent stuff, where you've got cranky parents, I haven't had cranky parents like this for years so you're learning on the run with some of those things but people needed me to look calm and in charge. I've purposely had that armour around me to a degree but it was a conscious decision to keep that façade there to serve a purpose.

Noteworthy points here include how Ruth uses phrases like 'keeping up the façade' and 'looking calm and in charge' and 'the duck looking serene but paddling like hell underneath'. These types of statements indicate that Ruth believes that to let one's emotions be visible is linked to losing one's professionalism and being seen to display weakness. This is an example of the ethical work she does on herself in order to become what she considers the telos of a 'good principal'. This type of belief of controlling one's emotions is consistent with other research into the emotions of female administrators (Sachs & Blackmore, 1998). The ways in which school principals respond to the demands of the job, and the expectations of principals by their respective local communities can sometimes be difficult for a female. For example, Ruth explains:

Sometimes you have got to have this front of Ruth the principal in the community, to have this persona you have to hold and that is a bit of a mismatch sometimes. At my last school they said to me 'Oh miss you don't wear principal's clothes!' cause they had only had blokes, and I said 'what are they?' and they said 'those long socks miss and those leather shoes'. So they had a picture of what a principal is, the same as the people do here. I think there is still this charismatic leader type of person that they think a principal should take.

To display emotions in the workplace for women is often seen as weak and non-rational and portrays women leaders as vulnerable (Sachs & Blackmore, 1998). This self-moderating of one's emotions is a mode of subjection which is even specifically spelled out as necessary for school principals in documents such as *Leadership Matters* (Education Queensland, 2006) which states principals need to be 'emotionally mature' and remain calm in challenging and complex situations' (2006, p. 2).

It is Ruth's self-regulation of her emotions that is an important aspect to becoming an ethical educator, as she explains:

You need to be steady when all hell's breaking loose, you've got kids going mad, staff arguing with each other, you need to be steady so, underneath you might have a bit of turmoil happening, plus you are dealing with your confidence in your own ability to deal with this. A lot of the time you don't have the opportunity or time to be able to ring people for advice, if you've got parents coming up, you've got a teacher here, kids upset, and they're all here together, you don't get the time to say 'well how will I deal with this?' You need to be

aware of your emotions and really alert to ‘yes I feel like crap because I just got hammered over this’ and try and step back and see the bigger picture and keep the vision.

Clearly, though, Ruth’s engagement with modes of subjection such as the government documents or community pressures have been an important aspect in her ethical work in producing forms of elaboration. It is apparent that Ruth perceives an aspect of good leadership is about keeping her emotions invisible. As noted previously, Foucault argues, in order to govern others one must be able to govern one’s self (Foucault, 2000b). We would add that it is also important to *be seen* to be able to govern one’s self. In addition to her self-regulation of emotions, Ruth regulates her behaviour and work practices according to criteria and expectations set by the local community. These modes of subjection upon which Ruth acts in relation to the languages, criteria and techniques available to her are crucial to her subjectivity and ethical formation. It is this symbiotic relationship between technologies of subjectivity and techniques of the self that is important in terms of management of the self (Rose, 1999, p. 11). Educators like Ruth need to develop a telos that will hold true even in the most difficult circumstances. This work can be done through an explicit and continual development of an ‘ethical self’.

## **Conclusion**

In this paper we have explored the issue of the work one does on one’s self to become an ethical professional. In current times of increasing standardisation and bureaucratisation of schools and the teaching profession, it is important to both recognise and understand the finer practices of becoming a teacher and a principal. More specifically, we have used Foucault’s ethical framework to provide a way to understand how emotions can be portrayed as a site for building an ethical self. Both the principal and the teacher in this paper have outlined how they have worked on their emotions to become the professional educator they desire to be. We have taken the notion of emotions as their ethical substance as the aspect of themselves that they work upon. Andrew expressed his telos as being a respected teacher, while Ruth wanted her telos of a good principal to be concerned with keeping her emotions in check. Clearly these aspects are not the only parts of these two educators’ telos, however, the aspects selected for this paper do provide points for comparison. We then analysed how the modes of subjection operate for Ruth and Andrew in the form of community relations and expectations, relationships with staff and students, and government policies. The forms of elaboration, or work on the self that Ruth and Andrew undertake involve conscious acts to keep one’s emotions invisible and/or in check in times of stress, either in the classroom or in relations with staff, parents and students.

It is important to remember that there is a range of normalising power relations at play for educators. However, through using Foucault’s ethical dimensions it becomes possible to see how both the teacher and principal in this paper actively work with and against these normalisations to construct their ethical selves. On both counts their emotions are a place of their self-construction where they labour towards the telos they wish to achieve. Through the participants’ self reflections presented here, it is possible to see how

these individuals govern themselves in ways that indicate a well thought out and deliberate ethical base, that is continually redefined through reflective practices. We believe, the process of an educator identifying their own telos, or the type of professional vision they have for themselves and then actively working on their emotions and feelings when challenges present is critically important work. An effective educator must do this as it can open spaces for those whom they are educating to do their own ethical work.

## References

- Beatty, B. (2000a) The Emotions of Educational Leadership: Breaking the silence, *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 3:4, pp. 331–357.
- Beatty, B. (2000b) The Paradox of Emotion and Educational Leadership. Keynote address presented at the British Educational Administration and Management Annual Conference, Bristol, United Kingdom, 22–24 September.
- Beatty, B. (2002) Emotional Epistemologies and Educational Leadership: A conceptual framework. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA, 1–5 April.
- Beatty, B. (2007) Going Through the Emotions: Leadership that gets to the heart of school renewal, *Australian Journal of Education*, 51:3, pp. 328–340.
- Bernauer, J. W. & Mahon, M. (2005) Michel Foucault's Ethical Imagination, in: G. Gutting (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (New York, Cambridge University Press).
- Britzman, D. (1994) Is There a Problem with Knowing Thyself? Towards a poststructuralist view of teacher identity, in: T. Shanahan (ed.), *Teachers Thinking, Teachers Knowing: Reflections on literacy and language education* (Urbana, IL, National Council of Teachers of English Press).
- Christie, P. (2005a) Towards an Ethics of Engagement in Education in Global Times, *Australian Journal of Education*, 49:3, pp. 238–250.
- Christie, P. (2005b) Education for an Ethical Imagination, *Social Alternatives*, 24:4, pp. 39–44.
- Clarke, M. (2008) The Ethico-politics of Teacher Identity, *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 41:2, pp. 185–200.
- Cole, A. & Knowles, J. (2001) *Lives in Context: The art of life history research* (Lanham, MD, AltaMira Press).
- Davies, B. (2006) Subjectification: The relevance of Butler's analysis for education, *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 27:4, pp. 425–438.
- Davidson, A. I. (2005) Ethics as Ascetics, in: G. Gutting (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (New York, Cambridge University Press).
- Dean, M. (1999) *Governmentality: Power and rule in modern society* (London, Sage).
- Drudy, S., Martin, M., Woods, M. & O'Flynn, J. (2005) *Men and the Classroom: Gender imbalances in teaching* (London, Routledge Falmer).
- Education Queensland (1997) *Standards Framework for Leaders* (Brisbane, The State of Queensland Department of Education).
- Education Queensland (2005) *Leadership Matters: Leadership Capabilities for Education Queensland Principals Technical Paper* (Brisbane, Queensland Government: Department of Education and the Arts).
- Education Queensland (2006) *Leadership Matters: Leadership Capabilities for Education Queensland Principals* (Brisbane, Queensland Government: Department of Education and the Arts).
- Foucault, M. (1992) *The Use of Pleasure: The history of sexuality Vol. 2* (Harmondsworth, Penguin).
- Foucault, M. (2000a) On the Genealogy of Ethics, in: P. Rabinow (ed.), *Ethics: Subjectivity and truth: The essential works of Foucault 1954–1984, Volume 1* (Harmondsworth, Penguin).
- Foucault, M. (2000b) The Ethics of the Concern for Self as a Practice of Freedom, in: P. Rabinow (ed.), *Ethics: Subjectivity and truth: The essential works of Foucault 1954–1984, Volume 1* (Harmondsworth, Penguin).

- Foucault, M. (2005) *The Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the Collège de France 1981–1982* (New York, Picador).
- Gee, J. P. (2000) Identity as an Analytic Lens for Research in Education, *Review of Research in Education*, 25, pp. 99–125.
- Gronn, P. (2003) Leadership: Who needs it?, *School Leadership and Management*, 23:3, pp. 267–290.
- Hall, S. (1997) Who Needs Identity?, in: S. Hall & P. D. Gay (eds), *Questions of Cultural Identity*. (Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage), pp. 1–17.
- Harding, J. & Pribham, E. D. (2004) Losing Our Cool? Following Williams and Grossberg on emotions, *Cultural Studies*, 18:6, pp. 863–883.
- Hargreaves, A. (2000) Mixed Emotions: Teachers' perceptions of their interactions with students, *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 16, pp. 811–826.
- Hargreaves, A. (2001) Emotional Geographies of Teaching, *Teachers College Record*, 103:6, pp. 1056–1080.
- Hargreaves, A. (2004) Inclusive and Exclusive Educational Change: Emotional responses of teachers and implications for leadership, *School Leadership & Management*, 24:2, pp. 287–309.
- Infinito, J. (2003a) Ethical Self-formation: A look at the later Foucault, *Educational Theory*, 53:2, pp. 155–171.
- Infinito, J. (2003b) Jane Elliott meets Foucault: The formation of ethical identities in the classroom, *Journal of Moral Education*, 32:1, pp. 67–76.
- Land, R. (1998) An Ethical Analysis of Leadership Competence for a Competitive Educational Market, in: L. Ehrlich & J. Knight (eds), *Leadership in Crisis? Restructuring Principled Practice* (Flaxton, QLD, Post Pressed).
- Mills, M. (2004) Male Teachers, Homophobia, Misogyny and Teacher Education, *Teaching Education*, 15:1, pp. 27–39.
- Moss, J. (ed.) (1998) *The Later Foucault: Politics and philosophy* (London, Sage).
- O'Farrell, C. (2005) *Michel Foucault* (London, Sage).
- O'Leary, T. (2002) *Foucault and the Art of Ethics* (London, Continuum).
- Peters, M. (2003) Truth-telling as an Educational Practice of the Self: Foucault, *Parrhesia* and the ethics of subjectivity, *Oxford Review of Education*, 29:2, pp. 207–223.
- Rose, N. (1999) *Powers of Freedom: Reframing political thought* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press).
- Sachs, J. & Blackmore, J. (1998) You Never Show You Can't Cope: Women in school leadership roles managing their emotions, *Gender and Education*, 10:3, pp. 265–279.
- Skelton, C. (2001) *Schooling the Boys: Masculinities and primary education* (Buckingham, Open University Press).
- Smith, J. (2004) *Male Primary Teachers: Disadvantaged or advantaged?* Paper presented at the Australian Association for Research in Education Conference, Melbourne. Accessed from <http://www.aare.edu.au/04pap/smi04051.pdf>. Accessed 25 July 2007.
- Wenger, E. (1998) *Communities Of Practice: Learning, meaning and identity* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press).
- Williams, C. (1995) *Still a Man's World: Men who do women's work* (Berkeley, CA, University of California Press).
- Zembylas, M. (2002) Constructing Genealogies of Teachers' Emotions in Science Teaching, *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, 39:1, pp. 79–103.
- Zembylas, M. (2003a) Interrogating 'Teacher Identity': Emotion, resistance, and self-formation, *Educational Theory*, 53:1, pp. 107–127.
- Zembylas, M. (2003b) Emotions and Teacher Identity: A poststructural perspective, *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, 9:3, pp. 213–237.
- Zembylas, M. (2003c) Caring for Teacher Emotion: Reflections on teacher self-development, *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 22, pp. 103–125.
- Zorn, D. & Boler, M. (2007) Rethinking Emotions and Educational Leadership, *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 10:2, pp. 137–151.