TEACHER DIGNITY IN THE UNITED STATES: A HISTORICAL DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

Diana Schergin

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TEACHER DIGNITY IN THE UNITED STATES: A HISTORICAL DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

By

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A DISSERTATION

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Major: Educational Administration

Under the Supervision of Dr. Kay A. Keiser

Omaha, Nebraska

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ABSTRACT

TEACHER DIGNITY IN THE UNITED STATES: A HISTORICAL DOCUMENT

ANALYSIS, Dissertation
Diana Schergin, Ed.D.
University of Nebraska, 2023
Advisor: Dr. Kay A. Keiser

Teacher dignity has been a topic of discussion among teachers and in society since the inception of schools in the United States. Yet even as the word “dignity” is referenced by educators, administrators, and community members, the term lacks clarity in understanding. As schools and society seek to understand the problem of the retention and recruitment of qualified teachers in the United States, this study provides a lens to look at patterns over time that represent the perspectives of teachers concerning their dignity.

This study focused on the semantic use of teacher dignity from the inception of schools in the United States. The study used a constructivist lens coupled with historical materialism to decipher patterns among sources on education. Keyword analysis was used to select texts for the study. The Attride-Stirling method is used to decipher themes among disparate sources that are organized by decade. Finally, a theme-based matrix was developed to help define the concept of teacher dignity. In this study, teacher dignity in the United States becomes situated within three organizing themes: the dignity of work (defined according to hygiene factors), teacher professionalism, and the character traits of teachers. The study of teacher dignity in the United States provided an example of how word use changes over time and how it can be used to understand the condition of dignity.
in schools for teachers.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In the 1905 play, “Man and Superman,” George Bernard Shaw declares, “Those who can, do; those who can’t, teach.” Bernard Shaw’s famous statement unwittingly created over a century of controversy surrounding those who choose to dedicate their professional lives to teaching (Free, 2021; Strontium, 2020). Teachers are trained to engage students actively in learning, differentiate learning to meet the needs of students at a variety of levels, meet state educational outcomes, maintain a well-managed classroom, and keep up-to-date academic records (Danielson, 2008; Marzano & Toth, 2013). In addition to their formal responsibilities, teachers are charged with identifying substance abuse and trauma and to respond appropriately, react to health emergencies including allergies and seizures, stop bleeding in the event of a school shooting or a battle with playground equipment, know what to do when they encounter vomit and other bodily substances, know when and how to break up fights, effectively communicate with families, shift quickly between online and in-person models of teaching, adapt to countless school directives, and treat every student with dignity. Although teachers often refer to themselves as “professionals,” to many, this status is contestable.

By international standards, the teaching profession in the United States has widely incorporated many qualities associated with teacher dignity-- teacher certification that includes a four-year bachelor’s degree in education, sufficient scores on Praxis exams, and continued professional development. Despite these attributes, teacher retention continues to be problematic. In North Carolina, for example, Hamm (2018) attributes teacher attrition and retention problems with the “death” of “The Art of Education” and
diminishing dignity with Neoliberal policies like “No Child Left Behind” (NCLB) and “Race to the Top.” Hamm has further identified problems with retention and attrition as associated with changes in teacher dignity brought about by policy changes. Accordingly, student-driven outcomes, accountability to efficiently produce these outcomes, and lack of instructional tools, training, teachers, salaries, benefits are associated with diminished teacher dignity (Hamm, 2018).

Without a comprehensive understanding of how to define teacher dignity, it is difficult to know what policies, events, and aptitudes have led to changes in perceptions and if it is indeed these events that have led to a crisis in the perceived dignity of the teacher. While the dignity of the teacher in the United States has been editorialized, a subject of public concern, and the topic of break-room conversation, it continues to lack historical and legal definition. In the void left by lack of definition and research, discussion about both the positive and potentially negative ramifications of protecting teacher dignity lay untouched.

Theoretical Framework.

When using terms for abstract ideas like freedom, love or dignity, there is usually a shared understanding of what the terms mean. But when there is misunderstanding, confusion and conflict arise. Therefore, studying how the use of a term changes over time can reflect the values and progress of society as the term evolves. As words develop, they highlight not only what factors make up the concept, but how that concept is applied in that time.

When people communicate, they intentionally select words that they think will most “expressively” and “efficiently” communicate their meaning. (65). Looking at the
ways words are cognized to convey meaning can provide important information about semantic changes and historical causes for changes in word usage (Blank, 1999). “Changes in our conception of the world can also lead to the transformation of an already existing complex conceptual system by the loss of one or more concepts, by shifting concepts or by introducing new ones” (Blank, 1999, p. 72). In studying the concept of dignity, this study bases this idea on the personal values and goals of the teacher. Notably, the role of the teacher is situated within a social structure—the school. As such, teacher dignity comes to embrace the personal qualities, needs, and requirements of the teacher as a human existing within a school system in the United States. Moreover, word use and words themselves change over time and reflect society’s values. As such, a study on the term teacher dignity in the United States lends valuable insight into the teacher’s ability to function within school systems over time.

**Human Dignity in United States Constitutional Law.**

While dignity is not explicitly mentioned in the United States Constitution, it is implied in Supreme Court decisions (Glensy, 2011; Rao, 2007) and referenced through the Social Contract Theory: “[H]uman worth and dignity….requires more of the state than to merely leave people alone[;]…the state requires positive state action to provide programs and services to improve the human condition” (p. 107-108). Among legal scholars, dignity is defined as simply the right to be respected (Alexander & Alexander, 2001).

Despite the absence of the word “dignity” in constitutional documents, judges have created a precedent for its inclusion and considerations in legal decisions. (Shulztiner & Carmi, 2014). During the nineteenth century and the first half of the
twentieth century, dignity is regarded as a principle affecting institutions and political office holders (Rao, 2007). The dignity of governmental offices, states, and the nation (as secured in its sovereignty from other countries) is considered key to protecting individual rights. (Madison, 1788).

While the Supreme Court references dignity before 1945, it is increasingly regarded after that time (Henry, 2011). The groundbreaking case that sets a precedent for individual dignity appears in *The United States is Lawrence v. Texas* (2003) (Glensy, 2011). In the Court’s decision, they cite “personal autonomy and dignity” as central to liberties protected by the Fourteenth Amendment. As such, “…matters involving the most intimate and personal choices a person may make in a lifetime, central to personal dignity” are interpreted as being protected by U.S. Constitutional law and are tied to human dignity issues (Glensy, 2011). While *Lawrence* represents the most transparent application of dignity by the United States Supreme Court, it did not present a framework for determining cases involving dignity. To date, decisions including the application of human dignity largely depend on “…the subjective view of the existing Justices” (Glensy, 2011, p.243).

To date, decisions including the application of human dignity largely depend on countries with modern constitutions. Instead of establishing a hierarchy of values, the United States Constitution primarily focuses on protecting individual rights, liberties, and freedoms. This enables individuals to “pursue their personal values and goals, rather than adhere to a particular social order” (Glensy, 2011, p. 246). In many countries, where dignity is addressed in their constitutional decisions, judges are compelled to respond to moral issues that affect majoritarian values in their decisions. Conversely, in the United
States, courts keep a rights-based perspective central to judicial decision-making. Within
the United States, Puerto Rico and Montana have adopted the idea of human dignity in
their state constitutions (Jackson, 2004).

Historically, the United States was founded upon the idea that individuals’ rights
are protected against majoritarian interests. As such, individual rights supersede
majoritarian interests, political climate, and even what may be considered “moral”
behavior (Glensy, 2011). To date, “teacher dignity,” as such, is not addressed directly by
the United States Supreme Court.

**Issues Concerning Teacher Dignity.**

While there is not a unified body of research regarding teacher dignity, there are
several issues that concern and affect teachers that may pertain to teacher dignity. Over
time, teachers’ salaries and social prestige have decreased (Boyle 2004; Strauss, 2017).
Boyle (2004) attributes this phenomenon to increasing numbers of female teachers in the
classroom. When common schools first opened, there weren’t enough men to fill teaching
positions, so reformers turned to women claiming that their ability to nurture and work
for one-third of the salary made them a viable option. Further, it eventually became
acceptable to enter the profession as a segue to administrative positions.

Others point to policymakers who seek to exercise increasing control over the
classroom as causing this shift (Harness, 2012; Ingersol & Collins, 2018; Strauss 2017).
This argument suggests that the professional responsibilities of teachers have changed
due to legislation such as “No Child Left Behind” and “Race to the Top” as well as new
managerial techniques that require less autonomy and more compliance with bureaucratic
structures among teachers (Brass & Holloway, 2019)
Still, others question the professionality of a career that is considered “low
demand” --short workdays, free weekends, and does not require workers to work during
the summer (Bartlett, 2004; Vilson, 2015). Ingersol et al. (2018) deemed the profession
of teaching as an at best “semi-profession” also falling short in the areas of prestige and
compensation. Andreas Schleicher, a supervisor for an international achievement test,
told the New York Times in an interview: ‘Teaching in the U.S. is unfortunately no
longer a high-status occupation’....despite the characterization of some that teaching is an
easy job, with short hours and summers off; the fact is that successful, dedicated teachers
in the U.S. work long hours for little and, in many cases, insufficient support from their
leadership” (Dillon, 2011, para 3).

While policy directives in the United States continually focus on raising rates of
student achievement, comparatively, as a country, the teaching profession has failed to
recruit high performing college graduates to its ranks, making little effort to provide
support for teachers while in the classroom, or to raise respect for the profession (Dillon,
2011). Although failing to address teacher dignity directly, researchers have dealt with
several areas of concern that point to the issues educators face that are likely to affect
their professional and personal dignity.

At the same time that teachers’ professionalism has come into question, it has
become popular to assert that educators are “called” to teach. Problematically, Strauss
(2017) deems the designation of being “called to teach” a way of saying that teachers are
predestined or born to teach; conversely, if this notion is accurate, teachers are not
expected to engage in rigorous professional training beyond the subject matter being
taught. The profession of education has, in the eyes of many, lost the designation of a
profession. At the same time, teachers are being asked to perform more duties at higher levels of proficiency than ever before.

As societal needs have evolved, the role of the teacher has become more demanding. Foremost is increasing reliance on assessment data. Implementation of state standards has resulted in changes to school curricula and necessitated changes in teaching methodologies (Kedzior & Fifield, 2004; Klieger & Yakobovitch, 2012; Marrongelle et al., 2013). Changes in standards for student outcomes have resulted in new systems for teacher evaluation which in some states has tied teacher performance to student performance (Braun, 2005; Darling-Hammond et al., 2012; Milanowski, 2004; Will, 2020). Even when stepped back, teacher perception of the pressure created through these systems and reforms has remained (Glazer, 2018; Will, 2020).

The emergence of technology as a tool in the classroom has also changed teachers’ roles and responsibilities. In addition to forcing teachers to reevaluate how to best engage students, teachers now must manage increasing student distractions (Attia et al., 2017; Goundar; 2014), that have contributed to an influx of online bullying (Bradshaw et al., 2015; Kowalski & Limber, 2007; Mark & Ratcliffe, 2011). While Mahanoy Area School District v. B.L (2021) established that a student’s private speech on electronic devices outside of school is usually under the responsibility of a parent, not the school, teachers continue to struggle to navigate the presence of new social and political issues in schools.

Schools (and teachers) are expected to respond appropriately when social changes and political pressures emerge, even when unprecedented. Recently, for example, conflict emerged over mask-wearing during the Covid 19 pandemic between schools and
state governments, parents and schools, teachers and schools, and teachers and students (Koon et al., 2021; Mervosh & Heyward, 2021; Pendo et al., 2020). At the same time teachers are expected to navigate pandemic politics, critical race theory, and gender identity issues have become increasingly prevalent in schools (Mervosh & Heyward, 2021). These struggles are widely apparent in the case of a transgender student, Gavin Grimm, who challenged the school’s decision to give him an alternative private bathroom—denying him access to the men’s restroom (Gloucester County School Board v. G.G., 2021). Cases like that of Grimm, whom the Court supported, leave teachers conflicted as to whether or not they are navigating new political and social movements appropriately.

Mental health issues among students have become spotlighted. With increased suicide rates among adolescents, schools (and teachers) have been forced to respond to this and other mental health crisis (Shannonhouse et al., 2017; Singer, 2017; Will, 2020). Increased incidence of school shootings and active shooter drills have created pressure on teachers to respond to trauma and active incidents of school violence (Beland & Kim, 2016; Daniels et al., 2007; Will, 2020). To date, Covid19 has exacerbated mental health issues as daily routines are disrupted and student stress levels, anxiety, and depression have increased (Chaturvedi et al., 2021).

Similarly, teaching is an emotionally and physically demanding profession. The emotional demands of teaching are well documented (; Henry et al., 2003; Isenbarger & Zembylas, 2006; Khan et al., 2014; Tuxford & Bradley, 2015). Ninety-four percent of teachers report being victimized by students (McMahon et al., 2014) This is especially prevalent among special education teachers (Williams et al., 2018). Incidents of students
screaming at teachers is common (Rosales, 2019) while physical assault directed toward teachers is on the rise (Rosales, 2019; Will, 2018). While policymakers and administrators quickly point to students with emotional problems as those being involved in teacher assaults, research suggests that many incidents involve students without such problems (Rosales, 2019). Rosales (2019) explains why the literature on violence against teachers is limited: “Many do not report assaults from students for fear of retribution from administrators.”

American school districts are struggling to recruit and retain teachers. Between 2008 and 2016, enrollment in teacher preparation programs went down by 37.8% with total completers down by 27.4% (Garcia & Weiss, 2019). As fewer people express interest in teaching, teacher attrition and teacher movers between districts and out of the profession are at an all-time high. Between 2011-2012 and 2012-2013, the percentage of teachers leaving the profession was highest among those with at least 25 years of experience, with districts losing an average of 8% of teachers per year and another eight percent moving to other districts (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015). Two-thirds of teachers’ report being burnt out in 2022 and 55% reported that they thought they would leave the profession earlier than originally planned leaving are for reasons other than retirement (Darling-Hammond, 2022). This marks a key difference from countries such as Singapore and Finland, where teacher attrition rates have been stable for the last decade at between three and four percent per year (Sutcher et al., 2019).

Teacher shortages amplify this problem. Even as districts try to reinstate teaching positions lost in the great recession of 2014, the number of entrants and re-entrants into the teaching profession has declined (Sutcher et al., 2016). The Covid19 pandemic has
only intensified this problem. At the end of the 2020-2021 school year, 1 in 6 teachers was considering leaving the profession, up from 1 in 4 before the pandemic. Data also indicates that 32% of teachers said that the pandemic had caused them to plan to leave the teaching profession earlier than anticipated (Walker, 2021). For example, the likelihood of teacher shortages in the future was amplified by teacher shortages in Detroit, Michigan, for the 2021-2022 school year. Not only did the district see more teachers quitting in the middle of the school year, but also increases in teacher stress and retirement among those who could qualify at the end of the school year (Russell, 2021; Tutman & Dado, 2021).

There are significant problems with teacher retention, attrition, and recruitment in the United States. There is compelling evidence that teachers leave for other jobs where they hope to feel they will be more valued. Little research has been conducted about teachers’ perceptions or problems regarding the teacher’s dignity in the United States.

**Purpose of the Study.**

There are different ways to look at the problem of teacher dignity. Ideas about concepts like teacher dignity develop over time. One way to examine teacher dignity is through a historical study of the terms used. The purpose of this thematic analysis is to explore perceptions of teacher dignity over time in the United States. With clearer definitions about what dignity means about professional educators, there can be greater clarity about the effects that policies have on teacher’s perceptions of dignity. To better understand the definitions within this process, the following research question has been constructed: What does teacher dignity mean in the United States?
Research Design.

Qualitative research recognizes the role of an individual observer of life events as a source of data. Through the tools of qualitative research, investigators gain an understanding of patterns of conduct and social processes (Denzin, 2008). A qualitative research design provides a methodological basis for the treatment of data, procedures to ensure the ethical treatment of participants, transparency in the research process, and a way of validating the potential biases in the data collected (Savin-Baden & Howell-Major, 2013).

Research design must be congruent with the type of documents and data collected (Savin-Baden & Howell-Major, 2013). Most publications discussing teacher dignity are first-person accounts of teachers, educational leaders, or community members. These articles are historically constructed from a unique educational context. When dignity is examined in context to how it is used and the time frame in which it was written, researchers can glean important insights into teacher perceptions of dignity.

Qualitative thematic analysis is associated with textual analysis (Brooks & King, 2012). Effective thematic analysis requires that the researcher make sense of data, provide analysis about the patterning of responses, and identify themes that emerge across the data set. Missing any of these points is problematic (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis is widely known for its flexibility and adaptability to a variety of epistemological and ontological beliefs and data types (Guest et al., 2013; King & Brooks, 2021; Terry et al., 2017).

Assumptions.

Qualitative researchers seek to understand the complexity inherent in humanity by
understanding the social world. Part of the qualitative researchers aim is to understand
the individual and their subjective self which includes their place in the world and their
understanding of it. This type of research comes with certain limitations. Anytime a
qualitative researcher collects data, they risk imposing their own personal
constructions. That is why qualitative researchers need to make sure that the chosen
approach, tools, and analytical framework are appropriate to the object of inquiry. It is
essential that research design is linked to the question and to the methodological
approaches for collecting the data (Levitt et al., 2018; Savin-Baden & Howell-Major,
2013).

**Role of the Researcher.**

Teacher dignity as a concept fascinated me after a brief introduction in School
Law. A quick look at the research seemed to suggest that the topic had been largely
overlooked in the United States. Furthermore, there seemed to be confusion about what
dignity meant—even among legal scholars.

At the same time that I was enrolled in School Law, events and studies released
guided me toward the topic of teacher dignity. In a 2018 report by the National Center
for Education Statistics, 10 percent of public school teachers report being threatened by
students and 6% physically attacked. These numbers have been on a steady increase
since the 2003-2004 school year. It is not uncommon to hear stories of teachers being
verbally attacked or physically assaulted including teachers being hit, strangled, whipped,
bit, spit at, and having objects thrown at them.

Case studies also reveal the inadequacies of state statutes to protect teacher rights.

In the fall of 2016, a first-year teacher at Westside High School in Omaha
Nebraska with extensive experience as a chef, tasted a tainted turnover that contained the semen of two of her students--a third student changed his mind at the last moment. I was a master mentor at the high school at the time. The event was unprecedented. Legally, the school was limited. There was no precedent for a teacher being shown such blatant disrespect in this manner. Eventually, two of the students returned to school. Staff was informed that students had a legal right to a public education. Miraculously, the teacher did not quit. She was told that after an initial suspension from students taking culinary arts classes, she may have to teach them in the future. As time went on, this event played heavily on me and would eventually and play a significant role in deciding to study the topic of “teacher dignity” further.

When starting a literature review on teacher dignity, a great struggle emerged. There were legal sources on dignity and international sources on teacher dignity, but research in the United States was limited to the personal accounts of individuals. Honestly, I started my study in an attempt to create a review of the literature.

While majoring in history and philosophy during my bachelor’s degree, I have had experience working with historical documents and analysis using different thought paradigms. My background in historical research took over as I collected what seemed to be an endless pile of articles, persons, and artifacts documenting important tidbits of information stretching from before the common school to modern times. Out of necessity and in order to make sense of it all, I decided to organize this information by decade. As I started to see patterns and perceptions of teacher dignity change over different historical eras, I began to ask why. I soon discovered that there were legitimate political, social,
and institutional changes within the field of education that occurred during these times and that the perceptions of teachers' dignity was wavering. What started as a literature review, emerged as a study. Although far from complete, what started as a literature review now had the potential to become a study.

**Significance of the Study.**

While the teacher’s dignity has been editorialized, a subject of public concern, and the topic of break-room conversations, teacher dignity in the United States continues to lack historical and legal definition. As society has undergone significant social changes, so to has its perspective of teacher dignity. To some, the dignified teacher is a revered social model; to others, the teacher's dignity is considered a faux pas.

The role of my dissertation over teacher dignity is to provide foundational research from which a conversation can start (and future research be conducted) about teacher dignity and the constitutional protections for teachers in the field of education. The stakes of this research are high.

Although teacher dignity has not been the center of academic research, the literature suggests that several issues contribute to an exodus of qualified individuals from the field of education in the United States. High rates of teacher attrition have created an increased demand for new, highly qualified teachers (Barnes et al., 2007).

While some attrition is natural, teacher dissatisfaction is cited by 55% of those who leave the profession and 66% of teachers who leave one school to teach at another (Carver-Thomas & Darling Hammond, 2017). As teacher attrition rates and mobility increase, school districts face increasing financial losses averaging $20,000 per teacher who leaves the school (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017).
Understanding the teacher’s perception of dignity during different historical eras as it pertains to perceptions of dignity may provide insight into the experiences that validate or diminish a teacher’s perceived dignity and choice to enter, stay in, or leave the profession. While this study is philosophical in nature, historical patterns in perception of dignity provides valuable points for understanding why the status of the teacher is often at odds with the concept of a professional. Patterns in the behaviors of administrators coupled with the perception of the teacher’s dignity provide predictable outcomes for decisions made at the district level and their potential impact on teachers. Moreover, the foundations of teacher dignity provide valuable information into how dignity enhancing school systems function, appropriate expectations and limitation for teachers, and an understanding of why qualified individuals choose not to enter the field of education or decide to leave it.

A broader study of changes in teacher dignity over time is needed to: 1) see if teacher definitions of dignity are congruent with legal definitions of dignity in the United States; 2) provide context about teacher perceptions of the occupation of teaching to their perceived basic human rights; and 3) seek a definition of what teacher's consider dignity and how that definition has changed over time. This study may glean insight into the impact of policymakers, administrative leadership, and societal expectations on the decision of educators to enter, stay or leave the profession.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The topic of teacher dignity is cloaked within many different terms: attrition, retention, violence, professionalism, qualifications, academic freedom, and even selfishness. The use of the term dignity in conjunction with teacher treatment as discussed in various articles appears to change over time. This literature review provides an overview of articles, papers, and dissertations that have addressed the topic of teacher dignity. As a topic of academic inquiry, teacher dignity is situated in a complex reality that involves historical perceptions, educational policy, and legal statutes. The topic also creates a natural juxtaposition with literature from an international perception, where the topic has been studied more extensively.

In the United States, changes in education policy and its influence on student learning is well documented (Amrein & Berliner, 2002; Aydin et al., 2017; Hazi & Rucinski, 2009). Similarly, employment qualifications and changes in the demographics of teachers, including the feminization of the teaching profession, have been examined (Boyle, 2004; Brumberg, 1983; Strober & Gordon, 1986). Student dignity, as a topic of academic research, has also gained prominence (Flensner & Von der Lippe, 2019; Goodman & Cook, 2019; Hill & Tollerud, 1996). However, literature on the topic of teacher dignity as such is limited in the United States.

American educators have multi-faceted responsibilities while maintaining the prestige and dignity of the profession (Ilaltdinova et al., 2017). Hamm (2018) attributes teacher attrition and retention problems with the "death" of "The Art of Education" and diminishing dignity among North Carolina teachers with Neoliberal policies like “No
Child Left Behind” (NCLB) and “Race to the Top.” Hamm also attributes problems with teacher retention and attrition associated with changes in teacher dignity are brought about by policy changes. Student-driven outcomes, accountability to efficiently produce student outcomes, and lack of stuff (instructional tools, training, teachers, salaries, benefits, etc.) are associated with diminished teacher dignity (Hamm, 2018).

**Dignity: The United States and International Perspectives.**

While the literature on teacher dignity is limited, the concept of dignity is studied within law and international peacekeeping. Human dignity is generally considered a value that applies to all people in common (Alexander & Alexander 2012; Henry 2011). Because the two parts of the research question (teacher and dignity) are intertwined, a brief review of literature on dignity from a legal and constitutional perspective is needed.

**Dignity in historical philosophy.**

The tradition of discussing the human right of dignity traces back to ancient times. Cicero described the Roman ideal of dignity as being derived from man's ability to use logic and reason. Since few men possessed the ability to exhibit these qualities at an elite level, social hierarchy and rank became intertwined with the concept of dignity. During the Renaissance, this view changed to encompass a moral view. Giovanni Pico della Mirandola states that since God creates men equally and all men possess free will, all humans inherently have dignity. Thomas Aquinas advanced this idea by stating that dignity is inherent in human beings because they were created in the image of God (Glensy, 2011).

The modern meaning of dignity is derived from Immanuel Kant's Categorical Imperative. Kant believes that the ultimate exhibition of morality is to treat humans as an
end in themselves. As such, humans have dignity as a form of intrinsic worth because of the ability to be rational, make decisions, set goals, and guide their actions by reason. Morality is created when humans understand what should be done and act accordingly. Manipulating people or using them to reach another person's end creates harm. Respecting a person's rationality is tied intrinsically to respecting their dignity as a human being (Rachels, 1986).

While philosophical arguments about dignity developed in the late 1700s, the idea of dignity as a human right did not become popular until after World War II. Before this, only five countries directly reference human dignity in their constitutional documents (Shulztiner & Carmi, 2014, p.464). A significant reason for the emergence of human dignity as a value is discovering mass human rights abuses that occur during World War II.

The brutality of the war, the utter disrespect for human life, and the systematic and planned execution of millions [cause] shock and trauma among the nations. The reaction [is] the emergence of new political and ideological frameworks. Human dignity symbolizes an antithesis, a complete rejection of, and an alternative to the scourges of war and what it represent[s] (Shulztiner, & Carmi, 2014, p. 464).

The formation of the United Nations and its Charter after World War II increases dialogue about human dignity internationally. Within the preamble of the United Nations Charter, the aim of protecting and reaffirming "...the dignity and worth of the human person" is emphasized as a universal goal (United Nations, n.d., para 2). By 1948, the General Assembly ratified the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Within this
document, dignity plays a central role (Glensy, 2011; Rao, 2007).

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights seeks to define and universally protect basic human rights. Dignity is referenced in the document as an "... economic, social, and cultural right." The worth of each human being is recognized at birth and protected between men and countries. It is to be protected in each person and includes the ability of a person to be fairly compensated for their work to ensure they can take care of their family. The document calls for men to treat each other in the spirit of brotherhood and countries to promote universal respect for human rights and freedoms (United Nations, n.d.). Following the Universal Declaration of Human Rights publication, many countries will amend their constitutions to include the concept of human dignity. By 2014, 162 countries had included the concept of dignity in their constitutions (Shulztiner & Carmi, 2014). Among the most notable countries for not doing so is the United States (Jackson, 2004; Shulztiner & Carmi, 2014).

**Dignity as a right--A United States perspective.**

Although not addressed directly, the concept of dignity plays a visible part in the founding documents of the United States. In The Federalist Papers, Alexander Hamilton supported a new constitution to promote, among other attributes, the "dignity" of its citizenry. The failure of the Articles of Confederation is attributed to the inability of state governments to respect the dignity of the nation. (Glensy, 2011). Despite the influences of the Kantian notion of dignity in US Constitutional law, dignity is not explicitly discussed in its text (Arshakyan, 2017; Henry, 2011; Staffen &).

While dignity is not explicitly mentioned in the US Constitution, it is an implied power that has been referenced in Supreme Court decisions (Glensy, 2011; Rao, 2007).
As an implied power, "dignity" is referenced in the US Constitution through the Social Contract Theory: "...[H]uman worth and dignity... requires more of the state than to merely leave people alone[...]; the state requires positive state action to provide programs and services to improve the human condition (p. 107-108). Among legal scholars, *dignity* is defined as simply the right to be respected (Alexander and Alexander 2012).

**Dignity as a value--An international perspective.**

Modern constitutions have rejected the American view of rights for a system that focuses on protecting social values by balancing rights with policy interests (Rao 2007). The concept of human dignity in these constitutions is usually ambiguous and exists in the medium between rights and interests.

Human dignity is considered the basis for many rights but is also part of the overarching social order with various political and policy consequences. Human dignity pertains to individual rights, but it also relates to non-rights-based interests that reflect democratic needs or policy goals (Rao, 2007). By emphasizing values, modern constitutions resist a stark divide between private rights and public interests because the constitutional order protects rights but also, in many instances, establishes (or at least aspires to establish) a public moral and economic community.

Under modern constitutions, courts weigh rights, social needs, and social values with the needs of democracy (Glensy, 2011). In this way, human dignity can be defined legally and politically because the value pertains to both the collective needs of society and the individual’s rights. Under this system, constitutional decision-making gives meaning to the concept of dignity by weighing its importance in connection with other rights and liberties (Glensy, 2011; Rao, 2007). "Rights generally do not act as trumps and
cannot be traded off against other interests or interpreted specifically in light of other constitutional values" (Glensy, 2011, p.248). While the United States Supreme Court has acknowledged that "compelling government interests" may override individual rights, most frequently, the focus is placed on the issue of rights violations (Glensy, 2011).

Finally, *dignity* is a concept embedded as a fundamental human right and legally protected value in many constitutional frameworks. Without a doubt, it is a concept that has undoubted influence in constitutions throughout the world. When evaluating rights-based versus value-based constitutions, the value of human dignity varies. In a values-based system, an individual's rights may be diminished to protect societal values or majoritarian needs. However, since these constitutions value human dignity, individual rights are evaluated within the broader social context of the state. Individuals live within a social order. As such, individual rights matter within the context of the social order and democratic society (Rao, 2007). In a rights-based system, societal values and majoritarian needs may be compromised to protect individual rights (Glensy 2011; Rao, 2007).

**Summary.**

Dignity is a historic, philosophic, and legal concept that has roots in ancient times and gained modern relevance after World War II. Driven in part by the formation of the United Nations and the subsequent passage of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, many nations adopted value-based constitutions that guarantee people fundamental rights including dignity. The United States has a rights-based constitution. This has resulted in a different treatment and emphasis on human dignity.

While studies have been conducted on many topics related to teacher dignity, broader studies on how dignity relates to the United States teacher are limited. By some
international standards, teachers in the United States possess many qualities associated with teacher dignity-- teacher certification that includes a four-year bachelor's degree in education, sufficient scores on Praxis exams, and continued professional development. Despite these attributes, teacher retention continues to be problematic in the United States.

The body of research that has been conducted on teacher dignity is mainly derived from research done outside of the United States. Within this culturally diverse body of research, it should be noted that only a few studies were from Europe; and only one article was published from the United States. Among the few articles found in Europe was a British perspective from the mid-1800s. Park (1879) cautioned teachers that an "unbending" notion of dignity associated with the self-importance of the teacher could prevent teachers from securing the student's "loving regard and affection" and that teacher dignity can be a barrier to building relationships with students (p. 13). By far, the most literature on teacher dignity comes from China. The literature on constitutional provisions on dignity may indicate that teacher perceptions of dignity reflect cultural values of dignity. Yet more current interest is indicated as well. Hamm (2018) studied teacher perceptions of dignity regarding educational policies passed in the early 2000s.
CHAPTER 3

METHODS

The purpose of this qualitative thematic analysis of documents is to increase understanding about the perceptions of teacher dignity over time in the United States. In exploring examples about what teacher dignity has meant in American society, there can be a clearer definition of this concept and insights about how perceptions of teacher dignity and professional respect of educators influences educational professionals, policies, and practices.

Overview of Research Design.

The analysis of historical documents for perceptions, attitudes, and values of the idea of dignity as it is applied to educators was approached through a qualitative lens. The identification of a research lens to guide source analysis can prevent the researcher from unknowingly imposing their own viewpoints on qualitative research findings and, thus, diminish credibility to a (Levitt et al., 2018; Savin-Baden & Howell-Major 2013). In this qualitative study, the Attride Stirling model was used to ensure that source analysis is trustworthy.

Research Question

The major question guiding this study was:

What does teacher dignity mean in the United States?

To organize this broad question into a meaningful pattern, sub questions included:

- How was teacher dignity communicated through American history?
- How was the larger social and political environment reflected in the perspectives on teacher dignity?
• What patterns or themes emerge that help explain and predict teacher
dignity and its impact on the experience of teaching and the field of
education?

**Sample.**

In this study textual data was used as a source for information analysis. The
individual disposition of a teacher is linked to the field in which they work. As such,
understanding policy changes or the context in which a teacher works provides a basis for
understanding the factors that affect their mentality (Avis & Orr, 2014). Changes in the
field of education, including those that result from educational policy, were researched to
provide contextual information for sources. Journals, historical texts, and informal
conversations with historians are used to provide additional context for educational
reform or social events affecting perspectives of teacher dignity.

**Data Collection.**

In qualitative research, specific data is collected from which the researcher is then
able to generalize themes (Creswell, 2014). In this study information was derived from
textual sources of information. When texts are written, they provide the researcher with a
naturally occurring set of data that is free from bias. Texts exist in various forms ranging
from formal academic articles, newspaper articles, Supreme Court decisions, and even
social media posts. Texts exist before the researcher decides to use them for a study
(Lockyer, 2008).

There are risks associated with the use of textual sources. First, the process of
artifact analysis requires the researcher to infer meanings to textual documents and make
judgments about the treatment of artifacts. Since the researcher analyzes the text in
isolation, the researcher’s lens can become imparted on the data collected (Lockyer, 2008). For this reason, it is essential that during the process of identifying themes, multiple sources of evidence are collected.

**Research Method.**

In research design, it is essential that the philosophical assumptions underlying a researcher’s approach to the study are identified (Creswell, 2014). Philosophical assumptions include the lens through which the researcher approaches the research question as well as specific methods for the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data (Creswell, 2014; Given 2008).

**Qualitative lens.**

A qualitative lens was selected as appropriate for this study. Within qualitative research, the use of theory to guide research and discover data is accepted practice (Creswell, 2014; Given, 2008; Savin-Baden & Howell-Major, 2013). Qualitative researchers can develop hypotheses that can be shaped, questioned, and altered throughout the process of data discovery. Qualitative research approaches are different from quantitative approaches that require that hypotheses are stated before the study. In qualitative research, theory drives the discovery of the relationship between categories (Creswell, 2014; Savin-Baden & Howell-Major, 2013). Qualitative research contrasts with quantitative approaches that require the researcher to predict categories based on a testing theory composed of variables that can be measured with statistical procedures to determine whether a prediction of a generalization of a theory is true (Savin-Baden & Howell-Major, 2013).

A qualitative approach is appropriate for the study of teacher dignity because it
lacks a clear definition and body of research in the United States. To predict definitions of the concept would create inherent bias in its definition. A qualitative lens enables researchers to seek an understanding of human agency and the process of meaning-making--how individual truths and knowledge are created (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008; Savin-Baden & Howell-Major, 2013). Moreover, because teachers live and work in many different contexts, this approach enables teachers’ voices to provide explanations and linkages that may otherwise be unseen in a quantitative study. Finally, when examining values such as dignity, the qualitative researcher can search for meanings that individuals construct and understand as well as the events and experiences that shape those perspectives (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008).

Qualitative research is criticized for the subjectivity with which a researcher can approach its subjects and materials (Lockyer, 2008). Unlike the quantitative researcher who can use an instrument with both internal and external validity that can be replicable, qualitative studies involve studying human thoughts and experiences as they pertain to the natural world. Since human experience is not replicable, qualitative researchers work to meet the standard of transferability. Research findings provide hypotheses about what will likely emerge in similar circumstances and akin contexts. It is the research consumer’s job to determine if a research finding is transferable to their situation (Donmoyer, 2008).

Qualitative studies that rely on the researcher as the measurement instrument are vulnerable to human error and misinterpretation when data is selected by the human hand and processed by the human mind. For this reason, qualitative research is conducted with intentionality, guided by theory, analyzed in conjunction with a methodology, and with a
consciousness of research bias.

**Study methods.**

Within the field of education, a historical study of a legal concept using sociological artifacts is unique. Having a clear theoretical perspective and methodology is important to maintaining credibility in the already controversial area of qualitative research. The levels of this method are presented in Figure 1.

**Figure 1**

*Methodological Foundation of Study*

![](image)

**Constructivist approach.**

This study was based on the idea of constructivism --that individuals construct their realities based on their experiences. The idea of constructivism is coupled with that of historical materialism to allow patterns of individual thought to be observed and documented during different historical time periods.

Constructivism holds that individuals “construct” meaning or knowledge based on
their experiences and the knowledge they learn from the world around them (Fox, 2001; Savin-Baden & Howell-Major, 2013). Researchers using a constructivist epistemology employ the concept of viability as a basis for understanding the theories and beliefs that individuals form from their experiences (McLay et al., 2019). Since individuals learn to construct knowledge through their experiences, the researcher’s goal is to understand how individuals use active learning to produce knowledge or meaning (Savin-Baden & Howell-Major, 2013). Fundamentally, this perspective rejects the notion that there is an objective external reality (Constantino, 2008; Fox, 2001). Instead, social constructivists examine humans and seek to understand human agency and meaning making (Constantino, 2008).

For this study, multiple considerations went into choosing a method. A method inspired by historical thinking and primary source analysis was essential. Artifact analysis, with particular emphasis on keyword analysis, was used extensively with a conscientiousness toward the article’s context during the initial stages of this research. Ideally, a method that had the capacity to examine three areas of data analysis was needed. First, it needed to include a process for contextualizing the different perspectives of teacher dignity. Second, the method needed to be based on artifact analysis that did not close the door to other sources of data. Finally, the methodology needed to include a process for looking at broader institutional changes that could create an environment that affects teachers’ perceptions of teacher dignity. For this purpose, a methodology known as historical materialism was selected.

**Historical materialism.**

Historical materialism, as derived from the works of Karl Marx, seeks to explain
history (and its different stages) by looking at material forces that cause change to the human condition. When used as a methodology, causal forces are considered valuable for understanding social phenomena or the human condition. Historical information is considered valuable for analysis because the historical materialist believes that specific events provide important information about how particular events can lead to large scale social change (York and Mancus, 2009). In this way, historical materialism combines the use of theoretical elements of sociology with history, which is considered an empirical discipline (Abrams, 1980). By nature, historical materialism is a scientific way of accounting for changes in history that affect the labor force. However, unlike positivists who believe that data must be observed, in historical materialism:

There are no social ‘facts,’ which constitute the ‘substratum’ of social theory, as the positivists thought. Every facet of social reality can only be understood as an outcome of the continual interplay between ‘moment’ (phase of, aspect of, totality) and ‘totality.’ The structure of the social process conditions and determines both the place and function of every ‘thing’ and the form in which it appears as an object of experience. Any given object can only be understood in context (and in the light) of its conditions and relations. These do not appear in immediate experience but are important in the understanding and explanation of things (Held, 1980, p. 164).

However, different from the positivists who believe in an observational method of verifying data, the historical materialist believes that the physical and economic environments that surround societies (and individuals living within them) influence individual perceptions (York & Mancus, 2009). Historical materialists believe that human
beings can only be partially understood without considering the environments in which they live (Fernandez-Armesto & Sacks, 2012).

Historical materialism holds that individuals cannot be evaluated separately from their social context, nor can a social context be evaluated as separate from the individuals who exist within it. Therefore, researchers using this methodology seek to understand the material conditions and interactions of research participants with their environment as well as the individual’s understanding of the systems that cause constraints or conditions that affect their relations with social structures (York and Mancus, 2009).

Historical materialists prefer to study the totality of history as opposed to a specific movement in time to be able to better decipher patterns, attitudes, or behaviors that might create a need for the reorganization of social relations. For G.W.F. Hegel, a contemporary of Marx, the cunning of reason is the result of dialectical reasoning. For Hegel, while the thoughts of individuals may, at first glance, seem disparate and fragmented, they are part of a universal knowledge. With proper analysis, the ideas of an epoch become concrete and complete. Hegel holds that individuals do not provide distinct thoughts or logic; however, the thoughts and logic of individuals together, with necessary connections, show patterns (Parkinson, 1989).

Historical materialists are concerned about trends rather than “fine grained explanation of particular events.” (Levine & Sober, 1985, p. 317). Instead, different from the historian, they are concerned with large scale trends that lead to different epochs in history (Levine & Sober, 1985). In this way, the job of the historical materialist becomes that of looking for homogeneity or themes that can be derived from heterogeneous data. Data then is organized into epochal divisions to show how attitudes have changed over
time (Levine & Sober, 1985).

Marx and Engels equate the development of productive resources in society and economics with new social relationships that emerge with industrialization (Levine and Sober, 1985; York and Mancus, 2009). While undoubtedly, this lens can be used for analyzing teacher perceptions of dignity, this research is not intended to provide a basis for economic determinism or the subjugation of teachers due to the forces of labor market changes. Instead, using critical theory and guided by Hegel’s idea of the Cunning of Reason, the methodological lens utilized for this paper seeks to use the basis of historical materialism in looking at major trends or structural changes in education that can be attributed as causal effects in changes to teacher perceptions of dignity.

According to Hegel, individuals do not have a notion of the rational patterns of history when they pursue their individual self-interests. For Hegel, individual thought and “self-consciousness” is grounded within an “objective real world” which becomes defined by a historical spirit (Hegel, 1977). Reason evolves through a succession of national spirits which display themselves through dialectical thought (Tucker, 1956).

Individuals believe that their consciousness is an “alienated actuality” separate from an “objective reality.” Yet even when individuals stand as an “antithesis” to the spirit, their reason is not free from it. On the contrary, even as an individual feels like they are acting according to their own self-interest, they are in fact acting as a part of a “universal” (Hegel, 1977). In this way, Hegel posits that individuals engage in dialectical thinking, what he calls thinking within a “historical essence.” Individuals believe that their thoughts are unique to their person. In actuality, Hegel posits that individual thought patterns are universal—
everyone is like everyone else…. [individuality] only exists in someone’s mind, an imaginary existence which has no abiding place in this world, where only that which externalizes itself, and therefore, only the universal obtains an actual existence (Hegel, 1977, p. 298)

When pursuing their own self-interest, individuals employ dialectical thinking (Parkinson, 1989). Therefore, from a constructivist perspective, the analysis of individuals’ perceptions is drawn upon to create an understanding of dialectical trends. When using historical materialism as a methodology, dialectical trends are identified that in turn represent historical thinking during different “epochs” or times. It should be noted that this analysis is different from that of Hegel. This research did not organize history into eras based on Hegel’s notion of a hero. A “hero”, according to Hegel is a supra self-interested actor who has the ability to be indifferent to universal consciousness and, through their own selfishness (and excellence), is able to awaken a new stage of universal consciousness (Hegel, 1977). Instead, this analysis utilized patterns in individual thought. From these patterns, data was identified and organized into different epochs of history. An epoch of history is defined as one in which the ideas of individuals are different from that of a previous age.

One characteristic of historical materialism is that researchers who employ this method use a source-critical approach. A source-critical approach requires that researchers use as many sources and source types as possible. When conducting historical research, a researcher must realize that historical sources only provide partial information and that each author has objectives and bias. Therefore, the historical materialist seeks to take information that is “fragmented, dispersed, and conditioned or “contaminated” by
the “human hand” and evaluate it to see qualitative trends (O'Leary, 2007, p. 2). One risk associated with this method is that researchers often do not recognize bias in the source material and, consequently, make faulty conclusions (O'Leary, 2007). Therefore, a method for text analysis and the formation of thematic networks is utilized as well as an approach for timeline-based methods for landscape change.

**Data Analysis.**

Ultimately, context creates a basis for understanding patterns of thinking and meaning making among teachers. From the data collected, patterns (or themes) derived from individuals’ life histories provided two important sources of information. First, it provided a basis for understanding how different social expectations for teachers affected teachers’ dispositions in the field. Second, it provided a broader context for understanding how changing power structures in schools affected a teacher’s perceived dignity within the profession. Notably, the individual's motivations and use of language are not of significance in a thematic analysis using a constructivist lens. Instead, the role of the researcher is to theorize based on socio-cultural and structural conditions that contribute to individual perspectives (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

When an author writes a text, their source is situated in a social context unknown to the researcher. Textual analysis also presents challenges for researchers to utilize the text as a subject of academic research while also providing an adequate context to the outside world when the text was written. (Lockyer, 2008). Each source must be respected as a unique artifact; the historical context in which a source was written is considered (Norum, 2008). Even within a dialectical approach utilized to understand patterns in the research in this study, it is important to see if the meaning of teacher dignity differs for
various authors and to take these into account. Using a methodology to guide textual analysis can mitigate some problems with researcher bias (Given, 2008; Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013).

Contextual information provides essential information about the environment or culture that influences behavior (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). Teachers are placed in a unique dichotomy between society’s policy needs and conversely as workers in an industry (Avis & Orr, 2014). While society seeks to create a system of education that meets policy needs, human capital (or the teacher) is subject to changes in their orientation or mentality that develop due to policy changes that affect the environments where they work (Avis & Orr, 2014). Contextual information provided essential information that was used to understand the complex factors that affected an individual’s thoughts about teacher dignity.

**Thematic analysis.**

Thematic analysis is a methodology gaining popularity and awareness in qualitative research (Terry et al, 2017). In thematic research, the researcher seeks to discover themes among the data by identifying and analyzing patterns either within or between different data sets (Boyatzis, 1998; Terry et al., 2017; Braun & Clarke, 2006.). Unlike traditional forms of qualitative research, thematic analysis seeks to first identify common themes among the data then combine and collapse small groupings of themes to demonstrate a larger context surrounding a topic of research (King & Brooks, 2021; Terry et al., 2017). Large data sets are often used in thematic analysis (Hawkins et al., 2017; Marks & Yardley, 2004).

Within the field of thematic analysis, there are diverse approaches and
methodologies. One attribute shared among thematic researchers is the analytic strategy of coding (Terry et al., 2017; Marks & Yardley, 2004; Mills et al., 2010;). Coding occurs when a label is assigned to a category of data sharing common patterns within data segments (Ayres, 2008; Brooks & King, 2021). This is often considered the strategy that results in data segmenting and, as such, data reduction (Ayres, 2008). Coding plays a central role in thematic analysis because the data groupings and labels assigned to them are later analyzed as results in the study (Mills et al., 2010; Terry et al., 2017).

There are two different approaches to thematic research that directly affect how codes are selected. In a deductive approach, the researcher starts with the coding then looks for data to support pre-selected themes. More commonly, however, thematic researchers use an inductive approach (Patton, 1990). In an inductive research approach, the researcher starts by familiarizing themselves with the data, then progressively and systematically creates labels for data segments related to the research question. An inductive approach often requires multiple readings of data segments and frequent revisions of codes to ensure that they accurately fit data segments (Hawkins et al., 2017; Mills et al., 2010; Terry et al., 2017). Others suggest that codes are adapted throughout the research process to accurately reflect the data (Mills et al., 2010; Terry et al., 2017). Reoccurring themes that emerge during coding are considered so long as they pertain to the research question (Hawkins et al., 2017). Some researchers create visual depictions of theme hierarchies that contain clusters of broader and narrower themes (King & Brooks, 2021; Attride Stirling, 2001).

While researchers (Attride, 2001; Marks & Yardley, 2004) have proposed different thematic analysis sequences, there are no finite rules in its application.
However, researchers suggest that conveying a clear research sequence to the reader is essential (King & Brooks, 2021). Ultimately, using thematic analysis requires a researcher to continually evaluate data from the vantage point of data as a whole body of research, coded segments extracted from the data, and the analysis produced (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Thematic analysis has been credited for the flexibility it provides researchers (Attride, 2001; Braun & Clark, 2006; Holloway & Todres, 2003; Lester et al., 2020; Nowell et al., 2017). While the methodological approaches and data types vary from one researcher to the next, there is general agreement that it must include a systematic approach to finding themes (Hawkins et al., 2017).

For some researchers, thematic analysis is a purely qualitative method of study. Others consider a method to connect a positivist tradition with qualitative research (Terry et al., 2017). Thematic analysis can be conducted within different ontological and epistemological approaches. It can also deal with various data types (Guest et al., 2013; King & Brooks, 2021; Terry et al., 2017).

The analysis phase of thematic analysis varies by author. The thematic network analysis phase occurs when generalizations are made from thematic codes (Ayres, 2008). Some authors use computer programs to compare code frequencies (Guest et al., 2013; Mills et al., 2010). Others use mapping strategies to graphically display coding relationships (Guest et al., 2013; Terry et al., 2017). Regardless of data type or methodology, the analysis phase of thematic analysis seeks to identify repeated patterns of meaning across a data set (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2006; King & Brooks, 2021). The researcher must interpret themes and convey information about the data field.
(Boyatzis, 1998). The analysis phase aims to convey information in a meaningful and useful way to a large audience (Ayres 2008; King & Brooks, 2021). Ideally, the final product of the analysis considers common patterns and contextual differences that account for variance among participants (Ayres, 2008).

An interpretative phase is also contained in thematic analysis. During this phase, the researcher discusses how themes are interrelated and interprets how it fits into the larger context (Boyatzis, 1998; Hawkins et al, 2017). This phase can also provide an analytic systems approach explanation to help the reader understand analytic choices made during the interpretation (Hawkins et al., 2017).

Clearly, defining themes can be difficult. Effective definitions should include both examples and non-examples (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Another problem is that there is no finite end to the process of theme refinement; the researcher must know when to stop (King and Brooks, 2021). Textual analysis is a human mechanism of analysis and is subject to error (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Often texts are analyzed and segmented independently by the researcher, including participant feedback; researcher cross-checking to ensure a fair text analysis can help (King & Brooks, 2021).

Effective thematic analysis requires that the researcher make sense of data, provide analysis about the patterning of responses, and identify themes that emerge across the data set. Missing any of these parts is problematic (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A common pitfall in thematic analysis is failing to provide any actual analysis about how the data contributes to the research question (Braun & Clark, 2006; Hawkins et al., 2017). Another common pitfall in thematic analysis is failing to provide any actual analysis about how the data contributes to the research question (Hawkins et al., 2017; Braun &
Clark, 2006)

The very flexibility that makes it appealing as a qualitative approach can also be problematic. Within the field of thematic analysis, no universal approaches or guidelines dictate how research should take place (Reicher & Taylor, 2005). With such flexibility, the researcher is charged with providing a systematic description of their approach and the procedures they plan to use in their selected theory and methodology. Many researchers struggle to clarify the steps and processes used to select, analyze, and interpret data (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Reicher & Taylor, 2005). Not having a methodology, clarity in the methodology or procedures used, or a systematic way of approaching the data is considered a problem with conducting thematic research (Guest et al., 2013; Hawkins et al., 2017).

Reliability is also a further concern in thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is highly interpretive. In thematic analysis, data is interpreted, coded, and made explicit to readers via the researcher's hand. The researcher determines the coding that goes into theme development, segments texts, and groups data into themes. They also interpret the thematic networks (Guest et al., 2013).

Furthermore, the development of themes can be problematic (Given, 2008; Holloway & Tordes, 2003). For some researchers, the problem lies in clearly defining themes. Finding continuity in the data evaluated can become a challenge. Others fail to consider variation or contradictions that may exist across individual accounts. Still, others fail to match the data with analytical claims made about it (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Defining themes with examples and non-examples can help create consistency (Braun & Clarke, 2006).
**Attride-Stirling's Thematic Networks.**

One of thematic research’s weaknesses is that it is not conducted methodologically and rigorously (Attride-Stirling, 2001). To address this weakness, Attride-Stirling (2001) created a model for constructing thematic networks. According to Attride-Stirling (2001), a clear methodology for analyzing textual materials is needed to yield meaningful qualitative research results. This methodology provides a six-step process to analyze text and find thematic networks.

In the first step of the Attride Stirling model, texts (and in this study’s case transcripts) are segmented. In this study, texts were segmented using keyword analysis. A coding system is also created in the first step of the Attride Stirling model. Next, the researcher identifies broad patterns within text segments. In the third step, themes are organized into basic, organizing, and global themes. Then each network is described according to the content derived from text segments. In the fifth step, the researcher summarizes individual thematic networks and creates illustrations that show patterns emerging in the research. Finally, collective thematic networks are interpreted and analyzed.

The Attride-Stirling model (2001) renders a representational and organizational framework for thematic analysis for textual data sources. Within the Attride-Stirling model, networks are created, which are illustrated in web-like matrixes (see Figure 2).
**Figure 2**

*Attride-Stirling Web Like Matrixes*

The first step of Attride-Stirling's methodology is text segmenting and analysis. Textual analysis involves first finding text evidence and then breaking it into manageable and meaningful segments. During the first stage of thematic analysis, the researcher devises a coding framework for organizing text segments (Attride-Stirling, 2001). After a coding system is devised, texts are approached and broken down into meaningful and manageable chunks” and organized according to the coding system (Attride-Stirling, 2001).

In the second step of analysis in the Attride-Stirling’s model, the researcher derives larger themes that emerge from text segments. In this phase, the researcher re-reads text segments organized under certain codes and abstracts common themes from the information. During this phase, patterns and structures derived from textual evidence are identified. The researcher is also able to reframe the reading of a text to include the identification of broad patterns as well as patterns that underlie data. Based on the data-
driven codes derived in the first phase of research, themes are abstracted and refined in
the second stage of research. Attride-Stirling cautions that it is essential that themes are
refined enough to provide information about distinct attributes and general enough to
include evidence gathered from multiple texts (Attride-Stirling, 2001). This step will be
completed for each decade studied during the study.

The third step of textual analysis involves the researcher constructing thematic
networks. The process starts by taking themes from the text and categorizing them into
groupings. Groupings are based on similarities in content or theory. Groupings start with
the identification of basic themes. Basic themes are an original set of themes that are
derived from specific points of data. From basic themes, clusters are formed that become
organizing themes. Organizing themes represent a conceptual division between groupings
of data. Distinct global themes are then identified and illustrated to produce a thematic
network. The global themes represent a metaphor that “encapsulates the main point in the
text.” (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 393). After identifying basic, organizing, and global
themes, the researcher must verify the thematic networks by relating them to the data and
refining the network (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 393). Thematic networks are then
illustrated using the web-like representation proposed by Attride-Stirling (Figure 2).

Due to the historical nature of this paper, during the third step, data was evaluated
originating from the various decades of the study, and larger thematic groups will be
identified. During this phase, data will be coded and categorized according to basic,
organizing, and global themes. Finally, during the third step, thematic network(s) were
illustrated on a time continuum using the web-like representation proposed by Attride-
Stirling. This web structure was used to organize information and themes relating to
teacher dignity that was referenced during the fourth and fifth stages of data analysis.

Finally, the researcher verifies the thematic networks by relating them to the data and refining the network (Attride-Stirling, 2001). During this step, the data from each historical era was organized into web matrixes.

During the fourth step of source analysis, thematic networks are described and analyzed. To do so, each network is described according to the content derived from text segments. The researcher returns to the original source(s) where the text segments were derived to verify themes. When cross-checking data, the researcher now reads the text for basic, organizing, and global themes. In this way, the web networks become an “anchor” for research interpretation. When presented in writing, networks are described and analyzed with the support of evidence in the form of text segments from artifacts. As each network is explored, patterns that underlie thematic networks will begin to emerge for the researcher. In this step, data is interpreted and analyzed for deeper meaning. Once conclusions emerge about a thematic network, the research moves on to the next step (Attride-Stirling, 2001). During this step, the data from each historical era was described and underlying patterns analyzed.

During the fifth step of the research, individual thematic networks are summarized to look for all-encompassing themes. Illustrations are used to show patterns emerging from the data. The goal of the fifth step of research is to summarize themes that emerge in each network, extoll patterns emerging from the research, and make patterns explicitly clear to the reader (Attride-Stirling, 2001). During the fifth step of the research, individual thematic networks were summarized to look for all-encompassing themes for each historical era’s web matrixes.
Finally, in the sixth step, the author returns to the research question and interprets patterns that emerge during the preceding steps. In the sixth step of the analysis, patterns, structures, and main themes are collectively analyzed. During this phase deductions from all networks are considered and patterns that emerge are explored (Attride-Stirling, 2001). During this the sixth step of this research, thematic networks were analyzed to provide an understanding of any broader themes that may emerge. The researcher abstracted data to explore themes and identify patterns that underlie thematic networks.

Qualitative research, even when systemized, is reliant on the hands and minds of the researcher and individuals or participants who have had social experiences. While interpretive tools can help provide structure during the researcher’s process, Attride-Stirling (2001) emphasizes the importance of the researcher disclosing the research interpretation process. While the Attride-Stirling model is a step toward providing clarity in qualitative research analysis, the data source is still based on individuals' social lives. Even when meaningful steps are taken in qualitative research (like those put forth in the Attride-Stirling Model), the researcher must actively work to create clarity in understanding subjective experiences. In this process, the researcher must intentionally seek to understand the research subject and work to separate their own subjective biases from the themes that emerge from the data.

To prevent subjective bias in the formation of thematic networks, two tools were used in the first step of the Attride-Stirling Model. First, text segments were selected and coded to start the process of theme-based analysis. To understand the process used in this research, two important mechanisms require further investigation: keyword analysis and coding.
Keyword analysis.

Keyword analysis is a qualitative technique that allows researchers to access large amounts of data from electronic documents while allowing for in-depth analysis of terms. Specific words or phrases are identified as being a predominant focus of research. By searching a document for specific linguistic terms, key parts of an electronic document are identified that may pertain to the study. Keyword analysis enables the researcher to gain an understanding of “the landscape” or broad perspective of the use of a topic by using key terms to select text segments to analyze (Savin-Baden & Howell-Major, 2013; Seale & Charteris-Black, 2010).

Concerns associated with keyword analysis is that the researcher is aware of the differences that exist between texts and that divergent sources may have varying levels of credibility, audiences, and purposes for reader consumption. Moreover, to protect the quality of data, specific words must be treated in context to the original document/author’s purpose. Excerpts should not be treated as independent from the article in which they were derived. When using keyword analysis, it is important to consider the context of the article to impact that source type may have on data. (Seale & Charteris-Black, 2010).

Coding.

Attride-Stirling (2001) cautions that it is essential that identified themes are refined enough to provide information about distinct attributes and general enough to encapsulate evidence gathered from multiple texts. Codes are devised that have explicit boundaries to ensure that they are not interchangeable. As such, coding systems play an important role in thematic analysis.
Codes represent words or short phrases that capture the essence of data. In coding, the job of the researcher is to analytically document patterns or consistencies in the data (Lester et al., 2020; Saldaña, 2016). While the researcher seeks to be objective, Saldana (2016) indicates that coding is fundamentally an act of analysis.

Codes serve as “metaphorical” puzzle pieces that contribute to a researcher's understanding of the data. Individually, each code is but one part of an entire research study. As such, the researcher’s responsibility in assigning codes is complex (Lester et al, 2020).

Effective coding systems require that the researcher differentiate between the unit of analysis (the entity that is the focus of the research) and the unit of coding (the segments of data that provide a way to assess the object under investigation). In this study, the collective data gathered from individual teachers during a historical period was used as the unit of analysis. As such, documents that were not derived from a specific individual were not used (Boyatzis, 1998).

The unit of coding used in this study was derived from raw data collected in the study. It was smaller than the unit of analysis and was used to segment data and later relate it in meaningful ways to the phenomena being investigated (Boyatzis, 1998). Using an inductive coding approach, textual segments were used to establish and observe coding structures based on the emergence of recurrent themes. As data was collected, the data itself informed the classification of codes and the categorizations (Boyatzis, 1998; Kawulich, 2004).

In this study, codes were manually assigned to data segments extracted from transcripts by the researcher. Data segments that directly pertain to teacher dignity were
organized in a spreadsheet. Care was taken to include text segments that included all perceptions of teacher dignity. Boyatzis’s (1998) five-step model for inductive research was be used when determining codes.

It should be noted that complete objectivity in devising codes is entirely unobtainable (Boyatzis, 1998; Saldana, 2016). To ensure validity in the code-making process, the researcher followed Saldana’s protocols for writing memos or taking notes as information is segmented and codes are being determined. During this process, notes were recorded to include important context surrounding the data source, potential problems with the study/coding system, how the researcher related to the participant or phenomena, and emergent patterns, categories, and themes. Any personal or ethical dilemmas found during the study was also addressed in these notes (Saldana, 2016).

The analysis started with the identification of lower-order or basic themes that emerged in texts. Once basic themes were identified, “organizational themes” were created based on categories of themes that were grouped based on their similarities to show more abstract relationships. Finally, all-encompassing themes or metaphors for data within its web matrix (universal themes) were identified.

According to Attride-Stirling, a clear methodology for analyzing textual materials is needed to yield meaningful qualitative research results. The Attride-Stirling model for thematic analysis breaks the research process into three stages: the breaking down of a text; the investigation of the text and integrating the text investigation into thematic networks. Within these three stages, Attride-Stirling’s methodology provides a six-step process to analyze a text and find thematic networks. This tool was used to both interpret each text and look for global themes that emerge from multiple texts.
One concern associated with coding accuracy is premature theme identification (Boyatzis, 1998; Saldana, 2016). As new researchers delve into coding, they often either identify themes without carefully considering all the data or miss themes altogether (Boyatzis, 1998). For this reason, Boyatzis’s (1998) five-step model for inductive research will be used when determining codes. Understandably, another concern associated with coding is researcher fatigue (Boyatzis, 1998).

**Boyatzis Model for Inductive Coding.**

There are five steps to Boyatzis’s inductive coding: reducing the raw material, identifying themes within subsamples, comparing themes across subsamples, creating a code, and determining the reliability of the code. To ensure that important “coding moments” are identified, a strong theoretical basis guides the researchers’ approach to the data.

The theoretical lens guiding the selection of text segments is keyword analysis. Keyword analysis was selected as an analytic strategy in the initial stage of data collection because it allows the researcher to find meaning in the use of the word “dignity” as it pertains to the teacher. Since teacher dignity lacks a significant body of research, this approach allowed documents to serve as a data source in a way that may otherwise be missed in a conventional reading of a text.

In this study, documents were first selected as sources for analysis based on the keyword’s “teacher” and “dignity.” These words were selected as essential for the text because the professionals working in the field of education are generally called teachers. Moreover, because the goal of the research is to understand teacher constructions of “dignity,” it was essential that multiple perspectives of the term are considered.
To create order among sources, texts containing the keywords of “teacher” and “dignity” were first separated by decades from when they were published. Next, keyword analysis was used to identify essential passages or quotations that could provide glimpses of teachers’ experiences or feelings about professional dignity. This information was examined so as to provide a window into teacher impressions concerning their professional dignity. This part of the research was guided by constructivism. Data was sourced from accounts of individuals who have lived and worked as teachers.

Textual analysis involves first finding text evidence and then breaking it into manageable and meaningful segments (Attride-Stirling, 2001). Once data is identified using keyword analysis and the context of articles considered, excerpts were taken from sources and recorded in a database.

The process of determining codes started with breaking down the text into meaningful and manageable text segments based on the theoretical approach of keyword analysis. Once the raw data was reduced into segments, themes were identified within each source then compared throughout subsamples. To derive codes, documents and segments were reviewed, and potential differentiating themes or codes were identified, revised, and rewritten as data is reviewed (Boyatzis, 1998). Original sources were then reread to determine if the themes are appropriate.

Boyatzis (1998) found that sound academic codes have consistent features. They possess a label or name, a definition of what is contained in the theme (characteristics and issues), a description of elements that would cause the researcher to mark it as a theme, a description of stipulations that may result in data being coded or excluded from the coding, and examples of positive and negative examples of data. Finally, to ensure that
the researcher is using codes appropriately, they must be verified. When qualitative researchers evaluate the same research materials, it may be coded differently. For this reason, taking the time to validate the selection of codes can increase coding validity. According to Attride-Stirling, the first phase of research concludes after themes are identified and organized using the structure suggested in the model.

**Trustworthiness, Credibility, and Ethical Considerations.**

Within qualitative research, little research has been conducted on creating trustworthiness with the approach of thematic analysis. However, to create a standard for trustworthiness, researchers have proposed methodologies to conduct thematic research (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Braun & Clarke, 2012; Nowell et al., 2017). Generally speaking, a sound study using thematic analysis will identify an approach for data segmenting, a system of coding for categorizing data, and a systematic approach for analyzing data (Ayres, 2008).

Since little research has been conducted on creating trustworthiness in thematic analysis, general parameters will be consulted from the field of qualitative research. In qualitative research, trustworthiness refers to the mechanisms that a researcher uses to make a study worth paying attention to. Given and Samure (2008) identify four criteria for trustworthiness in a qualitative study: credibility, reliability, confirmability, and transferability.

Credibility refers to whether the study’s findings accurately match the reality presented in the data. Credibility can be compared to internal validity in quantitative research (Given & Saumure, 2008). One concern in the thematic analysis of textual sources is researcher bias. When a researcher reads sources, they are read in isolation.
Peer debriefing will be used in addition to searching for contextual analysis within sources and the historical time they are written. Peer debriefing is a process where a peer not directly involved in the research probes the researcher’s thinking about the research process (Su’o’ng & Nguyen, 2008). In this study, peer debriefing was used to examine the use, contextual analysis, and interpretation of samples of text segments used. Integration of source data and segments of the study was also used to enhance trustworthiness.

Reliability in qualitative research refers to the dependability or consistency of the results obtained from the data. Finding reliability in qualitative research can prove challenging as the social world is constantly changing (Given & Saumure, 2008). When verification strategies are used in qualitative research, the researcher is more likely to reach the standard of reliability and validity (Morse et al., 2008).

In this study, the process of verifying data included a systematic approach to identifying data segments, content checking the data within the article or transcript, and the consideration of contextual societal information that might have affected information sources. While data verification is considered key to its inclusion in the study, two other measures were taken to ensure congruence. First, data was only included if it supported the study’s focus--perceptions of teacher dignity in the United States. Second, data was only used if it supported the conceptual basis of analysis--a constructivist view of teacher dignity. To reach the standard of reliability, Morse et al. (2008) suggested that interpretation must be constantly monitored to ensure that the research properly navigates when to start, stop, or modify the research process. Researcher responsiveness is considered key to creating a rigorous and valid study. Using the standard created in
Morse, et al (2008), researcher responsiveness was sought in five areas: methodological coherence, sample size, mutual interaction between collecting and analyzing data, thinking theoretically, and theory development.

Methodological coherence requires that the research question, data, and methodology support one another (Morse et al., 2008). To reach this goal, the researcher must constantly seek “fit” between each component to reach the study’s analytic goals. The process through which themes are formed within the Attride-Stirling model (2001) allows for researcher flexibility and responsiveness to data while providing needed structure to make the study transferable. In this study, it is of particular note that use of a database of data segments was collected before forming thematic networks.

An appropriate sample is considered important in creating transferability in a study (Jensen, 2008; Morse et al., 2008). Due to the limited number of textual sources, samples were based on keyword analysis and their relevance to the study. One limitation of the study is that texts were not included in the data sample if contextual information in the source indicated that it was not relevant to teacher dignity. The researcher was also limited in her ability to gain contextual information beyond that explicitly stated in the text.

Another aspect of reliable research occurs as the mindful researcher collects data and analyzes it concurrently to identify gaps. By moving between data and data analysis, findings are confirmed and reconfirmed (Morse et al., 2008). In this study, thematic networks were reviewed and revised as new data emerged to confirm their validity. During triangulation, thematic networks from the first phase of the study were scrutinized with those created during the second phase. The researcher also engaged in theoretical
thinking as thematic networks were reconfirmed or modified based on new data collected through this process.

During the final stage of analysis, theory development occurs. Using the standards created by Morse et al. (2008), the thematic networks derived from the study were compared to the theoretical premises of historical materialism.

Researchers gain confirmability in qualitative research when the researcher’s findings and interpretations are based on data. Confirmability is similar to the idea of avoiding bias in data and data interpretations. However, since qualitative research inherently involves researcher interpretation, the standard of confirmability is met when research findings and interpretation are congruent with the data collected (Given & Saumure, 2008). Providing clarity in how decisions are made during data collection and analysis also supports confirmability (Morse et al., 2008).

In this study, confirmability is sought in multiple ways. First, the Attride-Stirling model was used as a framework for thematic analysis. This framework provided transparency in the research process and the formation of themes. Appropriate sources of data were sought to ensure congruence between the research question and data sources. A methodology was followed to create transparency in source segmenting, the formation of themes, analysis, and interpretation. Finally, researcher analysis was provided on decisions made during the analysis that leads to data treatment decisions.

Transferability enables the results of a given study to be applied to similar environments. Transferability implies that someone in a different context can take research findings and apply them to a similar situation (Jensen, 2008). To create a generalizable research study to the larger population, it is the researcher’s responsibility
to select appropriate texts that apply to educational settings and provide thick descriptions of relevant data (Jensen, 2008). Thick descriptions entail that the reader is provided with an accurate description of the context so that others can determine if the study is transferable to their context (Jensen, 2008).

Transferability was accomplished in this study through the purposeful examination of multiple education sources that met the criteria of keyword analysis. Specifically, sources were identified as belonging to the field of education, containing the word dignity, and had to discuss the teacher as pertains to the topic of dignity. If a source met this criteria, segments of data were recorded into a spreadsheet. Then the article was read to determine if the context was appropriate for the segment to be included in the data set. A summary of the context was then recorded in the spreadsheet. Providing clarity in the research design and the methodologies utilized was provided to show how the continuous process of analysis and patterns were established.

Qualitative research represents a field of academic inquiry that embraces interconnected disciplines, fields, and subject matters. Generally speaking, the qualitative paradigm seeks to describe and explain the perspectives of those being studied. It is considered an interpretative process. Even deriving a definition of qualitative research is rendered difficult, given the many diverse perspectives and approaches within the field (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). As such, it is not surprising that in this constantly evolving method of research, even within the same field practitioners have different approaches and perspectives (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

With no widely accepted methods or practices, qualitative researchers generally draw on three similarities. First, qualitative research employs empirical materials such as
case studies, interviews, and texts as sources for data analysis. Second, theory drives the selection of data sources and the analysis of the qualitative researcher. Third, methodologies provide clarity and consistency in how the research is conducted (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

This research was dependent on the subjective opinions of individuals. Their lived lives and meaning making have value in understanding cultural, socio-economic, and lived realities. However, inherently, the subject matter of this research was focused on discovery, insights, and understanding from the perspective of those being studied.

Any researcher engaged in a study dependent on individual constructions experiences a risk of inadvertently imposing their views upon the data. It is for this reason that careful steps were taken to protect the integrity of this research.

While this study comes with its complexities, steps were taken to create transparency at each phase. Specifically, the theory driving the research and specific methodologies was presented to create clarity in decisions made to influence outcomes. The research was conducted according to the approaches identified and findings presented so that they could be evaluated.

**Limitations of Study.**

Researcher bias is an inherent problem generally in qualitative research and specifically within the theoretical lens of constructivism. While care was taken to ensure that reliability and member checking was used, ultimately, the researcher, as an external third party, is responsible for processing data.

Context was derived from fifteen years of experience in the classroom as a Social Studies teacher. The researcher has worked as a master mentor and participated in staff
induction activities for five years. They have also served in quasi administrative roles as an instructional coach and summer school dean.

Qualitative research cannot meet the traditional standard of generalizability set in quantitative research. Instead, qualitative research seeks to create contextual clarity so that those who live and work in similar situations can use and apply the data (Donmoyer, 2008).

An inherent limitation in the use of textual sources is limited information about contextual information. It also can be challenging to understand with depth the perspectives of others’ positions. For this reason, multiple texts were consulted for each section of textual analysis.

Perhaps one of the biggest limitations confronting this study is time. To complete this study adequately was a time-intensive exercise. Inherently, this is a data-rich study. Time limitations created barriers in how much member-checking was used in cross checking understanding of textual sources.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Perceptions of “teacher dignity” have changed over time. While the literature on teacher dignity appears disparate, the themes addressed provide insight into the phenomena. In short, articles written about teacher dignity reflect the times, attitudes, and beliefs of people living at that time. Providing historical context becomes essential to understand “teacher dignity.”

Colonial Times through the Industrial Revolution.

From the inception of the United States, education and teaching is touted as being a dignified profession. The idea of teacher dignity originates in the New England colonies when teachers are considered "learned men" capable of teaching basic reading and writing (Dexter, 1904). The New Haven School tried to address these challenges by providing the schoolmaster a prestigious salary and benefits for its time.

It is evident that the schoolmaster was to be a personage of some dignity, for in addition to £40 a year from the colony, £10 from the town of New Haven, and the tuition of the pupils from without the colony, he was to have ‘a settled habitation, not at his own charge,’ and his ‘property and person' were to be exempt from taxation. When, besides all this, he was given one week's vacation each year ‘to improve as the case may require,’ he left the form record that he was well satisfied (Dexter, 1904, p. 48).

Sharing a common education and function with the minister, they are afforded similar dignity and social status. In addition to the practical responsibilities of teaching content knowledge, the teacher is credited for the protection of the moral order, the
preservation of democracy and the creation of an active and knowledgeable citizenry
(Dexter, 1904).

While that of the grammar teacher is considered a dignified profession during
colonial times, the social values of the community pose challenges to schools that mirror
those of modern day. For example, after one year of teaching, a New Haven teacher is
released from his contract when the town did not see immediate results, although families
sent children to school on an inconsistent basis. Not surprisingly, the colony later
struggles to find learned men willing to come and teach in its schools (Dexter, 1904, p.
371).

The dame school emerges as parents desire an education for their daughters. The
objective of the dame schoolteacher is to provide the male enough education to get into
grammar school and the female with all that many believe they are likely to need. Given
the population served and purpose of the dame school, “[i]t was never held as an
institution of much consequence or dignity” (Dexter, 1904, p. 425).

Dame schools were originally taught by women who receive a small fee (around
three pence a week per child) for caring for and educating children from a room in their
homes (Dexter, 1904, p. 425). Described as “matronly,” “a mother of the street,” or a
“widow,” the dame schoolteacher is personified as a glorified babysitter from which
“[children] cannot run away” (Dexter, 1904, p. 424). In addition to taking care of infants
and knitting, the dame schoolteacher provides a basic introduction to literacy. The dame
school often has few supplies except in some cases one copy of the Hornbook. As time
passed, the dame school gains financial support from communities and is credited for
laying the foundation for the first public schools. In spite of the influence these schools
have on education in the United States, the dame schoolteacher is regarded by historians as holding little social status, having limited knowledge, and working under sufferance (Dexter, 1904).

Dialogue about teacher dignity during colonial times generally indicates that well educated male teachers are considered dignified by their communities. Conversely, women and teachers less educated are recognized for their “usefulness,” but are not considered “dignified professionals” (Dexter, 1904, p. 425).

The turn of the 19th century accompanies a change in the labor force. Influenced by the Industrial Revolution that creates more job opportunities for men in business and engineering, teaching becomes a profession dominated by women. Urbanization and population migration to industrial cities generate the need for bigger schools and fewer one room schoolhouses. At the same time, propelled by Horace Mann's movement to build better schools with more capable educators, states demand higher credentials for teachers (Bulger, 1972).

An American scholar and philosopher, Thomas Davison, is at the forefront of the movement to provide education to both the child of the aristocrat and factory owner but also the industrial worker. As an activist, Davison educates industrial workers in the evenings so that they “...[are] started on careers of dignity and usefulness” (Dublin, 1948, p. 208). In his opinion, the dignity of the individual student, (and as such) the worker, has the potential to thrive in America because he believed that “.... the dignity of the individual has its flowering here” (Dublin, 1948, 210). While the words "teacher dignity" are not used to describe Davison, he is portrayed as minimizing his status as a scholar, teacher, or thinker. He is described as serving his community, not for wealth, but
rather for the altruistic development of man and the preservation of democracy (Dublin, 1948).

In the mid 1800s teaching was professionalized for the first time (Bulger, 1972).

Evidence from the 1820s demonstrates that educational reformers worked to improve the condition of American schools. During colonial times, the typical grammar schoolteacher is described as having a strong background in content but not pedagogy (Dexter, 1904). Accordingly, James Carter proposes that teaching is a science worthy of study. Later Horace Mann raises public awareness for the “creation of professional educators with the training, qualification, compensation, and respect afforded a professional” (Bulger, 1972, p.10). For Mann (1868), the “worth and dignity” of the teacher provided a valuable asset to society (p. 71). The teacher, through instruction, character, and temperament instills students with a love of learning, desire to achieve, and moral foundation to be a productive citizen (Mann, 1868). The work of a dignified teacher, then, contributes to the formation of a strong labor force, active citizenry, and powerful country.

Out of the movement led by Carter and Mann (and inspired by the dame school), the idea of public schools funded by the state emerges (Dexter, 1904, p. 101). By the early 1900s, this vision expanded to include a public high school education with the goal to prepare students for the university (Dexter, 1904, p. 380).

The dignity of the professional educator is addressed in a 1903 speech to the Kansas Academy of Science. Dignity in the early 1900s is defined through the lens of inputs and outputs: the materials a professional works with and the results it produces. The question then arises, "If this principle is applied to the teacher's vocation, how
forcibly does it illustrate the worth and dignity of that vocation" (McWharf, 1903, p.6). Teaching is then defined as a dignified profession in its contributions to society in three ways: 1) the presentation of learning opportunities, 2) the development of human capital (and as such advancement of the wealth of the state), and 3) the preservation of the United States Republic. Accordingly, the teacher exemplifies dignity when they take on the social responsibility to furnish, train, and develop the human mind. Due to the attributes needed to educate those who are capable of sustaining the United States government, competent educators are, therefore, deemed worthy of high social status (McWharf, 1903).

The mid and late 1800s was an era for educational reform. Previously, schoolteachers are typically male, and few were educated (Bulger, 1972). Over the next century, the qualifications, demographics, and expectations for teachers change drastically. Likewise, perceptions of teacher dignity also change.

1840-1849.

The nineteenth century is known for the Common School Movement, where American education transitioned from being primarily private to providing more public availability to students. While the United States did not have a public education system prior to the 1800s, it did have the world's highest literacy rate. However, the financial barriers created by private institutions and significant literacy gaps created considerable problems for 19th-century families who were not literate but wished for their children to be.

In the 1840s, the first successful movement to structure a public school system occurred in the United States (Brackemyre, 2019). The transition from private grammar
schools to publicly funded schools required a new way of thinking. During colonial times, the grammar school served white, aristocratic men from wealthy families. Conversely, the common school provided an education for all men and women (Belding, 1930). During this decade, teacher dignity emerged in academic journals for the first time. During the 1840s, two organizing themes emerged from the literature about teacher dignity: teaching as a profession and best professional practices (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3**

*1840-1849 Theme Matrix*

The first organizing theme from the literature about teacher dignity concerned teaching as a profession. Within this organizing theme, two basic themes emerged: the office of the teacher and ideal teacher characteristics.

The office of the teacher underwent considerable scrutiny in the 1840s. There are two schools of thought in the literature about whether the office of the teacher deserves
the dignity of a profession. On the one hand, there is the thought that "...anybody may become a teacher. The most moderate ability is thought to be competent to the most important profession in society" (Of the Office and Importance of Teachers, 1948). Reports on the shortcomings of teachers are said to detract from their dignity and prevent teachers from having freedom in their classrooms. Administrators who fail to give teachers the ability to respond to such charges are also said to diminish the dignity of the teachers' office. (School Examinations and Reports, 1849).

On the other hand, some see the teacher who has the power to create the highest form of intelligence as a dignified profession (A.A.H. 1849). The "power [a teacher] wields, of the destinies she helps decide, of the fountains of happiness it is her privilege to open, and of the sources of misery, it is her prerogative to close, then there is no station, office, or dignity, known among men...which outranks [it] in important" (Female Teachers, 1839).

While noting that teachers often enter the field of education by circumstance, teaching is considered a dignified profession because of their influence on others. The teacher with "... exalted views of the dignity and responsibility of his calling" are considered to have a "godlike nature" because of their impact on the mind in its formative state. The teacher has "stupendous powers of thought, enjoyment, and suffering; its high responsibilities and immortal existence." (The Dignity and Responsibility of the Teacher's Office, 1849, p.14).

In an article focused on inspiring teachers to like their profession, it is noted that the most dignified professions have a history of standing in society. In this way, the teacher engages in more of a dignified profession than the doctor or lawyer: One would
conclude, after all,

that Socrates and Plato were engaged in as dignified an employment in teaching philosophy and virtue to the youth of Athens, as in petitifogging in courts amidst the wretched victims of vice, or in dealing out rhubarb and senna in the purlieus of the city (Why Should We Love our Profession, 1849, p.57)

The second basic theme that emerged during the 1840s is ideal teacher characteristics. Teacher training and preparation in seminary or normal institutions are associated with teacher dignity (The Benefits of Normal Institutions, 1839). However, character traits are most associated with teacher dignity. "[A]lertness and simplicity of manner...[a]long with moral duties and correct deportment" is associated with teacher dignity (The Influence of the Teacher's Examples, 1849, p. 110). While it is noted that a teacher need not fear losing dignity "by his manners," their ability to set an example is emphasized. Teachers who have the qualities "...of neatness, propriety, and order, in habits, manners, and dress" are associated with preventing "evil" in the classroom and preserving teachers' dignity (Teachers Duties Before and Out of School, 1842, p. 30-31).

The second organizing theme that emerged from the literature in the 1840s was ideas of best professional practices. Basic themes that emerged from the literature included parent participation and classroom management.

The roles and perspectives of parents are also considered necessary in the literature concerning teacher dignity. Some parents are noted as looking upon teachers as "servants." Parents of the 1840s deem the teacher "...an avocation of necessity, and therefore one of servility. Its dignity as a profession, they do not recognize" (Michigan,
1842, p.139). On the other hand, when parents impart dignity on the teacher, they are seen as making the profession "infinitely more valuable than his pecuniary pay...you make teaching not only a respectable employment, but practically what it abstractly really is, an occupation of the highest dignity (Hints to Parents, 1849, p 107). Including parent participation in schools is seen as an asset to increasing teacher dignity. When parents neglect schools, the teacher (and its patronage) are considered to have little importance and support by the community (School Committees and Visitors, 1838).

The ability of a teacher to successfully manage a classroom is also associated with teacher dignity. New teachers are criticized for acting like kings and queens when they "...walk in with an air of the highest dignity, and with the step of a king". On the contrary, the most successful teachers manage a classroom based on their real character traits and not depending on appearances (The Teacher's First Day in School, 1840, p. 23-24). Successful teachers are noted for being adaptable and adjusting their discipline and instruction to each unique situation: "He must make the school room pleasant to the scholar; be frank and affable; familiar, yet with dignity that the pupil shall respect" (Meeting of the Norfolk County Teachers Association, 1849, p188). Moreover, teachers who use corporal punishment on students wrongly are known for preserving their dignity by "acknowledging a fault.... he will thus teach the scholars that he loves truth and that the truth shall govern him in all things (Punishments and Amusements of Children, 1840, p. 97).

As the Common School Movement took hold in the 1840s, the dignity of the teacher's office and its requirements became topics of discussion. Prior to 1840, schools were primarily private. Many schools had prerequisites that included the ability to read
and write prior to entrance into the schools (Brackemyre, 2019). As the 1940s unfold, increasing public awareness of the value of schools and maintaining a positive classroom environment also gained propulsion. As American society moves toward a public education system, teacher dignity will emerge as a more significant theme in the literature.

1850-1859.

The 1850s heralded in unprecedented inventions and innovations. The Zip (zipper) took buttons by storm as a more efficient way of fastening clothing, while Singer revolutionized sewing with the foot-powered machine. While steam-powered water wheels made transportation more efficient in schools, the 1850s were known for calls to centralize American schools into a national system of education. During the 1850s, two organizing themes emerged from the literature—teaching as a profession and ideal teacher characteristics.

During the 1850s, teaching as a profession and ideal teacher characteristics emerged as basic themes from the research (see figure 4).

Teaching as a profession emerged as an organizing theme in the 1850s. During the 1850s, there were conflicting views about whether teaching met the prerequisites of becoming a profession. On the one hand, teachers are compared to Plato, Socrates, and Aristotle for their intelligence, taste, and morality (Meeting of the Rhode Island State Teachers' Institute, 1859, p. 354). There is a recognition that teaching ".... has steadily advanced in dignity and public favor....as second to no other in importance and respectability (I.F.C, 1958, p. 227)
At the same time, during the 1850s, there was concern that teaching had yet to reach the standards of a dignified profession. One study attributed the lack of dignity in teachers to be derived from feudal times when "peaceful professions" were held in contempt by society. (The Dignity of the Teachers Work, 1853). While others believe that teachers are "...kind of drone growing fat, and lazy on light work and leisure time" (W.T.A., 1859, p 244). Lack of professional pride is also cited as a cause for lack of dignity in the profession.

A large proportion of those now in the field appear to care but little for the honor and dignity of the profession; they enter upon the discharge of their duties, devoting but little time to professional study, to associations for improvement and elevation, and feel but little interest in giving rank and consideration their calling
(S., 1851, p. 232).

Called out for "croaking and whining" and only meeting the "low estimation of others," teachers in the 1850s were called upon to ask themselves, "What can I do to promote the proper dignity of the profession and to secure for it the highest respect of the community?" (The Dignity of the Teacher's Profession, 1850). As a result, three basic themes emerge from the literature about teaching as a profession: teacher qualifications, teacher associations, and wages.

The first basic theme that emerges from the literature was teacher quality. There was general concern in the 1850s that teachers lacked the necessary preparation to dignity the profession of teaching (Legislation Respecting Schools and Education, 1853). It was recognized that many people who entered the teaching profession did not have the qualifications needed to assume the dignity of the employment of being teachers. "The hireling, the ejected from other employments, the fop in letters, and the sluggard, should fly the vocation of educator" (The Instruments and Agencies to Be Employed by the Educator, 1854).

Does it not bear witness to a very poor state of public feeling when it was believed by too many…. When he who was neither strong enough to guide the plough, nor eloquent and learned enough to dignify a profession, was thought to be quite equal to holding the rod and teaching the elements? (American Institute of Instruction, 1855).

As such, creating prerequisites for teachers entering the profession is associated with dignifying the profession (Letter from a practical teacher, 1857; Legislation Respecting Schools and Education; 1853; W.R., 1856). For some, the creation of normal
schools for teachers is considered essential to dignifying teaching (Letter from a practical teacher, 1857; Legislation Respecting Schools and Education, 1853). Professional development opportunities are associated with dignifying the profession (C., 1855).

Teacher associations are also associated with teacher dignity and represent another basic theme in the research. Teacher associations were associated with teacher dignity in the 1850s. Teacher associations are considered valuable for enlarging the profession's dignity by increasing teachers' professional skills (Russell, 1857; J.H.T., 1852). If teaching is worth doing at all, it is worth doing well...such meetings have elevated the dignity of this hitherto somewhat belittled calling. It has proved that labor and study avail much to enhance the success of teachers. It expands the hearts of its votaries--it destroys the selfishness, which so often takes root, from the dull routine of the school-room--in fine, it elevates both the teachers and schools (State Teachers' Association, 1859, p. 244)

When teachers share their experiences and observations in teachers' associations, it is generally believed to benefit all teachers (Gay, 1857; Professional Obligations and Advancement, 1849; Russell, 1857; Walton, 1857). Part of the appeal of having teachers' associations is the teacher becoming a scholar (Teachers' Meetings, 1859). Teachers are called to teachers' associations:

If you know more than we, then it is your duty to come and teach us; if you know less, come and learn from us. If you think our mode of conducting affairs is not a good one, then cease fault-finding, and show us a better one. Take your place, be it high or low, among your fellow teachers, and do not imagine that by your knowledge or your ignorance, your dignity or your humility, you can rightly
escape the responsibilities you owe to the profession you have chosen (Gay, 1857, p.22)

Teachers' associations are considered important in building the profession of teaching nationally. When teachers from all over the United States join teachers' associations, they "advance the dignity, respectability, usefulness of [the teachers'] calling" by creating "one great Educational Brotherhood" that spans across the nation and states (Walton, 1857, p. 342). In addition, they are associated with establishing a public value for education and securing teachers' "professional dignity" (Massachusetts States Teachers' Association, 1848).

Teacher wages emerged as a basic theme in the 1850s. There was a great deal of tension regarding the treatment of teacher wages in the 1850s. Comparing teachers to the archangel Gabriel, some charge that the teaching profession is different from others and that teachers should rest their need for reward on faith alone:

The teacher worthy of his profession neither expects nor seeks compensation in a salary. He knows that no salary can equal in worth the value of his toils. He feels that he is dealing with that which is above all prices. He barters not with sugars and silks that minister to temporary comfort or vanity. He makes no merchandise of the passions of men. It is difficult for even the teacher himself fully to comprehend the true dignity of his labors. (The Teacher’s Rewards, 1850, p.119).

Conversely, others believe that for teaching to reach the status of a dignified profession, teacher salaries must be higher. It is believed that higher salaries and talent levels are needed in the field for teachers to reach the dignity of being professionals (The Teacher's Library, 1851; Drake et al., 1856). To raise teaching to the dignity of a
profession, the teacher must feel like they are worthy of being a professional: "we cannot expect that young men will make this profession of a life, unless there are some indecements appealing to that desire for progress and distinction.” (Drake et al., 1856, p. 354)

The second organizing theme that emerged during the 1850s is ideal teacher characteristics. Within this theme, teacher conduct and classroom management appear as basic themes. Many social and etiquette-based standards were considered essential to being a dignified teacher in the 1850s. Being patient and calm is further considered an essential characteristic of being a dignified teacher (Don't Fret, 1852; S.A.C., 1854; Teachers' Duties, 1853). Politeness, kindness, and gentle manners are praised as important teacher qualities (Vail, 1856). Having the ability to be accessible or friendly to children while exhibiting that they have a good nature and the ability to maintain a humane classroom is also praised as being dignified (S.J.P, 1857; Teachers' Duties, 1853). Self-respect and a high moral standard are associated with teacher dignity (Conversation between two Teachers, Miss A and Miss B, 1851; Gentlemanliness, 1857).

Notably, in the 1850s, It is recognized that there is danger of a teacher having too much dignity.

No cynic, no hermit, no Diogenes, no cold speculating philosopher is fit for a Teacher. He should have sweetness of disposition, affability of deportment, politeness of manners, dignity of person, agreeable colloquial powers, and a ready adaptation of himself to the great variety found in the social mass. Haughtiness, aristocratic feelings and notions, contempt for the poor and unfortunate,
harshness, boorishness, vulgarity, and degrading pleasures, or defiling habits, not only show bad moral qualities, but destructive and ruinous social qualities, which, if followed, would poison the fountains of social existence--the hearts of children (G.W.S., 1850, p.96).

Frequently, incompetent teachers or ones with little experience are cited as resting on their dignity (My First Term, 1854; The Instruments and Agencies to be Employed by the Educator; 1854). "Unattractive manners and inexcusable borrishments of deportment" are associated with teachers acting as "absolute clowns" (Gentlemanliness, 1857, p. 10). Not being indifferent to children or the profession is essential to having dignity as a teacher (Sherwood, 1856; "The Brown October," 1856). Some of the best teachers of the 1850s are praised as being "free from all assumed dignity" and earning respect and admiration from students (A.E., 1858, p. 187). Also, not complaining about areas of dissatisfaction was associated with teacher dignity (T., 1850). Notably, to reach these high standards of social conduct, it is recognized that for teachers to maintain a "natural dignity" they will need vacation time" (J.B., 1855).

The second basic theme to emerge from ideal teacher characteristics is classroom management. It was acknowledged in the 1850s that authority was one of the gifts of teaching. However, quality classroom management is associated with moving beyond old-fashioned notions of dignity to a system that emphasizes self-respect (Camp, 1851).

The Supreme Court decision in *Landers v. Seaver* (1859) creates a different framework for understanding teacher dignity in the 1850s. In *Landers v. Seaver*, a schoolmaster whips an 11-year-old boy, Peter Landers, in response to an insulting comment the student makes to the teacher the previous day off school grounds. Landers
is driving a cow past Seaver’s property with a group of other school boys and calls the
teacher “Old Jack Seaver.” The court cites the legal premise of *in loco parentis* to
discuss the response of the teacher. *In loco parentis* designates that when in school, the
teacher fulfills the roles and responsibilities of the parent (Bohlen, 1915). The Court
holds that Seaver is not to be held liable for the reasonable use of corporal
punishment. In its reasoning, the Court states that teachers must be able to determine
reasonable punishments based on considerations of the offense, student motive, the
disposition of the offender, as well as the influence the offense has on other students
(Bohlen, 1915; Bridinger, 1957).

Following *Landers v. Seaver*, an editorial was published by the Rhode Island
School Master (1859) on the topic of teacher dignity. Defining “real dignity” as “neither
frighten[ing] children nor disgust[ing] men,” the dignified teacher is said to be in
complete control of “…his sensibilities, his nerves, his muscles, his thoughts, words,
desires, [and] passions” (Meeting of the Rhode Island State Teachers’ Institute, 1859,
p.153). In accordance with the Court's decision, being able to diagnose and remedy
student discipline issues in a logical, controlled fashion is associated with teacher
dignity. Mann (1868) supports these sentiments in his annual report on education. He
states that when the teacher's dignity, pedagogy, and moral persuasion fail to prevent
laziness or constrain recalcitrant behaviors among pupils, the teacher’s physical strength
is a remedy for encouraging reform in the classroom.

During this time, the teacher's control over their faculties is associated with
acquisition of power; power influences student perceptions of teacher dignity. "So in the
school-room, it is next to impossible for a sickly, feeble young man to govern a school of
hearty, vigorous lads under ordinary circumstances, unless he possess strong will and
determination and knows how to wield them” (Meeting of the Rhode Island State
Teachers’ Institute, 1859, p.153). While noting that teachers need not have “the frame of
a Hercules” to manage a classroom or be a dignified teacher, it is generally thought that a
teacher’s ability to respond to student misbehavior is essential to the protection of their
dignity.

Where there is true dignity, there will be no flinching or vacillation when the
crisis comes, no excess of excitement under the test of motives or in cases
requiring deliberate action, for certain of his own integrity the teacher cannot be
moved by trivial causes” (“A Suggestion,” 1855, p.154).

Progressive teachers in the 1850s are praised for not letting their dignity get in the
way of being discreet in dealing with classroom infractions (S., 1851). Moreover, they
are encouraged to work with parents when questions emerge about the classroom instead
of resting on "false dignity" (Vail, 1856, p. 370). However, it is noted that in these
progressive approaches, teachers "...should not forget the dignity of his profession, nor
place himself entirely on a level with his pupils” (The Cheerful Teacher, 1856, p. 216).

As society moved more toward a national system of education and the widespread
use of public schools, teacher dignity became a prominent topic of conversation in
educational research. During this decade, there is skepticism that teachers will be able to
adjust their dignity and meet the qualifications of a more rigid professional standard of
teaching without resting on the dignity of their positions as had been an acceptable
practice in the past. As more students are ushered into the classroom, issues about the
qualifications and attributes of ideal teachers become more widespread. Unlike The Zip
(zipper), that revolutionized clothing at this time, professionals did not flock to the profession of education in the 1850s. In the 1850s, increased tension emerged between the people working in schools and the public who financed them.

**1860-1869.**

The 1860’s was a turbulent decade in the United States. The Civil War created turbulence in the nation during the first five years of the decade. Meanwhile, movements to instill public schools as a foundation of American society continued into the 1860s. Despite teacher shortages and continued debate about the role of common schools in the United States, teacher dignity continued to emerge as a topic of discussion. During the 1860s, organizing themes that emerge from the literature included teaching as a profession and ideal teacher characteristics (see figure 5)

**Figure 5**

*1860-1869 Theme Matrix*

Workforce considerations are an organizing theme of the 1860s. The two basic themes that emerge from the research include teacher qualifications and wages.

*Teacher qualifications* are a basic theme that emerge from the literature. Successful and dignified practitioners in the common school are said to be qualified
individuals—those with “a thorough acquaintance with practical teaching in all grades of schools, --men who are qualified to direct the machinery of the school-room, as well as to comprehend and unfold the profoundest principles of education” (The Board of Education, 1860, p. 106).

The professional training of teachers gained momentum in the literature of the 1860s. Generally speaking, becoming a qualified teacher is associated with teacher training. To a large extent, the normal school is credited for bringing dignity to the teaching profession.

that the Normal School has greatly improved the condition of a large number of our schools, introduced greater independence of textbooks in conducting recitations, and better methods of teaching, or influence, and of discipline, increased the proportion of female teachers, promoted greater permanency in the office, and favored associated efforts of teachers for mutual improvement and elevated popular sentiment in regard to the true nature of education, the qualifications requisite for teaching, the importance, and dignity of the profession, and the wisdom and necessity of the more liberal support of public schools (B.G.N, 1860, p299).

An increase in funding for normal schools training teachers is associated with providing a greater supply of teachers with higher levels of “usefulness and dignity” (Resident Editor’s Department, 1860, p.108). Notably, teacher shortages in the 1860s lead some educational leaders to believe that the common school may be able to provide a teacher with “suitable dignity” (Report of the Principal, 1868). “Old fogies” who taught during the era before the common school are also noted for being:
very respectable and quite useful. They are like the stones which the farmer
sometimes puts upon his harrow, making it harder for the willing animals to draw,
but striking the teeth deeper, and causing the work to be more thoroughly
done. A genuine aristocratic old fogy, who is educated up to the position he
claims, wins our respect. We cannot help wishing him more sympathetic and
more willing to impart his light; but we try to be satisfied that we are permitted to
walk in the shadow of his dignity. For the fun loving, amiable old fogy, we
confess a strong love, though we do sometimes want to shake him out of his
boots. All sorts of men are needed, and, one way or another, all aid in working
out the grand result (Old Fogy Teachers, 1861, p. 152).

Educational leaders of the 1860s sought to fill teaching positions with
experienced and new teachers willing to enter the profession. However, there is general
acceptance that continual teacher training is needed to create a competent workforce. One
1860s solution to teacher training dilemmas is the development of academic publications
that discuss issues concerning teaching.

We are doing something to raise the occupation of teaching to the dignity of a
profession…. If we are to have good teachers, we must also have the aid of the
press. Methods of instruction and discipline must be discussed, and the
experience of other States and countries must be made available here. (Back
Matter, 1866, p. 3, para 15).

While academic journals were seen to enhance the teacher’s dignity, textbooks
that supply keys for student work are considered a problem for the teacher’s dignity.
There was concern that supplying teachers with keys may be an attempt to make
“education easy” and ultimately devalue the teacher (E.P., 1862, p. 248).

Another basic theme that emerges from the literature about teaching as a profession is teacher wages. To raise the teachers’ dignity and raise their wages, California legislators promoted a teacher certification program to create “a higher sense of dignity and importance of their profession, and more expertise in fitting themselves for work (Teacher’s Certificates in California, 1869, p. 285).

There was a general push to increase wages and funding to make education a more dignified profession in the 1860s (Duzenbury in Search of a Salary, 1863; Resident Editor’s Department, 1860). For example, a retired merchant advocated for a $50 increase in the salary for teachers because: “he wanted a gentleman to instruct his children, not a boor who had failed in everything else, and took up teaching as a last resort…he would not have a man to teach his children, whom he would not trust to take care of his oxen” (Duzenbury in Search of a Salary, 1863, p. 13-14).

Increased wages are associated with more effective recruitment of scholarly individuals with cultivated skills (Duzenbury in Search of a Salary, 1863).

The second organizing theme that emerged from the literature in the 1860s was ideal teacher characteristics. Teacher conduct emerged as a basic theme. Like the 1850s, good manners are emphasized as critical characteristics of dignified teachers (E.A.C., 1867, The State Normal School at Farmington, 1868; Weston, 1868). Stamping one’s “foot angrily at pupils” or “blustering” about matters instead of inculcating good manners in students is considered undignified (E.A.C., 1867, p.15). Instead, the literature praises high intellectual capacity (Fletcher, 1868; The State Normal School at Farmington, 1868) and character as important teacher characteristics.
The teacher's duties demand the best qualities, of head and heart, a clear understanding of the principles of knowledge which he is to teach, a sound judgment to regulate matters of school discipline and class recitation, that true dignity of deportment and kindness of manner which secures respect and love (Fletcher, 1868, p. 213).

Dignity of character and a Christian dignity, including a calling to be in the profession, also embodied ideal teacher traits (Economy in Hours for Study, 1869; Object Teaching, 1865; The State Normal School at Farmington, 1868). Those who “...rise to the true dignity of the teacher’s profession” are those who teach without regard to political views but instead offer “... free access to the truth” (Object Teaching, 1865, p.300-301). Notably, having too much dignity in the 1960s is associated with “clownishness and foppery” (Weston, 1868). As well as the ability to “[k]ill[] many a good, jolly soul, who otherwise could have done great things (The Week, 1869, p.244)

The ability to manage a classroom is also a basic theme that comes to embody the dignified teacher. Teachers who possessed self-control in the 1860s were considered dignified (Economy in Hours for Study, 1869; Fletcher, 1868; The Teacher as a Talker, 1863; Warren, 1867). During the 1860s, there was considerable emphasis on a dignified teacher having a “presence” in the school room where a “nod or a glance” would act as effective discipline in the classroom (GTF, 1869). Being “somber” was associated with having dignity, whereas smiling was recognized as a potential force to diminish the teacher’s dignity (M, 1868, p. 455). Moreover, when teachers act like Hercules, “a god of real force,” students pay attention, intellectual activity is stimulated, and order in the classroom is established (Huntington, 1868, p. 22)
Corporal punishment is considered a progressive reform of the 1860s. It is considered an effective way of dealing with “wayward pupils” and teaching “...healthy habits of obedience to just laws, in the family, in the school, and in the state” (C.H., 1868, p. 127). In contrast to lecturing pupils on matters of morality, when the teacher could use corporal punishment, “the power of silence” and “the force of a motion or look” became more powerful. In this way, the teacher’s true dignity and self-respect were protected from “bad boys”: “Such a one may strike if occasion requires, but will never scold” (The Teacher as a Talker, 1863, p. 291)

Teachers are considered trusted adults to implement corporal punishment because “...he would be conscious of unworthiness” and call into question “his true dignity and manliness” if misused (Willis, 1869, p. 260). Moreover, the use of corporal punishment by the dignified teacher ensured a calm environment in the school. Notably, if the teacher is not dignified, neither “shouts” nor “blows” were proven to restore order in the classroom (C.E.E.M., 1863). While the court upholds that corporeal punishment is effective as a method of classroom discipline, they are clear that it should not be used to protect the dignity of a teacher. The Court's decision stated that “...there must be a reasonable and proper occasion for the use of force....it must be for the good of the pupil and the other scholars, not for the purpose of satisfying the irritated temper of the teacher or his personal dignity (Case of Nathaniel T. Allen, of West Newton, Charged with Unreasonable Severity in the Punishment of a Pupil, 1865, p. 107)

During the 1860s, many of the themes of the 1850s concerning teacher dignity were present. There is still concern over the qualification and pay of teachers and the qualities that society wants the teacher to emulate. As schools struggled to fill teaching
positions in the 1860s, wages and needed qualifications for teachers became popular matters of discussion. Parents and society members sought to protect teachers' dignity by teaching students’ compliance to laws and rules in the classroom. Meanwhile, attracting teachers to want to enter the profession continued to be a struggle as society's most qualified professionals sought jobs elsewhere.

1870-1879.

The 1870s was a decade of significant technological development and change. Thomas Edison illuminated the world with his electric light while teaching people to rock out (even if musical talent was absent) with the invention of the phonograph. Alexander Graham Bell’s version of the telephone allowed people to talk with electricity. In schools, the 1870s will also herald in new ways of thinking about education and the qualifications of teachers. Two organizing themes emerged from the literature in the 1870s: Best practices in education and teaching as a profession (see figure 6).

Best practices in education in the 1870s included basic themes in classroom management and teaching techniques. Classroom management in the 1870s had a strong emphasis on cheer and fun (Cawber, 1878; The Week, 1879) It is noted that it is okay for teachers “...to be both loved and respected” (The Week, 1879, p. 245). Moreover, the teacher that is cheerful and pleasant was shown to have “...pupils [that] yielded a cheerful and prompt obedience (Cawber, 1878, p. 206). The teacher with patience continued to be considered one with dignity (Style in Teaching, 1873). In the 1870’s, it was believed that the dignity of a teacher could be dangerous (The Week, 1879). The dignity of the teacher who spends most of his time “flogging” and using “the rod” is questioned in the 1870s (Public Opinion, 1877).
During the 1870’s, people questioned if instantaneous obedience was necessary to protect the teacher’s dignity (Allyn, 1870). Decisions to use corporal punishment are questioned as being “...one-sided or partial decisions” that are made based on the need for “natural perseverance of the teacher” as well as an often “hasty impulse; from ignorance of the nature of justice; and from mistaken notions of pedagogic dignity” (The One-Sided Abuse, 1878, p.185). Instead, schools were called upon to hire teachers with “natural tact, dignity, and force of character required to impress and control a number of children” (Public Opinion, 1877, para 7.). Getting to know one’s students and trying to “court the love of his pupils” is not considered beneath the dignity of a teacher in the 1870s (Parkinson, 1874). School gardening is recommended as an activity that could help classroom discipline. It helps the teacher “get[] a glimpse of the inner-self of his pupils, which through mistaken notions of dignity and useless formalities, is too often totally hidden from him” (Hoxie, 1877, p. 74).

Best practices in teaching techniques also become a basic theme relating to
teacher dignity. “Old humdrum methods of question and answer and ding-dong interludes of authority” are questioned to bring a “scholarly dignity” to classroom learning (G.C.F, 1870, p 144). Teachers who strive to engage students in learning activities (instead of routine “text work”) are praised in the 1870s for bringing dignity to the office of a teacher (Use and Abuse of Textbooks, 1879). Specifically, direct dogmatic teaching is praised as adding dignity to the teacher’s office (Allen, 1870). While most sources discussed ways to increase the teacher’s dignity through teacher techniques, another perspective blamed teacher dignity for impeding meaningful classroom learning.

The work goal of life ought not to squeeze all the juice of faith out of the old teacher. Dignity has killed many a good, jolly souls, who otherwise could have done great good…. If learning makes men morose and repulsive, we want none of it. Give it to hermits and anarchists. Let us laugh and grow fat, tell stories, romp with boys and girls, weep when it is necessary…. If there is anything in us to be respected, anything that is not a sham and a humbug, we shall be respected.... Teachers! wake up to the fun of life as well as to its wisdom; do right, but anyhow, be happy. Don't put it on as a coat, but let sunshine beam out of you everywhere (The Week, 1879, p.244)

As the 1870s teacher experimented with new techniques to enhance student learning, class sizes also became associated with teacher dignity. It was believed that increased class sizes would diminish the dignity of the office of the teacher (Elliott, 1874).

Teaching as a profession also emerged as an organizing theme in the 1870s. During the 1870s, there were many arguments used to support making teaching a
profession. While some believed that “the work of education [would only] rise in dignity and grandeur” with the establishment of a national department of education (Notes, 1877, paragraph 9), the majority of the literature supports that teacher characteristics, teacher qualifications, and wages would propel the profession to one with dignity.

Teacher qualifications were a basic theme that emerged from the literature. Teacher qualifications were enlarged in the 1870s to include knowledge “...in the development of the mind” and “rational methods adapted to these processes” to aid in student learning (Public Opinion, 1879, p. 287). Teacher certificates (Educational Intelligence, 1879; Editorial, 1871) and diplomas from normal schools (Dunton, 1877; Editorial, 1871) are emphasized as dignity makers. When states like Connecticut did not accept a normal school diploma or teacher certificate, they were accused of preventing teaching from reaching the standard of a profession (Editorial, 1871).

Some shortages in normal schools are attributed to problems with finding qualified teachers capable of dignifying the profession (Dunton, 1877). Teacher’s associations and conventions are cited as vital to putting the teaching profession into a “place of dignity” (Connecticut, 1877, p. 285; The One-Sided Abuse, 1878). Meanwhile, some argued that if education ever wanted to become a profession, they must find “…broad, liberal, successful men…[who] can confer dignity upon the profession (Chicago, 1879, p. 246)

Ideal teacher characteristics are another basic theme that emerged from the literature. It is warned that education will never reach the status of a dignified profession unless teachers have “Thorough preparation” and an “untiring” quest to “keep pace with…progress” (Orcutt, 1875, para 10)
“Dignity of manners and purity of conduct” is emphasized along with the ability to “elevate humanity” (Morton, 1874, p. 581). A connection to spiritual endeavors and “self-sacrifice” are also emphasized (Kraus-Boelte, 1877; Morton, 1874). Loving children is further considered an ideal for a dignified teacher (Kraus-Boelte, 1876; Kraus-Boelte, 1877; Morton, 1874). Character (Tingley & Russell, 1879) and “[A] knowledge of the difficulties of her work, and appreciation of the sad consequences of mistakes” is also associated with teacher dignity (Kraus-Boelte, 1876, p.98; Kraus-Boelte, 1877, p.69). Being able to keep order, be self-reliant, clean, truthful, and obedient, as well as polite, respectful, and reverent, were also praised as traits of the dignified teacher (C.C.R., 1870). Moreover, the ideal teacher understood the weight of their position in teaching the skills needed to make the republic function (Orcutt, 1877).

[W]e occupy a more responsible position than either [Socrates or Plato]. We are not only permitted to teach in the American republic but to live and act amid the stirring scenes which distinguish the opening of the second century of our nation’s independence. Let us realize the dignity of our position and the weight of our responsibility (Orcutt, 1877, p. 74).

Teachers who rolled up their sleeves to paint their blackboards were associated with being “earnest,” “enthusiastic,” and “hard-working” in building up dignity in the profession of education (Morton, 1874, p. 288).

A final basic theme in the professionalization of teaching is teacher pay. Tenure and security of income are associated with giving dignity to the teacher's position (Eliot, 1875, p. 255). Teachers are encouraged to improve their qualifications and “fitness for their work” in order to convince members of the public that their dignity is worthy of
“generous compensation for their labors” (A.P.S., 1871, p. 5). In addition to providing a source of professional development for teachers in the 1870s, educational journals credit themselves for increasing teachers’ salaries and “elevating the vocation to the dignity of a ‘profession’” (Good Advice, 1876, p. 77).

It became evident in the 1870s that if teachers wanted to keep up with fast pacing changes in American society, that change was imminent. As American society was electrified, American teachers were forced to confront the changing realities of 19th-century America. What did not change in the 1870s was teachers’ desire to attain dignity and society’s reluctance to grant it to them.

1880-1889.

The 1880’s celebrated the power of entrepreneurship and ideas. From the debut of toilet paper to the invention of the first practical fountain pen, the 1880s were all about improving life’s practicality, functionality, and efficiency. While the steam turbine and alternating current motor and transformers were taking factories and transportation by storm, consumers also learned to enjoy the luxuries of Coca-Cola and the first roller coaster (Bellis, 2019). Education, progressive reforms of the 1880s also sought to revolutionize the common school and settle issues concerning teacher dignity. Hence, in the 1880s, the organizing themes of teacher professionalism, ideal teacher characteristics, and best practices in education (see Figure 7)

The first organizing theme that emerged from the literature in the 1880s was teacher professionalism. Basic themes of staff retention, teacher tenure, academic journals, and teacher wages emerged from the literature.

The battle to retain teachers and transform teaching into a profession emerged as a
basic theme in the 1880s. Due to the occupation of teachers being "largely filled with temporary occupants," it is said to have "small claims to the dignity of a profession" (Public Opinion, 1880, para 3). It is noted that if schools were organized to look more like a business and if teachers worked together cooperatively, "...the teacher's calling [may transition] to the true dignity of a profession" (Luke, 1885, p.10)

Teacher tenure also emerged as a basic theme in the 1880s. The permanency of teaching positions is considered paramount to dignifying the profession (Massachusetts & Maine, 1880, p. 26). "[T]he barbarism of an annual election" is associated with "terrify[ing] the hard-working teacher" (Massachusetts & Maine, 1880, p.22). Prior to teacher tenure, "[a] mark made against a name in the book was sufficient to the cause the dismissal of that teacher without a hearing, and irrespective of quality or length of service" (Massachusetts & Maine, 1880, p.22) A general lack of "independence in professional activity" is associated with the denial of teachers "professional dignity" (Douai, 1880, p. 228). It was believed that dignity would be increased in the teaching profession if teachers with "good behavior" would "...not be subjected to the risk of annual elections" (A.N., 1880, p 412). Tenure is associated with increasing the dignity of the teacher because it enabled the teacher to take "initiative" and become "animate[d]" as they were able to "bring out ideas and methods of their own" (The Week, 1880, p.201). The teacher who developed "ideas and methods of their own" was known for increasing the "dignity of their position in the eyes of the community and of the committee themselves" (The Week, 1880, p.201).
Academic journals also emerged as a basic theme in the 1880s. Academic journals continued to be emphasized as necessary to the teacher’s dignity in the 1880s. Journals are emphasized as creating "a more exalted notion of the dignity and responsibility of the [teachers’] work” (A Chat with Young Teachers, 1880, p. 229). Notably, criticism of women teachers in society, and journals particularly, is charged with causing them to put on "fine airs of personal dignity in the face of a storm of criticism" (185). There is concern that such criticism may lead women to stop reading
academic journals and turn their focus elsewhere (Take a Journal of Education, 1880, p. 185).

Teacher wages represent another basic theme of the 1880s. During the 1880s, it was believed that those who chose to teach were forced to "...put up with half a martyrdom" in terms of pay. (Douai, 1880, p. 228). Female teachers known to give dignity to the profession were known for being paid so little that they made "...much less than that of the ordinary, shiftless servant girl". They were known for having to depend on "...the kindness of relatives or friendship of her profession [to] minister to her declining days and give her burial" (Educational Extinguishers, 1880, p. 297). The lack of wages for teachers is associated with making the profession "a steppingstone to more attractive professions" for men and young women leaving the profession when they became "eagerly in demand for wives" (Douai, 1880, p. 228).

Ideal teacher characteristics also emerged as an organizing theme during the 1880s. Within this theme, teacher etiquette and teacher qualifications emerged as basic themes.

Teacher etiquette of the 1880s is associated with the teacher's morality (Pettengill, 1885; Ohio, 1880; At Chautauqua, 1880). Teachers being "truthful" and or not trying to build up a "sham of dignity [based] on the assumption of universal knowledge and infallible wisdom" is considered a best practice in the classroom. Teachers must be able to help students "perform right and praiseworthy actions till they become habits." To do so, teachers "should maintain a becoming dignity of deportment, never trifle with his pupils, and beware of that excessive familiarity that proverbially breeds contempt (Pettengill, 1885, p. 3). Speaking poorly of fellow teachers was associated with "...the
exhibition of a petty spirit, beneath the dignity of the teachers' profession (Ohio, 1880, p. 107)

Teacher qualifications emerged as a basic theme of ideal teacher characteristics in the 1880s. Emphasis on normal school education for teachers is emphasized as being essential to teachers. Access to normal schools continued to be problematic for many teachers. "A program for pedagogic study, with reference to suitable courses of reading, would awaken thousands of teachers now plodding along in 'ways that are dark,' and give them their first intimidation of the breadth and dignity of the profession (Drift, 1880, p. 153; The Week, 1880).

The final organizing theme of the 1880s is best practices in education. Teaching techniques and classroom management emerged as basic themes. Teachers in the 1880s were called upon to adjust their teaching techniques. In the 1880s, it became unacceptable for teachers to hide "beneath the dignity of [their] work" and not teach students how to behave and learn (Knowlton, 1883, p. 4). As such, teachers are called on to imitate good manners to students and to use direct instruction if needed to teach "..... ignorant ones how to enter and to leave a room; how to sit, to stand, to eat; how to behave on the streets and in other public places; how to act at home and in school" (Knowlton, 1883, p. 4).

It is suggested in the literature that teachers had failed in their efforts to effectively "cultivate proper emotions [in students] and to subdue those that are ruinous to their morals" (Easily, 1883, p. 4). Due to this failure, the literature supports that teachers rarely possess real dignity (Easily, 1883). Instead, teachers are accused of hiding behind false dignity and failing to meet the needs of the common school in educating
students. Teachers who do not utilize new techniques to improve learning are said to have assumed "dignities that do not belong to him" (Alling, 1880, p. 292). The use of “snobbery” and conceit among teachers with "assumptions of dignity" is considered a common school problem (Alling, 1880, p.292). Moreover, the literature reflects that students' learning can be "retarded by the influence of [teachers]" (Easly, 1883, p. 3).

The last basic theme to emerge from the literature was classroom management. Like in the 1870s, there are different schools of thought about the role of dignity in classroom management. On the one hand, in the 1870s, it is noted that there is "...little danger of erring too much on the side of dignity." One school of thought in the 1880s was the necessity of teaching students to "feel reverence for authority." Teachers are encouraged to use a "natural gentleness of kindly feeling and interest in imparting instruction" (Perry, 1880, p. 22). The other perspective about the classroom emphasizes the governance of a classroom similar to one that would govern the United States in the 1880s. As such, speaking above the understanding levels of students with "words spoken in tones freezing their dignity and painful in their 'accuracy' are discouraged for an approach that embraces "...common sense in the school room" (Common Sense in the School Room, 1884, p. 73). It is noted that boys, in particular, "...do not like the stern dignity and feral looks which some teachers put on in the school room, from the mistaken idea that it is necessary to maintain order" (King, 1880, p.277). Boys are also noted for liking "...cheerful, bright rooms, adorned with flowers and pictures (King, 1880, p. 277).

The 1880s was a decade of innovation and change. As society embraced the common school as a tool for advancement, teachers struggled to meet expectations for the profession and themselves. Recruiting and retaining quality teachers capable of bringing
dignity to the education profession was a significant issue in the 1880s. Wages and teacher tenure were both identified as issues that could help. However, ultimately, by the end of the 1880s, the teacher's dignity was clearly in flux and in danger of disappearing altogether.

1890-1899.

The 1890s was a decade of enormous change. Immigrants streamed through Ellis Island in New York City, the Pledge of Allegiance was first stated in American Schools, and Wrigley invented the first piece of chewing gum—a product schools continue to grapple with today. At the close of the 19th century, the common school, and its virtues in teaching principles of democracy and good habits were praised. Teacher dignity during the decade became classified according to the organizing themes of teaching as a profession and ideal teacher characteristics (see Figure 8).

Teaching as a profession emerged as an organizing theme in the 1890s. During the 1890s, there was greater emphasis on teachers making their professional contributions noticeable to the public (Brooks, 1894). It is noted that the teacher’s “dignity,” “influence,” and “power” are incalculable in their ability to perpetuate the American Republic through the common school (Winship, 1898, p. 256). A bill to give teachers fixed tenure is stated as giving teachers a notion of professional “dignity and freedom from the harassing control of local trustees” (Editorial, 1898, p. 128). Teacher qualifications, professional organizations, institutions, and teacher benefits emerged as basic themes during the decade.

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Teacher qualifications continued to be a basic theme in the 1890s. During the 1890s, teaching continued to be debated on its merits as a profession instead of a trade. Professions are distinguished in the literature from trades based on the emphasis on “learned preparation.” Learned professions are said to differ from trades that instead focus on manual and mental dexterity (Kelsey, 1896, p. 596). For teachers entering secondary schools, a “better general education and professional preparation” are associated with “…raising the general status and dignity of the teaching profession” (Current Educational Literature, 1896, p. 645).

While society grappled with ways to increase teacher qualifications in common schools, teacher competency tests were called upon in place of student competency tests. If the high-pressure written examinations [are] not decidedly beneficial to the child, we may find that it may be a benefit to the teacher.... The mental discipline for the teacher is repeated as many times as there are pupils in the school and opportunities for examining them. Thus, the teacher's task has a tendency to make the profession grow in sobriety, dignity, and work, while development is given to both brain and spirit (Powers, 1893, p.324)
Figure 8

1890-1899 Theme Matrix

Teachers who did not support the transition from student competency tests to certificates from school are accused of trying to protect their dignity (Moore, 1896).

The use of normal schools to train teachers became a source of controversy in the 1890s. Normal schools are criticized for having “various degrees of efficiency” and as “...far from being ideal” (Smiles, 1892, p. 205). Meanwhile, others found that universities not specializing in teaching also presented challenges in creating an effective teacher workforce. While universities are noted for preparing teachers for the scholastic demands of teaching, it is noted that they “...tend to lower the worth and dignity of the profession of teaching” (Lyte, 1895, p. 364). In addition, universities, in contrast to the normal school, were accused of educating teachers “.... away from the child and the branches with which the teacher of the child must deal (Lyte, 1895, p. 364).

Professional organizations are also emphasized as a basic theme in the 1890s. Professional organizations are recognized as providing dignity to teachers (Boston Teachers’ Club, 1899; Smiles, 1892; Educational Intelligence, 1896; Largest and Best Meeting of the NEA). The formation of the National Education Association (NEA) is
associated with advancing the dignity of the teaching profession (Smiles, 1892, p. 108; Largest and Best Meeting of the NEA, 1899). Teachers’ associations “...promote the general welfare of our country by concentrating the wisdom and power of the numerous minds, and by distributing among them the accumulated experiences of all (Smiles, 1892, p. 108). They are also associated with adding “dignity and permanency to the vocation of teaching” (Largest and Best Meeting of the NEA, p.111). The Buffalo Women’s Teachers’ Association also notes the importance of building “community” in the “teachers’ profession” to create “...a deeper sense of the dignity of the teacher’s profession” (Educational Intelligence, 1896, p. 36). For example, the creation of a department of physical education by the National Education Association is associated with giving dignity to teachers of physical education (Council Committee, 1895, p. 117)

Ideal teacher characteristics are also an organizing theme that emerged in the 1890s. The basic theme of character and best practices in education emerged within this theme. The teacher’s character traits emerged as a basic theme in the 1890s. In the 1890s, there was not as much emphasis on teacher wages as during past decades. As such, the teacher is “called” to be a model of morality through their willingness to accept a lower income and higher social dignity is associated with teacher dignity (James, 1895, p. 433). In the 1890s, dignity was associated with the teacher’s ability to use courtesy, dress appropriately, and act with character (Educational Intelligence, 1896, p.100). It is believed that, unlike other vocations, teachers must be held to “...a greater purity of character and a higher standard of moral excellence” (Dungeon et al., 1893, p. 77). The formation of character in the classroom is said to occur when the teacher models and has students practice “...obedience, punctuality, courtesy, and exactness” (Lawrence, 1899, p.
92). In this way, students and teachers alike establish good habits, avoid sins, and reach the standard of dignity (Lawrence, 1899)

To maintain a position of dignity, teachers are called upon to be just in their decision-making— to make “amends for being in error” (Mutch, 1896, p. 380). Moreover, behaviors that are “unbecoming to the dignity of the teacher” are cited as including “criticiz[ing] a predecessor, “gossip[ing] about the failures and faults of other teachers,” and “slander[ing] a fellow teacher” (Dungeon et al., 1893, p. 77).

Best practices in education also emerged as a basic theme supporting ideal teacher characteristics. Having a firm grasp of content information and methods of teaching is associated with teachers having a “manly spirit,” being “open-minded,” “magnanimous,” and having the ability to teach with “dignity” (Dungeon et al., 1893, p. 77). Teachers who can explain and expound on lessons are praised as dignified (Seliney, 1890). In contrast, those who let their professional dignity prevent them from using new techniques to “help the dullest child” are scorned for harming the profession (Editorial, 1898, p. 129). Working with parents to teach proper conduct to students is also associated with teacher dignity (Mutch, 1896).

During the 1890s, the ability of the teacher to use pedagogy and methods to support student learning became emphasized. Specialization of instruction is associated with teacher dignity by giving “…an inexhaustible interest to the teacher’s function.” The teacher also gained dignity by becoming a “…deep source of intellectual enthusiasm and growth” (Eliot et al., 1894, p. 92). A teacher who can move beyond teaching content information to embrace “…the spirit of the poet and the artist” is associated with creating a “new dignity” in the field of education (Arnold, 1892, p. 329).
At the turn of the 20th century, the common school continued to grapple with the high social values of the school with its ability to retain and recruit quality individuals to serve in the profession. The teacher's dignity in the 1890s can be considered as much a virtue as a vice to the teacher's success. During this decade, teachers are called to move past their feelings to embrace their critical social function while changing their approaches to teaching altogether. As a dignified professional, the teacher shares knowledge of best practices and employs them in their classroom. They must do so collaboratively and without complaint to reach society's standard. Without universal tenure laws, many teachers of the 1890s find themselves encapsulated in Wrigley's sticky situation as they strive to meet new societal standards for dignified teachers without professional protections afforded to them.

**The First Half of the Twentieth Century.**

By the early 1900’s, the level of education a teacher earned was correlated with teacher dignity (Dexter, 1904; Foght, 1917). A social argument emerges that argues for increased education among rural secondary teachers to add “dignity” and a new sense of responsibility to secondary schools. Moreover, “…[T]eacher preparation will add dignity and new sense of responsibility to the tasks of the secondary schools” (Foght, 1917, p.5)

The transition from private grammar schools to publicly funded schools required a new way of thinking. During colonial times, the grammar school served white, aristocratic men from wealthy families. Conversely, the common school provides an education for all men and women (Belding, 1930).

As the common school became increasingly popular in the 1920s and 1930s, a school for the education of all children, the teacher is called upon to reassess student
teacher relationships and dignity. In the 1930s, character education or progressivism was emphasized over student achievement (Egan, 1932). During this time, education becomes an essential tool to provide all children the necessary knowledge needed to become socially responsible citizens and collaborative group members. Through education, children learn the entrepreneurial skills needed to combat problems that may arise from capitalism such as the formation of monopolies (Berube & Nelson, 1995).

As the school becomes a venue for the education of industrial workers as well as future professionals, agricultural workers, and housewives, dignity takes on new meaning in the literature. Starting in the 1930s, out of necessity as well as a desire of a labor force to adapt to sweeping economic changes, a new emphasis of technical education emerges in public schools. In a child’s education, “the necessity and dignity of work” to instill character as well as industrial skills is emphasized (Proffitt, 1938, p.1).

1900-1909.

During the 1900s, developments such as windscreen wipers, air conditioning, and electric washing machines revolutionized daily living. As people sought to develop "hanging" new inventions like radar and tea bags ("Inventions that Shook the World: 1900s, 2022), schools were also undergoing considerable changes. At the turn of the 20th century, 78% of American children between the ages of 5 and 17 were enrolled in schools for about eight years (encyclopedia.com, 2023). In the 1900s, two organizing themes emerged: the teacher's role in educational systems and the dignity of work (see Figure 9).
During the first decade of the 20th century, American schools sought to restructure themselves to imitate a corporate business. The superintendent became the CEO of schools and educational leaders’ managers within school systems (Encycloedia.com, 2022). At the same time, structural changes made to education systems brought on new perspectives of teacher dignity. These are apparent within the basic themes of administrative/teacher differentiation, effective teaching practices, and issues concerning teacher pay.

While the number of available sources to analyze from the early 1900s is limited, issues related to teacher dignity indicate a conflict of perspective among teachers, administrators, and community members. For one administrator, teacher compliance with progressive ideas in education is superior to the teacher's dignity. "The best thing a teacher can do with his dignity…is to do without it" ("Boxing as Relish, 1907, p. 578). Teacher dignity is also scorned when teachers are unwilling to "...wash up the
dishes or scrub the sinks because it is beneath her dignity to do it" (Talbot, 1904, 732). If teachers do not embrace such work, then their competence in the classroom is also questioned. "Unless her pupils see that she helps merely because of the pressure of her other work, she will also fail to teach that lesson which nearly every American child most needs…respect for honest work" (Talbot, 1904, p. 732).

The boss-employee relationship and mentality are also discussed in relationship with teacher dignity. Unlike small schools with fewer administrators and more cooperation, a danger is said to exist in large school systems where it is easier for administrators to lose touch with employees and the actual functioning of schools. Administrators are said to only achieve dignity themselves "by sitting at the feet of the teacher [so that] they may know what children need. This will bring them the true dignity that belongs to higher service" (Jackman, 1906, p. 271). In this way, the "organization" of school systems possess an inherent threat to teacher work and dignity (Jackman, 1906).

The benefits and pay of teachers in the early 1900s are also associated with teacher dignity. The topic of teacher pay, even among unions, is said to "lack" dignity (McAndrew, 1903). Like Supreme Court Justices, teachers are said to make less money because of the prestige of their professional positions. "The dignity and respectability of the work enable the public to secure greater ability for less money than in private industry" (Phillips, 1905, p. 619-620). At the same time, teacher tenure is associated with enhanced teacher dignity. Teacher tenure is said to provide "dignity, independence, and freedom" to the teacher by freeing them from the stress of "securing an annual re-election, and from apprehension of reduction of pay (Eliot, 1902, p. 296).
A second organizing theme from 1900 to 1910 is dignity work itself. Within this organizing theme, two basic themes emerge—the respectability of educators and teacher training. By the early 1900s, the level of education a teacher earned was correlated with teacher dignity (Dexter, 1904). Teachers are noted for being in a profession that requires various skills: kindness, patience, a duty to society, morality, and professionalism. "And the teacher who can measure up to this standard is always esteemed for her wisdom, respected for her zeal…No profession calls for greater skill…. No other work is more difficult. None requires such wisdom, such tact, and such patience" (Hamilton, 1902, para 2-3). In this respect, a teacher's dignity is associated with the ability to confer dignity on others. The teacher's ability to instill dignity in others is reflected in a 1909 beatitude: "Blessed are they who teach the dignity of labor, for they shall regenerate the earth" (Women School Teachers, 1907). In addition, the "dignity and greatness of the teacher's office" is associated with the worth they provide children and the nation (Morris, 1909).

The education of teachers is associated with “teacher dignity” between 1900 and 1910 (Educational Intelligence, 1909; Myers, 1906). Teacher training is both associated with increased and diminished teacher dignity. During the early 1900s, universities expanded education programs to ensure that teachers had higher levels of educational attainment than their students. Teachers were asked to consider child development in their lesson planning and implementation (Encyclopedia.com, 2022).

Another method of increasing teacher dignity is said to occur from the actual physical training of teachers. Instead of emphasizing the "teacher's high and holy calling, the teacher's obligation to the state, her place in the system, [or] her relation to the
coming generation, "teachers' physical training is emphasized. Teachers can find their 
"...dignity and worth through physical training." Moreover, teachers can find their 
"function in life fulfilled" by taking care of their physical selves (Shafer, 1908, p. 623).

From 1900 to 1910, there was also an increased emphasis on teacher productivity 
and efficiency (Encyclopedia.com, 2022). A teacher with an "eye on results" who uses 
".... methods that are economically and educationally sound" and maintains a spirit of 
practicality is said to have dignity (Myers, 1906). However, there is genuine concern that 
the most effective teachers achieve dignity from the "practical truths" they provide in the 
classroom (Myers, 1906). Others believe that "[t]he teaching instinct springs from love 
and not from intellect" (Educational Intelligence, 1909)

As the Wright brothers took flight and the world learned how to use Morse Code 
to send out distress signals (Encyclopedia.com, 2023), school systems and teachers were 
undergoing considerable changes. During this decade, dignified teachers had good 
hearts, small wallets, and had to learn to function within an industrial complex of school 
systems. While teachers within schools were recognized for their emotional skill sets, 
society and administrators started to question teacher dignity. Teacher dignity was 
considered a negative attribute among administrators when teachers were unwilling to 
take on tasks not directly associated with their teaching responsibilities. Moreover, 
administrators were challenged for not understanding the value of teachers within 
schools. Ultimately, during this decade, the education system and the teacher's dignity 
become entrapped within a complex system of societal interpretations of changes 
happening within schools and society.
1910-1929

The years between 1910 and 1929 are defined by the introduction of electricity, World War I, and the emergence of the Spanish Flu pandemic. As refrigerators and washing machines changed the management structure of many households, the automobile, airplane, and military tank revolutionized the transportation of goods and tactics for war. In education, these years are also known for the development of the normal school and new laws that made at least an elementary school education compulsory by 1918. Three organizing themes will emerge: desirable teacher characteristics, the dignity of work, and teaching as an act of social responsibility (see Figure 10).

The first organizing theme for 1910-1929 is desirable teacher characteristics. Within this theme, basic ideas emerge including the dignity of character, risky behaviors, and the idea of quiet dignity. It should be noted that the idea of quiet dignity is unique to 1910-1920.

Dignity of character is associated with teacher dignity. Having a dignified character encompasses varying values to different authors but is ultimately defined according to the teacher’s ethical behavior in thought and action. Being honest and conservative in thought is associated with teacher dignity (Professional Ethics, 1915, 573). Dignified male teachers are said to exhibit actions of high character by “avoid[ing] every circumstance that may be twisted into questionable conduct or taste (Editorials, 1911, p. 546). In addition, teachers are called upon to give dignity to their work by turning it into a field of academic study (Baker, 1915). For secondary teachers, having dignity is associated with being “scholarly” and building confidence in school systems
(Brownson, 1910). By the 1920s, being “patriotic”, “high spirited”, and “eager to devote life and labor to this most serviceable of honorable professions” is also associated with teacher dignity (Educational Forum, 1920, p.499)

The literature also reveals that “risky behaviors” have an effect on the teacher’s dignity. For example, a dignified teacher would not be seen rushing or moving too fast in front of children (Stanton, 1915). A dignity that makes teachers “stiff” and unable to make an “apology to a pupil” is also considered an impediment to teacher effectiveness (Porter, 1915). Likewise, a teacher’s “portentous dignity” is blamed for interrupting learning and causing students to freeze (Bush, 1925, p. 133). Teachers who teach in a dirty classroom are called on to realize that “…it was a greater sacrifice of dignity to teach in an untidy room than to clean it” (Educational News, 1920, p. 305). Moreover, teachers who teach to fill the gap between “maidenhood and marriage rather than being driven by an inner urge” risk the dignity of the profession (Birch, 1927, p. 171).
Figure 10

1910-1929 Theme Matrix

The feeling teachers hold about the content they teach as well as the educational methods utilized can also put their dignity at risk. Teachers who engage in play in the classroom or on the playground are said to put their dignity at risk (Curtis, 1913). Teacher dignity is shown to be an impediment to students learning math when high school teachers feel it is beneath them to teach arithmetic. Likewise, teachers who are not “awake to the beauties of the science” of math cannot impart to their students “the dignity and beauty of reason” (Rorer, 1911, 10).

Teacher training is another basic theme addressed during this decade. Teacher training is increasingly associated with the idea of teachers being professional. A social argument emerged that argued for increased education among rural secondary teachers to add ‘dignity’ and a new sense of responsibility to secondary schools (Burnham,
Teacher preparation was associated with adding dignity to teaching (Baker, 1913; Breckenridge, 1916; Morgan, 1924). Teachers who are “dolts and dullards” are considered a risk to dignity in the profession of education. (Educational Forum, 1920, p. 499). Teachers are called upon to increase their understanding of the theory and practice of teaching to preserve the dignity of the profession. Dignified teachers are said to “know what he [she] is doing and why” (Baker, 1913, p. 339-340). In North Carolina, a teacher’s dignity would be protected by forbidding school districts to hire teachers who were not board certified. “This plan would give teachers a standing and a dignity that they [did] not …[previously] possess” (Latham, 1912, p. 52). For example, in the field of home economics, it is recognized that the trained worker dignifies the job” by filling such a position with a person “who is fully qualified as hiring someone [without formal training] lacks the dignity that comes with efficient training” (Cobb, 1917, p. 152). Similarly, raising the basic requirements “...for negro teachers” is considered necessary “...in order that colored men and women may find the profession of teaching children of their own race an opportunity for a career of dignity and of the highest usefulness (Kilpatrick, 1921, p.487). Noting the different training requirements for teachers at the primary and secondary level is also associated with teacher dignity. In this way arose the theory that one type of teacher training differs from another type in dignity. The work of preparing teachers for teaching in high schools came to be considered a less humble service than that of preparing them for the elementary schools (Knight, 1927, p. 201).

By 1925, the state was called on to provide teachers “sufficient dignity” by furnishing training to teachers to make them the “best men” by training them in the “best
methods” (Winship, 1925, p.39). Raising requirements for teacher qualifications causes strain for school systems. Superintendent John Withers, “warned of the danger of the deterioration of schools because of the lack of high class recruits for the teaching force” (News Items and Communications, 1920, p76). It is recognized that “.... if the dignity of teaching is unrecognized,” colleges and schools cannot “... prevent the graduates of those institutions from seeking employment where conditions are more favorable” (Buckingham, 1923, p.342)

Lack of dignity in the profession causes particular problems for rural schools. It is noted that there is a struggle to find qualified teachers: “.... the proper place of dignity” in rural schools that must compete with “...long-recognized departments of the normal school” (Burnham, 1915, p.185).

The final basic theme associated with desirable teacher characteristics is that of “quiet dignity.” The teacher’s “quietness” is considered critical to teacher dignity. “Quiet dignity” is considered an ideal teacher characteristic (Doub, 1916). In other cases, having quiet dignity is associated with a dependable teacher. “He is true, courageous, and sure of himself. He maintains a quiet but still unmistakable dignity.... what he says he will do, he will do” (Cobb, 1918, 316-317). Having “quiet dignity” is also associated with a teacher having “truth and honor” (Venable, 1911, p.105).

Teachers who have “quiet dignity” are also considered companionable and encourage cooperation between pupils and teachers. Being able to “listen patiently to an angry parent or board member, then reply with quiet dignity, without petulance” is associated with the teacher’s self-control and dignity (Doub, 1916, p. 390). Dignity of character is associated with teachers being “...loyal to those in authority over them”
(Professional Ethics, 1915, 573-578).

The second organizing theme during this decade is the dignity of work. As the normal school becomes more popularized, teaching as a profession undergoes considerable change. The basic themes emerging from the dignity of work include the relationships between administrators and teachers, school funding/compensation, and teacher recruitment.

The first basic theme that emerges from the dignity of work is the relationship between teachers’ and administrators’ dignity. As the common school became more prevalent between 1910 and 1919, the relationship between administrator and teacher dignity became increasingly prevalent in the literature. From 1910 to 1919, the population of students in American schools increased to 59%. By 1920, one hundred percent of American students would have the opportunity to receive at least an elementary school education (Gold, 2022).

With the introduction of a compulsory education, administrative positions are considered of increased importance in the normal school. The position of superintendent is said to “uphold the dignity of the splendid profession of teaching” (N.W.W., 1918, p.26). School principals have dignity because of their ability to deal with school problems and complaints (The School Principal: Opportunities, Responsibilities, and Problems, 1912, p. 677). Educators are called on to demand that the Bureau of Education “...ought to be a place of such influence and dignity that no one could find a larger sphere of influence than the headship of the Bureau” (Editorial Notes, 1911, p. 545). Supervisors who provide a “watchful eye upon the grossest errors of his weakest teachers,” are said to bring dignity to the profession of teaching (Thayer, 1927, p. 177)
Teacher dignity is in peril when they speak poorly of their colleagues and superiors (Code of Ethics of the Alabama Education Association, 1916). Likewise, teachers speaking against administrators or superintendents is considered a risk to teacher dignity (The Elementary School Journal, 1928; Thayer, 1927). In the 1910s, teachers were encouraged to act in “every honorable way in establishing and maintaining the dignity, good name, and usefulness of Boards of Education, principals, superintendents and others charged with larger responsibilities.” Conversely, those who express dissatisfaction or speak negatively about the school systems are considered to lack dignity (Code of ethics for teachers, 1916, p.185). Exposing the inadequacies of administration, especially the position of superintendent, is associated with lack of dignity on the part of teachers (The Faculty of the School of Education of the University of Chicago, 1927).

By the 1920s, a small gap in the literature emerged between the philosophical foundation of supervisors who support “the dignity of the teaching profession and the inspirational functions of the supervisor” with the practical problems confronting teachers in the classroom (Thayer, 1927, p. 177). Principals are called on to realize that “the teacher is interested in her chosen profession and that that interest may give birth to ideas not beneath his dignity to listen to” (Educational Forum, 1920, p. 641).

Another basic theme that emerged from the dignity of work is the basic theme of teacher pay. A crisis of teachers earning living wages or getting “a square deal” is associated with teacher dignity (East Orange Campaign, 1920, p. 150; L.A.W. & Knight, 1920; Lenhart, 1918). In multiple scenarios, teachers’ salaries are “…compared with that of the ignorant laborer, or with the iceman and window washer” (L.A.W. & Knight, 1920, p.113). It is generally recognized that teachers can only have dignity if their
professional and personal expenses can be covered (Burke, 1926; Lenhart, 1918; School Problems, 1928). “Everything should be done to enhance the dignity of the teaching profession…. Teachers are idealists. In order to live, however, they must have food and clothing and shelter” (School Problems, 1928, p. 151-152). An adequate retirement is also associated with teacher dignity (Crawford, 1922; M.R.T., 1923). (Moreover, low pay among teachers leads to the social and economic perception that teaching is not a professional profession (Burke, 1926; Chass, 1926; “The Case of the Teacher, 1924).

There are many solutions proposed during the first two decades of the century to remedy problems with teacher pay. Goding (1928), suggests that by doubling the number of students and classes, teachers could earn a respectable wage (p.9). Among the discussions about pay, teacher tenure (Mardis, 1911; Williams, 1921) as well as the use of salary schedules (Educational Forum, 1920) are associated with preserving teacher dignity. “.... A minimum salary sufficient to maintain a well-educated, and well-trained woman in dignity and comfort with provision for a comfortable retirement” is also referenced as key to recruiting and maintaining teachers in the classroom (Merchant, 1918, p. 594). Marriage is attributed to creating instability in the profession because women principally fill teaching positions (Knight, 1928). The use of propaganda and placement services is suggested to convince people to enter the teaching profession: “...a man must be competent for service, must believe in his work, and feel the dignity of his work…. but there are only few who ever attain these conditions unless they are helped to understand and appreciate them (Educational Forum, 1920, p. 499). In absence of increasing salaries, administrators seek to bring dignity to teaching through school gardening (Editorials, 1918) and the use of games when working with teachers (Curtis,
1912). By the 1920s, it became “undignified” for teachers to discuss their concerns over pay (Educational News and Editorial Comment, 1919). By the end of the century raising teacher pay is considered a necessity to prevent a communist revolution (Foulk, 1920)

Teacher migration/recruitment is the last basic theme that emerged from the dignity of work. As teacher migration became an issue of concern, teacher recruitment became a basic theme of the 1910s and 1920s. At the beginning of the 1910s, an advertisement for good male teachers proclaimed that teaching “…is clothed with dignity and supported by rational compensation” (Educational News, 1913, p.223). However, this attitude changes by the end of the decade. “...[Y]oung men in this country today are convinced that teaching and nothing are one and the same, as far as prospects go.” The profession of teaching was regarded as giving professionals “a certain dignity, a certain leisure, a certain opportunity to satisfy the heart....” However, it also compared teaching to “a gold brick for the heart” and notes that it is only a job for a male if they are celibate and do not desire to marry (Reilly & Lynch, 1919, p. 439).

As male teachers exited the field of education for administrative positions and other career options, women were increasingly referenced in the literature. For women, it was recognized that there was “…no vocation for young women, whatever their ancestry or home environment, comparable in dignity or reward” to that of teaching (Morgan, 1924, p. 512). However, women are said to have less dignity in teaching than men because they have “…little intensity or power, little courage or independence, much pinch backed dignity” (Birch, 1927, 171).

The final organizing theme is that of dignity as a form of social responsibility. Three basic themes emerge within this organizing theme: World War I,
democracy in teaching, and public funding of schools.

World War I also represent a basic theme that emerged from dignity as a form of social responsibility. By the end of the decade, wartime and pandemic stress is apparent in the education system. In the climate created by World War I, stress is put on a system already in distress (Morrison, 1919). Nevertheless, it is recognized that teachers responded to World War I with a patriotic spirit and dignity. Teacher dignity is associated with “deepened seriousness” and “... the unusual demand with which the nation’s need and the war-time school situation required a...cordial, patriotic response, and strength.” Teacher dignity is also associated with the teacher’s ability to respond to new needs (Educational News, 1918, p.668). Despite the stress and extra work afforded to teachers during World War I, it is noted that teacher salaries remained “stationary” while expenses increased. (Merchant, 1918, p. 594). When confronted with the burden of extra costs, there is concern about how that would affect a teacher’s dignity. “The teacher who is not quite sure how he can pay his board bill next week will carry that anxiety into the classroom with him...[his salary] is uneconomical for the community, which depresses their freedom, their efficiency, and their dignity (Palmer, 1914, p. 537). The literature notes that cash is “...more and more key to the world’s respect. The ‘dignity of the profession,’ so-called, may be fine as a halo, but it might be slim eating” (Merchant, 1918, p.594). By 1918, the migration from teaching to other professions became a topic of public conversation.

There is increasing emphasis in the literature on the school system as a medium for promoting and modeling principles of democracy after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 (Foulk, 1920). By 1920, administrators were increasingly called on to create
democratic organizations within the school system and to protect the dignity of teachers. Schools, and as such teachers, are considered to be “under a government so autocratic that all individualism is crushed and the inspirational leader is changed hopelessly into a spiritless drudge” (Educational Forum, 1920, p. 641). Administrators are called on to preserve teacher dignity by “awakening” and “maintaining” teacher dignity by making education a “.... cooperative endeavor.... [teachers] must be permitted to proceed along democratic lines if their work is to assume the dignity befitting a professional pursuit” (Flowers, 1920, p.655-656). Likewise, principals are called on to protect teacher dignity: “Cannot the principals realize that the best results are obtained when all are working together in harmony to accomplish a desired end?” (Educational Forum, 1920, 641). Schools are also called on to protect the dignity of teachers by protecting teachers from “super patriotism,” and “severe attacks,” that could result in a teacher “losing their position (Flury, 1926, p.629).

A final basic theme is the idea of teaching as an act of service. As state legislatures are responsible for increasing funding normal schools, teachers are warned not to “whine” or “complain.” Instead, they are called on to realize “...the dignity and worthfullness of [the teachers] task and...throw [themselves] into its performance with abandon” (Underwood, 1921, p. 80). In lieu of adequate financial compensation, there was an effort during these decades to appeal for teachers to enter the profession through a sense of service, not profit or a good living. Women are called on to realize that while their financial compensation may be “meager” that through teaching they can experience the “...noblest spirit of community service” (Morgan, 1924, p. 512). By the 1920s, teacher shortages were considered proof “... that young people of capability and ambition
are looking to other fields of endeavor” (Reports from the Educational Field, 1923, p.270). Lack of prospective teacher recruits are attributed to lack of adequate teacher training, poor salaries and lack of professional dignity and value of teachers (News Items and Communications, 1920; Reports from the Educational Field, 1923).

The second decade of the 20th century represented a significant decade of change regarding teacher dignity. With the emergence of administrative structures in schools, the characteristics of dignified teachers undergo considerable change. When coupled with the stress of World War I, changes in perceptions of educators and the stress of the job led to a shortage of teachers in schools. This is only compounded by a push by the military to produce literate citizens and soldiers. Further, the Bolshevik Revolution will create an emphasis on instilling the virtues of democracy in students during the beginning of the 1920s.

**1930-1939**

From 1930 to 1939, the United States witnessed the revolutionary development of the first analog computer, neoprene, and the jet engine. Even as life-changing inventions including frozen foods and scotch tape hit the markets, 1930-1939 will be widely known for economic difficulties confronting households and schools. The 1930s is widely characterized by a worldwide economic downturn that resulted in the Great Depression. In the United States, the beginning of the decade will be known for the Wall Street Crash and the subsequent tendency of Americans to pull their money out of banks. While education funding will decrease, conversations about the role of teacher dignity will remain. As the school becomes a venue for the education of industrial workers as well as future professionals, agricultural workers, and housewives, dignity takes on new meaning
in the literature. Three universal themes will emerge during this decade concerning teacher dignity: Teaching as a Profession, Teacher Recruitment, and the Dignity of Work (see Figure 11).

Dignity as a reflection of a profession emerged as an organizing theme. During this decade, there is considerable debate about how to elevate teaching into a profession. Basic themes with this organizing theme include teacher conduct outside the classroom, teacher’s associations, new areas in education and academic dignity. Kirby (1939) points to teacher conduct outside the classroom as essential to advancing teaching into a dignified profession. Teachers are scorned for smoking in public and dancing in public halls. Teachers are told to teach by example because “The best teacher is the one who lives nobelist” (Kirby, 1939, 276). To be a true professional, “… the teacher should set a high standard in everything—language, dress, etiquette, culture” (Kirby, 1939, p.276). Notably, Kirby is unique in his focus on individual teachers and their efforts in creating a dignified profession.
From 1930 to 1939 teacher associations became a symbol of teacher dignity. Teacher associations vary greatly during this time but are vast in prevalence. Data about teacher dignity will come from multiple teacher’s organizations including the American Library Association, the National Council of English Teachers, the National Education Association, Alpha Gamma Delta, Phi Delta Kappa, and any number of different state associations (Gray, 1939; Givens as Secretary of the NEA, 1934; Keeping Abreast of the Times, 1936; News from Chapters, 1932; The News Digest, 1937; Towne, 1931).

Some teacher associations that emerge in the literature between 1930 and 1939 were concerned with ensuring that teachers’ pay was sufficient that teachers would not lose dignity for lack of income (“Keeping Abreast of the Times,” 1936;). Mostly, though, teacher associations are said to serve higher professional purposes for the teacher. The
idea that a social organization could provide an opportunity for dialogue and
collaboration is associated with democratic principles and the “dignity and worth of the
individual human personality” (Keeping Abreast of the Times, 1939, p. 229). There are
calls to increase dignity in the profession of teaching by creating organizations like the
Bar Association for lawyers and the American Medical Association for doctors to uplift
teachers from being “…. cringing and timid, the least influential members of any
community” (The News Digest, 1937, p. 204). For some, teacher organizations are
associated with the recognition needed to add dignity to the profession (Gray, 1939;
News from Chapters, 1932). For example, the American Library Association is attributed
to helping school librarians achieve dignity through efforts to get school libraries
included in the accreditation processes (Towne, 1931). Teacher conferences are attributed
with the ability to elevate teacher dignity in ways that student achievement cannot
(Walker, 1937).

New areas of education also emerge in the literature about teacher dignity
between 1930 and 1939. Specifically, three curricular areas emerge: deaf education,
library education, and foreign language. Providing services in these areas is associated
with increased dignity in the nation (Covello, 1939). Foreign language teachers are
promoted for having supreme dignity because of their roles in promoting “world peace.”
The dignity of the Foreign Language teacher is said to be reflective of his “supreme
mission” as “…. international interpreter [and] a minister to promote sympathetic
understanding and goodwill between counties and peoples” (Smith, 1933, p. 8). Library
education also emerges as a topic surrounding teacher dignity during this decade. In this
field, dignity is associated with crowding out incompetent librarians (Rosenlof, 1930) and
those that limit the capacity of the librarian to clerical work (Kulman, 1938). Part of deaf educators gaining dignity is associated with colleges providing training (Riggs, 1931). Teacher certification in deaf education is also associated with increased teacher dignity (I.S.F. et al., 1931).

The teacher as an academic is also associated with teacher dignity. When teachers were forced to use guides to teach, they found their dignity reduced, leaving the teacher feeling like they were a “servant” to the guide (Trabue, 1932). Efforts to increase communication between legislatures and teachers are said to give “dignity to the work of the schools and remove…suspicion and misunderstanding from the minds of the public and legislators (Wright, 1930, p. 369). The academic dignity of a teacher is also associated with principles of democracy. A teacher with academic dignity is said to have the ability to use reason and research to “…present to his students the whole truth” (Kohn, 1939). The dignity of teaching in democratic countries is said to contrast with that of totalitarian countries. In totalitarian states, the truth is considered “objective” according to state definitions, and as such, “…the dignity of the teaching profession is not recognized” (Kohn, 1939, p. 183).

Teacher recruitment also represented an organizing theme of the 1930s. The Great Depression had a significant impact on schools. By 1932, the number of people unable to pay property taxes caused school budget shortages. As a result, schools made budget cuts, reduced the number of school hours, increased class sizes, and decreased teacher salaries. Many rural schools were forced to close during this time. Conversely, as jobs became scarce, youth desired to stay in school longer (“The 1930s Education: Topics in the News, 2023). The economic situation that surrounded American schools had an
impact on perceptions of teacher dignity. Specifically, basic themes in desirable teacher
characteristics include gender, aptitude, and the idea of teaching as a calling.

Having dignity is considered a desirable trait in the 1930s for “wise teachers.” It
is associated with being vigilant, alert, and patient (Forman, 1936, p. 475). It is also
associated with being “quiet, [having a] fine sense of justice, [and] efficiency” (Makers
of Better Schools, 1934, p.485). “Poise,” “self-control,” and “sobriety” is also associated

Gender issues surround conceptions of teacher dignity in the 1930s. In the early
1930s, there were questions being asked about whether a woman married to a respectable
man in the community would affect the dignity of being a teacher and wife should she
continue to work after marriage (Emery, 1931). It is concluded that “the dignity and glory
of wifehood and motherhood….brings to the work a broader outlook, a ripened
experience of life, greater understanding of pupils’ problems, a more sympathetic
attitude, and maturer judgment” (Emery, 1931, p.35). Meanwhile, there continue to be
questions about why males aren’t seeking professions in education. “It is not that
education is barren; it is simply that in building up a confidence in its own
worthwhileness, education has become smugly complacent, secure in the belief that the
dignity of the profession precludes any manifestation of aggressiveness, prevents any
display of mannerism other than that of withdrawal” (Lafferty, 1938, p. 92). Teaching is
also said to be “A Man’s Job,” because of the potential for promotion into better-paying
administrative and supervisory positions (P.M.C. & Lee, 1938).

Teaching as a calling also emerged as a basic theme in the 1930s. Educators’
human components are said to elevate teaching beyond a profession (Osmond, 1931,
Clem, 1936; Weaver, 1931). Teachers are considered of value because of their ability to make learning “meaningful” and “worthwhile” (Weaver, 1931, p. 451). Teachers who possess dignity are said not to recoil “from the duties of a calling, that magnifies the dignity of toil” (Osmond, 1931, p. 553). United States President Calvin Coolidge placed the groundwork of American civilization in the hands of teachers. In his words,

The standards which teachers are required to maintain are continually rising.

Their work takes on a new dignity. It is rising above a calling, above a profession, into the realms of an art. It must be dignity by technical training, ennobled by character, and sanctified by faith. It is not too much to say that the need of civilization is the need of teachers (Inskeep et al., 1936, p. 512).

Another organizing theme that emerged between 1930 and 1939 is the dignity of work. Within this theme, basic themes being discussed include best practices in classroom pedagogy and the relationship between administrators and teachers. In the 1930s, character education of progressivism was emphasized over student achievement (Egan, 1932). As such, teachers are warned of about potential dangers associated with using achievement to “command[] dignity:”

the importance of 100 percent attendance or any other high goal, tends to develop in certain children’s attitudes of deceit and evasion. Children have been known to steal silk stockings in order to appear well dressed where too much emphasis has been placed upon physical appearance of the class. They have been known to neglect important home duties in order to keep from breaking into 100 per cent attendance marks (Egan, 1932, p. 65).

A hallmark of the progressive movement, teachers are called upon to treat
students as individuals and social beings—not just products of academic
achievement. During this time, education becomes an essential tool to provide all
children the necessary knowledge needed to become socially responsible citizens and
collaborative group members.

Through education, children learn the entrepreneurial skills needed to combat
problems that may arise from capitalism such as the formation of monopolies (Berube &
Nelson, 1995). The framework for evaluating teacher dignity also changes with the
impetus to educate children from diverse economic and social backgrounds. Teachers are
challenged to be like “policemen.” If a policeman can function without being perceived
as “an object of terror, and still is able to enforce orderly behavior…. [then] …. teachers
[can] afford to lose a bit of dignity without detriment to their relations with the boys and
girls” (Belding, 1930, p. 522).

Between 1930 and 1939, best practices evolved to reflect teacher dignity
changes. Teachers are encouraged to shed their dignity and engage in student-friendly
activities during this time. Teachers are cautioned that presenting themselves and
information with too much dignity may adversely affect student learning (Burkhard,
1936; Frank, 1934). “The great teacher will not think it is beneath his dignity to pay
attention to the art of presentation…. The great teacher will never be content to show
knowledge on the counter with a take-it-or-leave-it air. He will strive to make intelligence
intelligible (Frank, 1934, p. 5).

Physical changes in the classroom are encouraged to break down barriers between
students and teachers.

Sitting in a group about a table instead of in formal rows of seats has abolished
almost completely the still duality which used to [exist] between instructor and class… I am afraid, [the teachers] elevation on a platform tended to hedge him about with too much dignity and make him somewhat unapproachable, even to the fearless curious student; and which certainly did tend to make the student still less articulate (Burkhard, 1936, p.6).

Once students and teachers are positioned to interact cooperatively, the teacher is said to be “…. off his dignity and at one with group totality” (Woodard, 1933, p. 399). As a result, problem-solving increases with teacher-student collaboration (Burkhard, 1936; Woodard, 1933).

In the same light, when dealing with disciplinary issues in the classroom, teachers are encouraged to “relax her severity” and be more like the police officer who has “ceased to be an object of terror, and still is able to enforce orderly behavior” (Belding, 1930, para 6). But, conversely, Belding (1932) cautions that “Persons in authority rarely assume false dignity, for it is sure to be punctured, and they know that they cannot go very far on flat tires (p. 273).

While in interactions between students and teachers, teachers are encouraged not to think about their dignity, students are still limited in attacking the teacher’s dignity. For example, in the Ribald Ditty case, the Court evaluated a student poem that was derogatory to the teacher: “My teacher is a bald headed ass, a bald headed ass is he, No more hair will grow on his dead, than grass will grow on me” (Hodgdon, 1937, p. 309). The Court held that teachers could punish students if their dignity is insulted, even if it occurs outside the classroom. The Court held: “…to refer to a teacher as an ass, is to insult the dignity of so worthy a public servant by classifying him in a group of lowly and
humble creatures to which it would be impossible for him to have the remotest biological resemblance (Hodgdon, 1937, p. 310).

Administrative structures are also associated with teacher dignity. Administrators are said to support teacher dignity by involving teachers in decision-making. “Mistakes in policy are avoided by the pooling of experiences in similar situations. Participation…. adds to the dignity of one’s position and instills a feeling of living in a real democracy” (Manze, 1939, p. 4). The community is said to benefit further because “teachers are better able to accurately interpret the school to all members of the community (Manze, 1939, p. 4). Administrators responsible for teacher performance also associate teacher dignity with teacher performance. Teachers who exhibit “smug complacency” or contentment with routine are associated with diminished teacher dignity and low standards in the education profession. (Young, 1933, p. 33). In contrast to teachers, administrators are said to have dignity because they take responsibility for “…. teacher pensions, salary security, tenure” and their ability to ensure high standards in the profession (Anderson, 1930, p. 150).

The struggle confronting American society during the 1930s was evident in conceptions of teacher dignity. Americans wanted to hold onto their ideals of teacher dignity and professionalism while faced with an economic crisis that had real implications for the classroom. During this decade, society continued to grapple with changes in teachers’ demographics and the characteristics they consider ideal. As teachers are called on to do more with less in the classroom, there is increasing emphasis on teacher service as providing dignity to the profession. As conceptions of teacher dignity change, teachers seek to find dignity in different ways—the perception they are engaged in a calling, participating in teachers’ associations, and even adjudicating
assaults on matters of dignity. Meanwhile, administrators are increasingly leaned on to protect the profession and ensure that teachers act in a dignified manner.

1940-1949

The events of the first half of the twentieth century, including the end of World War II, inspired the idea of human dignity in constitutions worldwide. The topic of “dignity” as an international right became popularized with the formation of the United Nations and its charter (Shulztiner & Carmi, 2014). Notably, no adjustments to the United States Constitution were made to address human dignity per the international norm (Henry, 2011). As “dignity” became an international buzzword, ideas surrounding teacher dignity took shape in the United States. From 1940-1949 ideal teacher characteristics and teaching as a profession emerged as organizing themes (see Figure 12).

Ideal teacher characteristics emerged as an organizing theme in the 1940s. Confronted with a teacher shortage during WWII and after, different views emerged about what characterized a dignified teacher. While some point to teacher morale as being the barrier to teachers realizing dignity (“What shall we do about Teacher Shortage, 1943), the literature has two basic themes: the ability of teachers to teach all students and democratic vs. autocratic approaches to teaching
Wide variances in teacher expectations, perceptions of liberty, and viewpoints on the treatment of students appeared after WWII as states and schools tried to adapt to social changes. As the individual is given more credence, caution is raised that imparting too much dignity on the teacher can yield negative results. Like the despot, “There are school people of all ranks who make harsh rules that pupils are unwilling to obey and perhaps out not to obey…Stand not too solidly upon thy dignity lest thou crush it with thine own two feet” (“Retaliate or Relax,” 1945, p. 80). The teacher is called upon to sacrifice some of the respect and prestige associated with their profession to build relationships with the diverse student populations they serve. “Smug complacency” in teaching the 85% of students in math that are not college bound is not considered a dignified practice (Fabing, 1947, p. 8). Teacher dignity is associated with having a “quiet dignity” and ease in “dicover[ing] each pupil’s confusion and the skill and speed with which she dissipated that confusion” (Frey, 1941). Conversely, aiming math instruction to meet the needs of students with varying needs is associated with teacher dignity (Douglass, 1945).
The democratization of teaching also emerged as a basic theme in the 1940s. The idea of teaching in democracy is referenced in the 1940s as a way to define teacher rights increasingly. As schools prepare citizens to defend democracy (within the United States and through international cooperation with its allies) against “the devastating explosive power of a thirty-millimeter shell,” teachers are called on to make changes to their curriculums and approaches to teaching and learning (Singerman, 1945). The need for highly qualified teachers in areas like foreign languages is called upon not just to protect “the dignity of his profession” but also to protect and defend democracy (Freeman, 1941, p. 295).

In contrast to previous decades, classroom management in the 1940s is increasingly associated with characteristics of democracy. For example, in previous decades, dignity was associated with a well-run classroom where children behaved “sitting in order, maintaining a forced silence; in an act perfectly controlled by in the presence of the inflexible teacher.” Conversely, the 1940s teacher is called upon to develop a new sense of dignity by “bring[ing] out the best in the child” (Bernetta, 1941, p. 352). Generally speaking, dignity in the 1940s is associated positively with teachers who ran their classrooms democratically and negatively with individuals who ran their classrooms authoritatively.

In a comparative study of the American and Austrian classroom and school systems in 1948, it is noted that, unlike the American teacher, those considered professional are treated with dignity and respect in Austria. Concern is expressed that a recently liberated country previously under the Nazi regime could be more progressive than the American system (Bode, 1948).
As such, in the United States, teacher dignity is increasingly associated with the teacher’s ability to espouse the qualities of democracy in the classroom. Instead of running a classroom authoritatively, good teachers in the United States are called on to be “personally secure” so that they do not have to run their classroom (and maintain their professional status) with “bluff and swagger” (Symonds, 1947, p. 652). Likewise, teachers who can work with students individually “.... without loss of dignity or without giving offense” are praised as dignified (Cheyette, 1940, p. 68).

Teaching as a profession also emerged as an organizing theme between 1940 and 1949. During the 1940s, the magnitude of the teachers’ contributions to society and the war effort became widely acknowledged and associated with teacher dignity. The “magnitude” of the teacher’s responsibilities “under the goose-step” (Wilson, 1941, p.122) placed the prominence of the teachers’ professional dignity under a national spotlight. Raising dignity in the education profession is considered to “....be a blessing not to teachers only, but to our country, to our whole national life” (Foley, 1940, p. 106). Basic themes within this organizing theme include teacher shortages, societal esteem for the teacher, and the teacher as an individual.

Due to teacher shortages resulting from World War I, there is increasing discussion about teacher recruitment issues affecting teacher dignity. Teachers called for hiring content experts to protect all existing teachers and the “dignity of his profession” (Freeman, 1941). There is great concern that “misfit” teachers hired “as wartime emergency cases.... [will not] add height and dignity to the profession” or “be prepared to [teach] what he will be called upon to teach” (Troyer, 1942, p. 82). In the same light, new science materials are attributed to giving teachers “dignity in your calling” (Harlow,
While it is generally recognized that for teachers to be recognized as a professional, they need to gain dignity, there are different opinions on what that entails. Some believe that for the teaching profession to gain status as a profession, teaching and educational standards for teachers must be increased. “One of the most amazing things in this connection is the common hostility of teachers to a raising of standards.... Teachers should welcome such efforts. They improve our staff, improve the schools, and eventuate into better pay and fairer recognition of the dignity and social worth of education” (Ives, 1940, p.78). Conversely, others associate dignity of character with teacher dignity. Good character is attributed to teachers having a professional attitude toward their work. “The situation is not going to be remedied by any ‘raising of standards’ which is merely a matter of curriculum requirements in teacher-training. Improvement will be brought about by a long and painful process. It will require the continued loyal effort of individuals and organizations that have the intellectual and moral stamina to stand steadily for ideals, come what may (Foley, 1944, p. 301). Professional dignity is associated with teachers engaging cooperatively with other teachers and accepting their position as important figures in public life (Miser, 1942). The dignified teacher of the 1940s is seen as continuously seeking professional growth, writing curriculum, ensuring every student’s needs are cared for, acquiring materials (when a budget does not provide them), and working with parents (McNerney & Gillis, 1948). They also engage in professional development activities (Foley, 1940; Huffman, 1949). As such, dignified teachers are said to have a natural dignity acquired through the responsibilities of her position. This might be
mistaken for severity, but she is an understanding and amiable person. She has
grown professionally, socially, and personally, despite the fact that she has
worked for lackeys’ wages. She has been confronted with overcrowded rooms,
bursting their seams with hellions who are brimming over with enthusiasm and	wentieth-century ideas. She has taught all day, then attended courses (which she
paid for herself) half the evening. She has attended P. T. A. meetings the night she
wanted to do something else, but parent contact was more important to her
(McNerney & Gillis, 1948, p. 161).

At the beginning of the 1940s, teachers were called upon to set aside their dignity
and emancipate the public school using democratic techniques (Kellogg, 1940). As such,
educational techniques that mirror that of the totalitarian dictator are questioned. Concern
over mass human rights abuses and fear of communism emerge in the conversation about
education to ensure that teaching methods are congruent with the values of a just and
democratic society. “The public schools are the public’s schools. In a democracy, the
people of any community have the right to determine the kind of conduct they are willing
to approve in the teachers because of the powerful influence of the teacher’s example”
(Kellogg, 1940, p. 15). Under considerable public pressure, teachers are often the subject
of public concern and opposition. A prominent perspective is that teachers have rights
just so long as they do not conflict with community rights or result in losing respect for
the teacher’s character (Kellogg, 1940). As such, it is reasonable to expect that the
teacher sets a standard of decorum by not wearing clothing that “flaunt unusual
sensational styles,” smoking in public, running for political office, and spending time
with children outside the school environment. “[The teacher] shall set a standard that will
classify her as entering a professional life of service, and not a ‘jitterbug’ looking forward only to the next dance, the college carnival, or a new Sir Galahad” (Kellogg, 1940, p.15). In short, during this time, a teacher’s behavior in their private life is considered an extension of her public life. As such, not just a dignified teacher but one who wants to sustain employment will conform to community values at the risk of being dismissed.

At the beginning of the 1940s, the accepted tone was that for a teacher to be a dignified professional, a “teacher” must have a public persona to which their private persona must be sensitive. Irvin T. Simley points out that most working individuals’ rights have been compromised, questioned, or interfered with (Kellogg, 1940, p. 14). In contrast to earlier visions of the teacher as a professional, role model, and community leader, as the 1940s progressed, the dignified teacher is seen as obediently serving their community while embracing their characteristics as individuals that make them humans.

Emery (1943) suggests that the lack of societal esteem for teachers can be attributed to the clothing teachers choose to wear. While noting that having a teacher wear a uniform would be akin to having a prisoner wear stripes, teacher dress is attributed to them showing “pompous dignity” (111). Problems with teacher dress are reiterated in the literature when teachers with “...lovely gray hair” are called upon to “...put aside your worn dark blue dress...Be young and pretty, with a touch of dignity. Give your pupils a glimpse of your more attractive self” (James, 1944, p. 487). Notably, teacher dignity is said to be diminished when “…senior boys twice my size whistle down the fall at my retreating figure (Martz, 1948, p11)

After fighting to preserve democracy, the sentiments of democracy are used to liberate teachers and explore the characteristics that make them individuals. Teachers
associate the value of having freedom of thought and expression with having dignity (Mann, 1945). Teachers must have “... the freedom to think and speak as individuals and not as puppets of any central power” (Mann, 1945, p. 234; McNerney & Gillis, 1948; Slonim, 1945). The liberation of the teacher to be creative and curious is related to them gaining individual dignity (McNerney & Gillis, 1948; Slonim, 1945). Granting teachers the autonomy to live a personal life separate from their professional one is considered a symbol of dignity (Moore, 1948). Moreover, public sentiments about the teachers’ participation and interest in community decision-making shifted toward criticism of those who opposed it (Troyer, 1942). During the 1940s, unions became a dignified option for teachers, given their connection to democracy.

No longer may the so-called ‘teacher caste’ of the good old USA draw their skirts unto themselves and say it is beneath their dignity to be in a union, for unions among teachers have been rapidly developing in the past few years, especially since Congress has made the union a part of the democratic procedure (Hodgdon, 1946, p. 245). Granting teachers tenure so they may cooperate with other teachers, parents, and administrators are associated with teacher dignity. Teacher tenure creates a “democratic approach [where] the teacher will achieve a professional dignity, which will make his job the envy of qualified boys and girls” (McNerney & Gillis, 1948).

After the Allied forces emerged victorious from World War II, teacher dignity was scrutinized during the 1940s. While schools struggled to recruit teachers, increased pressure to produce qualified professionals gained momentum. Likewise, to prevent American G.I.s from falling into “the goose step” of the Axis powers, the vehicle of American schools to promote democracy through its curriculum and the practice of
teachers becomes prominent. However, while teachers strive to find their voice and independence as professionals, society struggles to define acceptable motivations for teachers—some wanted teachers to be academics with high standards, others teachers to be “human,” while others believed that truly dignified teachers were called into the profession. As the United States did not follow the United Nations model declaring human dignity a fundamental human right, the quest to define teacher dignity continued into the 1950s.

1950-1959

Hollywood evoked the 1950s as an era of “Leave it to Beaver.” The sitcom explores the values of democracy, capitalism, traditional families, and consumerism (DeSapio, 2020). As Ward and June Cleaver sought to shield their son from the world's corruption, Americans were confronted with changes in American schools that would significantly impact teacher dignity. Two significant organizing themes emerged during the 1950s: teacher effectiveness and the dignity of work (see Figure 13).

First, teacher effectiveness materializes as an organizing theme between 1950-1959. Gender-based issues and professional development become basic themes within the organizational theme of teacher effectiveness.
During the 1950s, the teaching profession was dominated by women. It is not uncommon for the literature of the 50s to blame women for problems in education and emerging social problems: Some even thought that "...young boys who lack suitable masculine role models among their teachers will not only become reading failures or behavior problems but might end up in the nearest pool hall in search of a gang leader to emulate" (Walker & Barton, 2013, p.125.)

Images of the matronly schoolteacher who never married or may be the economic victim of widowhood, abandonment, or abuse are used to portray the female teacher of the 1950s. Furthermore, the lack of professional status and the resistance of school boards to negotiate with women led many to blame females for low salaries and status among teachers. Deemed semi-professionals, women are also blamed for the hierarchical structure of schools and the need for teachers to have many rules and little autonomy (Etzioni, 1969; Walker & Barton, 2013).
During the 1950s, economics also became tied with teacher dignity. David Earle Lewis (1953) states that society does not value the teacher for two reasons. First, unlike the lawyer or doctor whom their patrons fear, the educator does not command the respect of parents and students. Secondly, because the teacher does not produce something tangible like the "plumber" or "the carpenter," society does not feel they warrant a comparable salary (Lewis, 1953). Accordingly, the professional dignity of the teacher is called into question.

What is the most pathetic factor of all is the fact that many teachers have little or no inclination to fight for their professional dignity and lapse into the whining lethargy of self-pity. Too often, teachers have allowed themselves to be castrated… by a society which demands a capon-role for them, simultaneously allowing themselves the liberties of healthy, if somewhat earthy, chickens (Lewis, 1953, p. 60).

Professional development also emerged as a basic theme. Teacher training prior to entering the classroom is associated with the teacher’s dignity (Tedesco, 1955). Team teaching with the opportunity for advancement into the role of a team leader is associated with teacher dignity (Woodring, 1958). The literature suggests that both university programs and school systems strive to develop teachers professionally to assist in the development of teacher dignity. During the 1950s, teachers started to engage in "cooperative workshops" to assist their fellow teachers in developing professionally. The literature suggests that teacher dignity is enhanced through these workshops as they are encouraged to identify classroom challenges, engage in reflective conversation, and contribute knowledge of acceptable classroom methods (‘Education of the English
Teacher for the Composition/Communication Program, 1959; Wright & Bettelheim, 1957). By focusing on building the capacity of the educator, the teacher is thought to be able to make decisions in the classroom more effectively.

Teaching may be compared to driving an automobile. If the car has plenty of gasoline and a good battery, and the mechanism for igniting the gasoline vapor, the engine will purr happily, and the automobile will travel under its own process of internal combustion. The driver guides its course according to his own ability and wisdom. But if there is no gasoline, no spark, no internal driving power, the driver has little choice but to push or be towed--a laborious, exasperating and often a totally unnecessary hardship (Fisher, 1958, p. 143).

In the 1950s, increasing teacher dignity correlated with increasing teachers' effectiveness. As a result, concern about reforming education programs to preserve democracy and improve teacher dignity was widely expressed in the 1950s.

Concern about the teacher's dignity is expressed when some teacher education programs advertise the profession as one of ".... little work, easy jobs, and much leisure" (Tedesco, 1955, p. 207). Subsequently, poor teacher education programs and lack of teacher dignity are identified as causes of increased mediocrity in students. Furthermore, poorly trained teachers are equated with poor academic skills and a lack of appropriate social behaviors among students (Tedesco, 1955). As a result, concern about the need to reform education, preserve democracy, and better student and teacher dignity was widely expressed during the 1950s. American schools are called upon to be sensitive to public pressure as social institutions. Educational literature includes an increased emphasis on teaching core academic subjects. Politically, this means responding to pressures
associated with the desegregation of schools (Berube, 1994).

The dignity of work emerges as an organizational theme from 1950-1959. Post-
World War II society is confronted with an increase in birth rate (known historically as
the “Baby Boom”) and, subsequently, a shortage of teachers in the United States (Woods,
1955). While some point to teacher wages as a source of increasing teacher dignity,
others point to the dignity afforded teachers as a solution to teacher shortages. Teacher
wages, classroom management, and the low societal esteem for the teacher and teacher
wages represent the basic themes.

In the 1950s, there was debate about whether teacher pay was equivalent to their
value. Within teacher education programs of the 1950s, professors are recorded as
identifying a profession in the field of education as one with a reasonable salary
"...considering you work only six hours a day and you do have your summers free"
(Tedesco, 1955, p. 207). Conversely, Male (1959) holds for teachers to get dignity, there
must be "remuneration for their labors according to their value" (Male, 1952, p. 47)

Having women in the field of education further complicates issues concerning
compensation. Among the areas of concern are the unwillingness of school boards to
negotiate salaries with women and the refusal of teachers to strike (Lewis, 1953). Some
feel that the inability of women to negotiate for higher wages led the field of education
failure to be considered a profession (Etzioni, 1969). The female teacher’s willingness to
take on additional duties without compensation is deemed a "...lackey burdened with all
kinds of duties which are made to feel is 'part of their responsibilities" (Lewis, 1953, p.
60). As a public institution, public pressure and professional ethics are used to counter
teacher arguments for a professional wage (Lewis, 1953).
Issues in classroom management are also associated with teacher dignity. The pressures felt by teachers in schools to effectively educate children is evident through the discussion of corporal punishment in the literature. With increasing numbers of students in schools, the need for corporal punishment is considered by some teachers necessary to provide a reasonable work environment. “Any teacher…. if queried, will quickly dispel any idea that discipline is a minor problem. In an era when the public demands the best possible education for its children, all the teacher’s time and energy should not have to be spent on disobedient, noisy, and insubordinate youngsters…. Public education is mass education, and overcrowded classrooms leave very little time for individualized handling and instruction (Bridinger, 1957). On the other hand, others consider teachers who slap students to be undignified– comparing them to “tyrants” who would be willing to “shoot a potential friend in wartime” rather than deal with student discipline issues (Esposito, 1959).

Low societal esteem for teachers is associated with recruitment problems and shortages in the field. Many states lowered teaching standards in the 1950s to increase the number of people qualified to fill teaching positions (Bulger, 1972). Students seeking professional careers are deterred from entering the field of education when the duties of teachers are compared to those of a "glorified babysitter" (Lewis, 1953, p. 61). Consequently, as universities turn out increasing numbers of teachers, concern over the subsequent deteriorating dignity of the teacher becomes a subject of discussion (Bailey, 1955; Tedesco, 1955; Woods, 1955).

Understandably, teacher recruitment was also identified as a problem during the 1950s. For some, problems in getting teachers to enter the profession were due to the
high moral standards that teachers are held to (Byers 1950; Woods, 1955.) California schools in the 1950s refused to recruit teachers because might undermine the “welfare and status, dignity, and importance of teaching….in the minds of teachers and the public (Byers, 1950, p.12). Others point to the teachers' accountability to public pressure created by parents.

The profession [of teaching] has never been accorded dignity and prestige commensurate with the training it requires. The lay public is more often critical than laudatory of a teacher's efforts. If he or she has performed his duties well….little or no praise is forthcoming. But let one of his pupils fall short of the expectations of the child's parents, and not only the teacher but many patrons are certain to be made aware of the poor quality of instruction in the local school. No doubt some of this criticism is justified; it may be in part a result of substandard certification regulations in certain states (Woods, 1955, p. 139).

Bailey (1955) reiterates these sentiments by associating dignity in the teaching profession with the American tradition of holding teachers ".... accountable to the public, but [not….] the mob" (p. 23).

As Cold War tensions change the dialogue about students and schools from a group sharing common characteristics to a mentality focused on individualism, it also becomes recognized that to preserve democracy the teacher must be afforded dignity and responsibility in accordance with the contributions that he or she makes (Tedesco, 1955). The disparity in the field of education between the service the teacher provides, and professional dignity requires the recognition that "[s]chools do not turn out produce—they turn out future citizens" (Lewis, 1953, p. 63).
The 1950s is a complex decade for American schools. But, just like Beaver, who struggled to meet the goals of the perfect nuclear family of the 1950s, schools struggled to meet the increasingly complex goals and expectations. As schools in the United States are called upon to meet changing political and social goals, teacher dignity is distressed. Public pressure and teacher dignity is significantly impacted as more women enter the workforce, schools are desegregated, and they are called upon to meet Cold War pressures to keep up with the Soviet Union in math and science.

1960-1969

From bell bottoms to tie-dye t-shirts, the 1960s represent a significant time of change in the United States. From bubble wrap to sharpies and even lava lamps, the 1960s become iconic for developing progressive (and sometimes controversial ideas). The 1960s is also a time of iconic changes in education. Before the 1960s, the federal government's role in education was minimal. During the 1960s, the federal government increased funding to public schools from half billion to three and a half billion dollars as part of the New Frontier and Great Society social agenda. Previously, federal dollars went to support staff induction programs and those to improve teacher training (Kantor, 1991, p. 48). In the 1960s, new federal dollars were allocated to schools to provide services to disadvantaged students including migrants, minorities, the poor, and students in special education programs. During the 1960s, three organizing themes emerged concerning teacher dignity: the dignity of work, teaching as a profession, and ideal teacher traits (see Figure 14).
Figure 14

1960-1969 Theme Matrix

The dignity of work emerged as an organizing theme during the 1960s. Within this theme, educational reforms emphasizing student’s rather than the teacher’s dignity and classroom management emerged as basic themes.

Education reforms represented a basic theme of the 1960s. The social agenda driving federal policies reflected a new emphasis on student dignity in schools. The goal of the New Frontier and Great Society Agenda (which would become the Elementary and Secondary Education Act—ESEA) was to eliminate poverty by providing opportunities in education that could break the cycle of poverty (Kantor, 1991). Student dignity is at the center of this movement.

These efforts involved including migrant children and their families in school programs and activities, including work-study and adult education programs (Evaluation Report for Migrant Problem 1966-1967, 1967). For example, a program in Farmington, Utah, (cites the American value of “… dignity and worth of the individual "as a core value on their checklist for reaching migrant children in the district (American Values Guide, 1968, p.11). In the teacher checklist for instilling student dignity in the classroom, teachers were asked to ensure that all students in the school: 1) had value and worth as human beings; 2) were able to express ideas freely; 3) used respect and compassion towards classmates; and 4) included all students in activities both in the classroom and on the playground (American Values Guide, 1968, p.11). In a teaching curriculum established under ESSA, an exploration of the American symbol of an eagle is included to help students understand the selection and meaning of the symbol being “[r]epresentative of dignity, power, and keen wisdom” (American Values Guide, 1968, p. 114).

At the same time that schools worked to change classroom and school practices to enhance student dignity per the goals of ESSA, teachers were criticized for their inability or unwillingness to build dignity in those students. As a result, research in the 1960s is said to “shift from ‘blaming the pupil’ to ‘blaming the teacher’” (Ball et al., 2002, p.6). As such, the research on dignity focuses on the virtues of the student’s dignity and the shortcomings of teacher performance to meet increasing societal demands.

The new social agenda put forth in the New Frontier and Great Society Social Agenda and federal expectations for schools created by (ESSA) generated animosity among teachers. After Congress passed the ESSA, feelings of alienation among teachers became more common. For teachers, ESSA changes the nature of teaching. It makes
some feel like “…a small faceless cog in a bureaucratic machine” (Garlton, 1968, p.14); they feel alienated by their communities. Teachers start living outside the areas they teach for reasons of safety and economics. A “we-they” mentality emerges between administrators and teachers (Garlton, 1968, p. 14). In addition to feeling alienated, the dignity of teachers was reported to deteriorate with work and poor conditions in the workplace. Large class sizes, challenges in meeting federal curriculum expectations, racial tensions, and the lack of accessibility of administrators to teachers are noted as areas of concern (Garlton, 1968, p.15).

Professional development also represented a basic theme of the 1960s. In light of educational reforms, it was believed that interjecting dignity into the teacher's work was best achieved through professional development and continuous education. According to this line of reasoning, the dignity of the teacher was best preserved by providing teachers access to educational practices that "foster individuality in teachers, develop self-understanding, allow for self-fulfillment, and provide for growth in ability to live and to work harmoniously with one's self and with others… best fulfills individual dignity" (Openshaw, 1962, p. 90). In the 1960s, real concern emerged about removing the individuality of the teacher or the student from the classroom. Caution is expressed to school officials about professional development programs that purport the use of specific methods because it may make teachers too "robot-like". Effective teacher development evolves to include teacher reflection and a growth mindset (Openshaw, 1962, p. 90).

Best practices in education also emerged as an organizing theme in the 1960s. Teacher values, educational methods, and classroom management emerged as basic themes during the decade. Teacher values were a basic theme of 1960s research. The
teacher's role in socializing, politicizing, and humanizing students is considered at the forefront during the 1960s. To create a classroom that builds student dignity, the teacher of the 1960s is called upon to be knowledgeable in both content and methods, adept at classroom management, have emotional intelligence, an understanding of personal boundaries, and be able to help others build a worldview based on the perceptions of others (Clothier, 1966). The successful teacher is said to be dignified because, from their dignity, student dignity emerges:

"If the teacher is a secure person with feelings of self-worth, dignity, and confidence; he will tend to encourage the development of a similar, positive self-concept in a student" (Clothier, 1966, p.8). In addition to being a confident teacher, in the 1960s, the private values of a teacher (whether political, social, or economic) were considered a matter of public concern.

Debate emerged about the teacher's role in influencing impressionable children. Some believed that a qualified teacher could impart knowledge to children without impinging on the liberties of the teacher or the student. On the other hand, skeptics argued that the personal values a teacher had could potentially negatively influence children (Roach, 1959).

Teachers' values were also considered dangerous because they can influence educational theory. The teachers' role in writing school curricula might advertently or inadvertently negatively influence students because of the personal, social, political, or economic value systems they hold (Clayman, 1961). This concern is reflected through the use of loyalty oaths in education. Initially, loyalty oaths required teachers to pledge loyalty to state and federal constitutions. In the 1950s and 60s, teacher loyalty oaths
expanded from expressing loyalty to state and federal constitutions to the teacher
pledging to be patriotic and not teach or sympathize with specific political theories
(Roach, 1959).

In the 1960s, teachers were harshly challenged for victimizing the dignity of
children through the shortcomings of their teaching. One such attack states, "Almost
every act or word is judged audibly by teachers as 'good or bad,' 'right or wrong,' 'plus or
minus.' Such a lack of what may be called 'judicial restraint' is so evident in the teaching
profession that it has been called a 'teacher's disease'" (Raths, 1964, p. 339). Teachers'
personal and private feelings are criticized as impairing the students' "...human dignity—
the right to hold differing ideas and to behave in unique ways" (Raths, 1964, p. 339). An
effective teacher is deemed as one who can understand conflict and engage in conflict
resolution (Clayman, 1961, p. 24).

As teachers become the subject of social critique, they become skeptical of the
influence that social pressure has on their dignity. Responding to an increased portrayal
of teachers in the media as "weak, colorless people," concern is raised that teacher
confidence may be negatively impacted as society creates "...an image of the teacher as a
dolt with low economic and prestige status who did not succeed as a man or woman"
(Bossone, 1963, p. 92.). Using words like "contradictory" and "confused," social theories
of the 1960s are credited for creating a need among teachers to "hide under a verbal
blanket of so-called research about what constitutes the good teacher" (Bossone, 1963, p.
94). As a result, general confusion emerges over concerns about the teacher's dignity and
how to foster its improvement. To instill teachers "...with greater self-respect, dignity,
and a positive self-concept," "order" is needed among society, educational leaders, and
educators (Bossone, 1963, p. 94).

Educators and researchers express concern about the state of the teacher as well as student dignity. At the same time, increasing pressure is put on teachers to treat students with conformity. Responding to the demands of the Cold War, classroom priorities move from the development of the individual to the student's retention of factual information. With increased emphasis on math and science, others feel that the teacher's dignity is at its greatest when teachers are allowed to embrace "...the creative development of the individual" (Stark, 1964, p. 26). In this respect, teacher dignity emerges when teachers work to develop the individual student. "...[T]he teacher who rightfully belongs to the dignified profession...fights against the dragons of conformity, misplaced values, careless thinking and apathy" (Stark, 1964, p. 28).

Teaching as a profession also emerged as an organizing theme concerning teacher dignity in the 1960s. In addition, social issues, collective bargaining, and wages emerged as basic themes from the research.

Social issues, including race and gender equality, emerged in the 1960s. At the same time, researchers point to an increase in male teachers during the decade (Doherty, 1966; Garlton, 1968). As more males enter the education field, teachers' working conditions improve. Lower turnover among males is associated with their desire to have an enduring career in education. The increased presence of male teachers and administrators is also associated with increasing professionalization in the field. Accordingly, some believe an increase in teacher salaries correlating with more men entering the profession is attributed to the male's ability to demand dignity in teacher treatment (Doherty, 1966, p. 521).
During the 1960s, widespread social expectations supporting a one-income household led many women to exit the classroom when they got married or started a family. Characterized by the high mobility of women in school systems, discrimination against women in the workplace, in general, created a distorted version of teacher dignity.

Their competing family roles and the expectation that they will be discriminated against, reduce women's performance and aspirations. They are then discriminated against partly because they are thought to lack ambition. What seems to be discrimination against the individual may often be a wise policy for the organization (Etzioni, 1969, p. 230)

Women were criticized in the 1960s for being "emotional," "lack[ing] ambition," and for choosing the field of education because it is a helping profession (Etzioni, 1969, p. 203). The need for strict rules and bureaucratic controls within schools are used to justify the role of the male administrator and explain why the female teacher accepts not working in a field where they could achieve "professional status" (Etzioni, 1969, p. 217). In the classroom, female teachers are said to have a less dignified role than men as they tolerate behaviors that the male teacher would not. Unlike the male teacher, women are more likely to "...put up with a variety of indignities" because they were likely to ".... resign just as soon as one's romantic, psychological, or economic goals have been realized" (Doherty, 1966, p. 521).

Wages increasingly became a symbol of the teacher's dignity in the 1960s. Horace Mann first addressed the correlation between teacher wages and dignity in the mid-1800s when school boards complained of not being able to find quality educators: "We pay best,
first those who destroy us--generals; second, those who cheat us--politicians and quacks; third, those who amuse us--singers and dancers; and last of all those who instruct us—
teachers" (Garlton, 1968, p. 12) In the 1960s, wages for teachers in the United States are below the national mean with the average teacher on a nine-month contract making $5519. Beginning salary for a college graduate at the time was $6780. Despite legislated wage minimums, teacher salaries lagged. In 1967, wages for teachers were reported to be 36.1% below minimum wage requirements. (Garlton, 1968, p. 12). Notably, some believed that an increase in teacher salaries correlating with more men entering the profession is attributed to the male's ability to demand dignity in teacher treatment (Doherty, 1966, p. 521).

Collective bargaining was also a basic theme of the 1960s. As teachers engaged in collective bargaining and strikes, attitudes and value-oriented changes emerged between the populace and teachers and among teachers themselves (Garlton, 1968). Public reactions to the 1963 teacher strikes were mixed. In contrast to the social protests of the 1960s that are considered a “respectable” and “virtuous” way to challenge the status quo, teacher protests and strikes are perceived by the public in a negative light (Galton, 1968, p.18). Calling children “…the helpless victims of this undisciplined adult strike,” the perception of teachers involved in collective bargaining is overwhelmingly negative. While some support raising teacher salaries in New York, for example, to “…halt a migration of the city’s best teachers to suburbia,” most blame teachers themselves (Buder, 1962, p. 375).

To many [the strike] …is an outrage, not just because the teachers are public employees, but because they are irreplaceable professionals deserting
helpless children. Some critics … went so far as to compare it to a doctor abandoning a patient because he couldn’t pay his bills (Buder, 1962, p.375).

Most of the population generally disapproved of the teacher’s ability to strike. As such, many felt that teacher strikes damaged teacher efforts to professionalize education and disaffected the public from their cause (Buder, 1962). On the other hand, teacher strike sympathizers identified the problem of teacher strikes as balancing the interests of teachers with the need of schools to “bring about broad social improvements” (Buder, 1962, p. 523). As the public became engaged in discussions about teacher strikes, subjects surrounding salary increases and better working conditions were associated with increased dissatisfaction among teachers (Doherty, 1966).

As the Rolling Stones and Tina Turner transformed American society to rock and roll, education underwent a revolution of its own in the 1960s. The 1960s is infamous in pop cultural society for the radical social changes it brought to American society. Trends in education were no different. As education reforms changed the norms of schools to focus on the needs of students, teachers themselves started to look for dignity in new ways. The power of collective bargaining forced society to reckon with teacher issues. However, it also called society to question the professionality of those in the education profession.

1970-1979

The 1970s became known as the “decade of me” and the great societal awakening. In response to the counterculture created in the 1960s, Tom Wolfe, reporter for New York Magazine, coined the term “decade of me” to describe the need of the 1970s personae to question orders and recover from tragedies created by authoritarian
corrupt systems and individuals (Conley, 2010). A number of events in the late 1960s and early 1970s inspired educational thinking in the 1970s. Events such as Watergate cause Americans to question the need for people to follow orders without question (Fraser, 2014). Vietnam protests illustrate the ability of individuals to speak freely, even against their government. The Apollo 13 space tragedy emphasizes the need for individuals to be able to problem solve. Fear created during the Cold War about communism results in a need for schools to instill the democratic ability to think and engage in discourse to distinguish the American system from that of the Soviets. As such, the individual’s ability to question authority and think independently became important values in the 1970s. When coupled with the aftermath of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, increasing social tensions surrounding rights for minorities, women, and gays increases discourse on how to protect students’ dignity. In the 1970s, two organizing themes emerge from the research on teacher dignity: teacher quality and the dignity of work (see Figure 15).
Teacher quality emerges as an organizing theme between 1970 and 1979. Within this organizing theme, basic themes found in the literature included dignity as a threat to quality teaching and the need to protect student dignity.

From 1970-1979 teacher dignity emerged in the literature as a theme that may threaten student learning. During this decade, educational thought attempts to confront teaching ideologies derived from “mass education” associated with the common school emerging from the Industrial Revolution. No longer bound by the goals of Industrial America to produce a certain type of worker through mass education, high quality teachers are called upon to create environments that empower the human personality. Teachers who relish monotonous work or place their own personal dignity at the center of the significance of their jobs are said to be a product of the Industrial Revolution. “This kind of teacher is easily replaced by a tape recording” (Hawley, 1979, p.599-600). Reforms in schools are called for to prevent “dignified” teachers from turning students into “human data banks” by keeping students “busy in school” and
assigning “...them an unconscionable amount of work to do at home” (Murphey, 1972).

The final basic theme within teacher quality is dignity as a barrier to student
learning. As the institutional role of the school and the teacher in educating a child is
properly reevaluated, the literature challenges teachers to abandon their dignity. In place
of the teacher directed classroom where a teachers’ values are imposed on the student,
teaching strategies emphasize the cultivation of student thought and discussion (Rice,
1976). Regardless of content area or student ability, teachers are encouraged to make
“...each pupil [an] important and a real part of the activity” (Klingele & Klingele, 1970,
p.40). The idea of a “democratic classroom” where each student is valued regardless of
their ability becomes popular (Klingele & Klingele, 1970; Moyer & Kunz,
1975). Instilling critical thinking skills in students and efforts to make the school less
intimidating are emphasized over the hierarchical roles between students and teachers.

“The school is not the place for subversion of the society...to protect our conception of
human dignity” (Shaver, p. 21, 1972). Good teachers are credited for being excellent at
building relationships (Corman, 1973; Moyer & Kunz, 1973). Trusting relationships are
associated with the humanity of the student and the recognition that students have dignity
and worth (Burke, 1976; Koch, 1971). Simultaneously, the teacher who focuses on
yielding high test scores over meaningful learning experiences is criticized for creating
routines and procedures to enhance their own dignity (Murphey, 1972).

To elevate the student to that of a dignified individual, teachers are called upon to
change their demeanor, skill sets, and tolerance in working with students. Teachers who
are considered “pompous” or who show “excessive professional dignity” are said to have
“personal insecure[ies]” which may “frighten” adolescents “in need of support from a
strong and secure adult (Hilliard, 1973, p. 64)

Researchers publishing in the 1970s, suggest that a teacher’s dignity can deter student achievement in the classroom (Frye, 1979; Hilliard, 1973; Murphey, 1972). The professional educator who demands authority is viewed as lacking “self-esteem” and “security” in their ability as a professional. (Hilliard, 1973). At the same time, teachers willing to abandon “professional dignity” are viewed as empowering the imagination and creativity of students and for modeling democratic ideals. When children experience such a classroom they realize “…there is no king or ruling class” or the need to subordinate themselves to an authority figure (Frye, 1979). To the dismay of many teachers, districts fearing that the “dignity” of the teacher might impinge on student learning, start to implement “teacher proof” curriculum (Romey, 1973). The teacher proof curriculum sought to provide teachers specific content information, timings, questions, and scripts to ensure that students will have desired outcomes.

We told him how long each pre-lab discussion should last, how long his students ought to take in completing the lab work, and how to handle the post-lab discussion. We gave him extra "in-depth" material on the subjects in the text to ensure that he would always be one up on his students. In short, we tried in every way to make our curriculum absolutely teacher proof by giving each teacher a perfect "manager's handbook." If you followed the teacher's guide, you couldn't mess up, and the result of your teaching would be excited kids who knew more earth science than ever before (Romey, 1973, p.407).

In the 1970’s, there is the belief among the general public that the classroom decisions a teacher makes are not technical in nature and are easily skewed by his or her
political leanings. Censorship of teachers, in place of academic freedom, becomes accepted. Districts and school boards are encouraged to monitor lessons and vet curricular decisions to ensure that they are suitable and do not offend students’ dignity (Cox, 1976). As such programs become popularized, there is teacher outcry that “institutional programs” are equivalent to teacher brainwashing that they should be performers instead of reflective practitioners (Romey, 1973; Neff, 1972). In this way teachers are called competency based “performers” and compared to trained fleas: “[T]eachers…[and] the trained fleas in the circus have more in common than you might suppose. Neither have been subjected to reflection. Both have been trained to perform” (Neff, 1972, p.482).

Television is also credited as a source of diminishing teacher dignity. Media reports on school "...violence, conflict, demands, alarm, dismay, division, and powerlessness,” (129) make the topic of teacher dignity a distant topic for consideration (Murrow, 1976, p. 129). At the same time, Azbell (1978) suggests that television teachers provide models of dignified and undignified teachers. Teachers can learn how to achieve dignity from television teachers like the Fonz embracing “professional poise.”

The Fonz would call it, ‘being cool.’ ‘Being cool’ is the opposite of the distraught and anxious teacher trying desperately to cope with the run-a-way class, pleading for attention from students who would rather enjoy seeing them lose control. The Fonz never allows his ‘class’ to use him in this way, but maintains his dignity, calm exterior, and reserved strength. He does this because he is a master in the use of silence, the steady gaze, and a facial expression that does not over-dramatize his internal emotions. His objectives are clear-cut, and he moves
toward them without deviation or any hint of insecurity. Others may be jumping up and down, shouting, exhibiting run-a-way emotions, giddiness, and scatter-brain reactions, but not the Fonzo. He remains ‘cool’ and he knows he has control as long as he hangs on to his ‘cool.’ He values it and appreciates its power in maintaining control. It is not a harsh power that stands in the way of friendship, gentleness, or empathy for others. It is only when joyous relationships are abused that the Fonzo resorts to his ‘cool.’ (Azbell, 1978, p. 300-301)

The second basic theme that emerges from the literature on teacher quality is student dignity. By the 1970s, the protestant “work ethic” is considered by some to be old fashioned and the need for hierarchy in the classroom archaic (Groves and Kahalas, 1975). Following this trend, 1970’s society seeks to redefine the source of a person’s dignity in a way that is not attached to a job or work (Groves &Kahalas, 1975; Strom, 1971).

Once we thought dignity came through biology, being well born; later we decided it occurred as a product of labor, having a job. Now some people are saying that dignity begins with conception--to my mind a proper age for acceptance as a person (Strom, 1971, p.169).

As the social emphasis in education shifts from looking upon the teacher as an “icon” of democratic society, to a potential threat, discourse regarding the teacher's dignity changes considerably to encapsulate the student. During the 1970s, perceptions of teacher authority and competence were called into question. Stanley Milligan’s electroshock experiment confounded Americans and called into question the ability of adults to make sound judgements. When “teachers” are given instructions to provide
electro shocks to “students” who do not respond desirably, researchers hypothesized that under two percent of “teachers” would administer the highest level of voltage "XXX" that could potentially lead to a loss of life. While the experiment did include a random sample of adults (not necessarily certified teachers), the ability of actual teachers to think independently and morally is questioned when 70% of “teachers” in the study administered the highest voltage treatment (Lickona, 1976). While society questions the judgment of teachers, teachers themselves are looked upon as lacking technical expertise and an education that adequately prepares them to make technical judgements. “It is not an uncommon belief that the education of teachers imparts no special competency beyond that possessed by the average person on the street” (Cox, 1977, p.8).

The second basic theme that emerges from the literature is a teacher's ability to treat students with dignity as a signal of their quality. As tenants of social thought evolve, the ethos of the teacher as a “dignified” professional continues to evolve to encapsulate that of the student. During the 1970s, youth are known for espousing their own moral codes and fighting their elders for the right to live by it. Some are crying, "End war. Stop killing." So many young people seem to be saying, "I am a human being; I have worth and dignity; respect me, listen to me, and let me live!" (Anderson, 1972, p. 43). Social dissonance in the 1970s, resulted in considerable pressure on schools to provide more rights to students (Anderson, 1972). Schools and teachers are forced to reconcile that students are entitled freedom of speech (United States Courts, 1969), that people cannot be discriminated based on sex (Title IX, 2021), and that non-native speakers are entitled to a bilingual education (Lau et al v. Nichols, 1974).

The dialogue of student dignity is backed by the research of BF Skinner on
positive and negative reinforcement. Skinner claims that negative reinforcement and its consequences can harm or produce undesirable effects on students (Hooten & Mahaffey, 1972; Snider & Murphy; 1975). Following the ideas of Skinner, experiences and individual responses to them, shape behaviors. Beliefs shift to the idea that behaviors demanded in a given environment can create desired behaviors among students. Teachers are cautioned that delays and negative experiences occurring in the classroom can have harmful effects on children through a form of "negative learning" (Groves and Kahalas, 1975). When a teacher violates the dignity of a pupil, the pupil learns that the individual man is worthless. He learns that if one has enough authority and muscle, he can do whatever he wishes to do to anyone who has less authority or less muscle (Snider and Murphy, 1975, p. 300). By 1978, the creation of a classroom climate “…where the basic dignity of students is supported” and one in which “[t]he teacher avoids embarrassing or criticizing the student” is included in the California state teacher evaluation system (Minnis et al., 1978, p 37).

In the 1970s, it was recognized that developing the student as a dignified citizen requires a change in pedagogy (Lindsey, 1973; Tate, 1970). Limitations created through rote learning and highly structured classroom environments with a clear teacher-student hierarchy, are thought to stifle the ability of students to think and function (Groves & Kahalas, 1975). As such, the authoritarian teacher who relished a “superior” role to their student is called upon to relinquish old ways of teaching and classroom management.

Whenever we treat young people as humans capable of thought, we are likely to find our conclusions challenged. This is an uncomfortable position for those who have relied on an authoritarian relationship to maintain their 'superior' position
over their students. Yet, in the long run, the sincere involvement of students in establishing the school's instrumental values would not only be in line with our commitment to human dignity, but it could help to make the school much more meaningful and less inimical institution for the students. Among other outcomes, the change in the relationship between student and institution might make the job of teaching more pleasant for some people (Shaver, 1972, p 24-25).

Teachers in the 1970s are consistently accused of dehumanizing students by failing to recognize the dignity of students (Burke, 1976). Quality teaching in the 1970s is believed to protect student’s individual dignity (Andrews, 1977; Ludwig, 1976; Smith, 1974; Tate, 1970). Only then is it thought that learning can occur (Andrews 1977). A product of humanism and cultural pluralism, educational thought posits that for students to learn and behave appropriately, the teacher needs to consider their cultural backgrounds, ability levels, and attributes that make them individuals (Andrews, 1977; Denemark & Espinoza, 1974; Klingele & Klingele, 1970; Shaver, 1972). In this way, the 1970’s American school begins to be seen as a mechanism for social justice. Poverty, disparities based on race and gender, and the prevalence of “slums” or urban environments are viewed as areas where society has failed (Education, 1970; Lickona, 1976). Teachers who migrate from low-income urban schools to wealthier middle-class schools are accused of contributing to the problem. They are accused of preventing social progress because it is “beneath their dignity” to teach in such environments (Brindley, 1974).

Another area in education that was highly scrutinized during the 1970s is the teacher’s treatment of ethnic minorities and female students. Minorities (both ethnic and
gender) complain that school materials promote a white, male Americanized perspective which leaves many students from diverse backgrounds feeling isolated. Mexicans are portrayed as lazy banditos and girls are encouraged to go to school by learning about housework from her mother. “[Mexican Americans] [want] teachers to stop calling them names like ‘animals’ and ‘stupid idiots’” (Mondale et al, 2001, p. 152). Responding to social pressure to address the needs of the school to refashion its attitudes and practices, two major reforms were passed in the 1970s: Title IX and the Bilingual Education Act (Mondale et al, 2001).

Prior to the passage of the Bilingual Education Act, Mexican Americans in Crystal City High School caught speaking Spanish were given two options: “three days suspension or three licks with a paddle” (Mondale et al, 2001, p. 150). As part of President Johnson’s War on Poverty, the Bilingual Education Act provided funding to schools for students whose first language was not English. With the passage of this legislation, teachers and schools were asked to not only embody the idea of cultural pluralism, but also act as leaders in promoting its ideas (Shaver, 1972).

In contrast to the perspective of the United States as a “melting pot,” where cultures meld into a distinct American Culture, cultural pluralism posits a “salad bowl mentality” of culture where each culture is able to maintain its individual identity while being a part of a cohesive American society (Shaver, 1972). For some teachers the transformation of public schools to schools that protect and promote cultural sensitivity and contest corporal punishment was career ending (Shaver, 1972).

The second organizing theme that emerged from the literature in the 1970s is the dignity of work. Within this organizing theme, work conditions and unions emerged as
basic themes in the literature.

Work conditions resulting in a lack of purpose and pride among teachers is a basic theme in the 1970s. In a non-parametric ranking study conducted in Oregon on the open classroom, out of 77 items, teachers identified the preservation of their dignity as the second most significant item in importance (behind creating a school climate conducive to open discussion and learning for staff) (Kleparchuck, 1970). Some researchers attribute diminished teacher dignity to the media in portraying teachers and schools poorly (Murrow, 1976). Others attribute problems to the university system for failing to prepare those entering the urban classroom (Chall, 1975; Drummond and Lawrence, 1978; Fried, 1973).

One way this is addressed is by school districts themselves. Noting that “[m]ost teachers respond favorably when treated with dignity,” professional development programs become centered on addressing feelings of teacher inadequacy and building teacher capacity and dignity (Drummond & Lawrence, 1978, p. 275). To help build teacher capacity and increase their chances of success, districts are called upon to provide training and in-services to equip teachers with the skills and knowledge of working with the poor or ethnically diverse populations and, consequently, increase teachers’ rates of success. To “enhance” dignity, teacher training helps teachers realize that the goal of education is for the learner to achieve purpose—not necessarily academic knowledge or skills (Strom & Larimore, 1970).

We need to look at learning more as something in which the learner achieves…Otherwise, what one is being taught as a student or counseled to do as a teacher naturally seems irrelevant. By relying in future research on teacher
intentions as one criteria system of success, we allow self-direction, eliminate the
intruder concept, and enhance teacher dignity. (Strom & Larimore, 1970, p. 74)

In the 1970s, the teacher was encouraged to fight the status quo, empower
students, and implement changes in the classroom that revolutionized the concept of
student dignity. At the same time, teachers experience information discord, an upended
notion of teacher dignity, and a new responsibility to implement multicultural education
in their classrooms and communities. As researchers seek to preclude school tensions,
building capacity among students and teachers yields finger pointing, confusion, and
social dissatisfaction with schools. Information discord is particularly evident in the
matter of classroom management.

As teachers undergo considerable scrutiny, they voice increasing concern in the
1970s that their safety is being ignored and that “teachers’ dignity is diminished by
excessive tolerance of outrages committed by students” (Hechinger, 1979, para
3). Lickona (1976) illustrates this dilemma when looking at two teachers’ responses to
similar disciplinary infractions. The first teacher was condoned for referring a second-
grade student to the office (who would later be suspended) for calling her a “son-of-a-
bitchin-whore.” The second teacher was praised for telling a student that she was
unhappy with the student’s decision to tell her that a classroom infraction was, “None of
your business, you mother fucker.” Since the latter student apologizes to the teacher later
in the day, the teacher is said to respect the child’s rights and dignity as a person and in so
doing, makes a positive influence on his life (Lickona, 1976, p. 19).

To manage a classroom in one “slum school,” the teacher is directed to “admit
[mistakes] and laugh with the class.” In this way the teacher prevents students from
seeing them embody dignity, vanity, or pride in their work that can only cause more disciplinary problems. “An effective procedure is to make clear the position of the teacher, and/or to ask what the child or children would do if they were the teacher” (Anderson, 1972, p.151).

Unions also became a basic theme in the 1970s. During the 1970s teachers began to seek help from unions to protect their employment rights, safety in the classroom, and professional dignity. Among teachers there is debate as to whether joining a union violates a teacher’s professional dignity. Teacher protests were highly unpopular in the 1970’s. While some believe it is the only recourse teachers have to protect their professional dignity, physical safety, and employment rights, others charge that it diminishes the professional dignity of the teacher to engage in an activity popularized by blue collar workers (Bender, J., & Weinstock, 1977). Teachers participating in them are considered selfish and willing to hurt kids because "...if you haven't got education, you can hardly get a job sweeping the floor” (Jenkins, 1973, para 44).

The controversy over teacher unions extends to community members when teachers began to engage in strikes in the 1970s. Wages as well as issues of dignity are attributed to causing the first teacher strike in Saint Louis. A teacher picketing during the strike commented: "I can't say exactly what I'd be willing to settle for…but what I want most is respect. The attitude of the board of education is arrogant, patronizing, and paternalistic. They won't talk to us. I'll stay out until that changes" (Jenkins, 1973, para 30).

Unlike vehement accusations by teachers’ organizations that charged union members’ safety is being ignored and their dignity diminished by excessive tolerance of
outrageous student offenses, some blame the teachers themselves for such offenses. Violence in schools is attributed by some to be the result of lack of self-esteem among teachers and commitment in the field. “Teacher’s self-esteem and commitment to the children’s education reduces disruption and crime…when a school is run by an efficient and perceptive staff, antisocial behavior declines or disappears” (Hechinger, 1979, para 12-para14).

Educational research in the 1970s began to recognize that teachers are not equipped with the skills needed to protect the dignity of students coming from various backgrounds, teach critical thinking skills, and administer decisions regarding student discipline. This results in a significant shift as researchers become highly critical of teachers and their abilities as dignified professionals to make decisions that are good for kids. This results in vast amounts of research seeking ways to minimize teacher deficits that will in turn increase student dignity. As society grapples with changes emerging from the Cold War and the Civil Rights movement, the treatment of individuals in the classroom gains trajectory—with teacher dignity identified as an impediment to social progress. The dissonance that manifests is conflict between teachers and schools and between teachers and students as teachers respond to new social pressures.

1980-1989

From teased hair and shoulder pads to beatboxes, the 1980s were known for being big. In 1983, the “Big Island” in Hawaii became known for having the world’s most active volcano (Kilauea, n.d.). Meanwhile, the 1985 experiment to modify the formula for Coca-Cola proved to be a big flop (History Channel, n.d.). The movie “Big” (1988) propelled Tom Hanks to big fame (IMDb, n.d). With the tearing down of the Berlin Wall,
big political changes were on the horizon for the four decades-long Cold War. The 1980s were also known for having big changes in education.

During the 1980s, concern over the quality of American education became increasingly prevalent. The report “A Nation at Risk” was published and warned Americans of increasing mediocrity in schools (Gardner, 1983). Further, studies conducted in the 1980s indicated poor student performance in American Schools (Gardner, 1983). Terrel Bell, Secretary of Education under Ronald Regan, created an impetus to examine the quality of education in the United States. An urgency was created over failures in education, particularly those affecting poor and minority students (Gardner, 1983; Goldberg & Harvey, 1983). During the 1980s, economic pressures, education reform, and the dignity of work emerged as organizing themes (see Figure 16).

Economic pressures are an organizing theme from the literature in the 1980s. Basic themes of teacher wages, unions, and job security emerge within the literature to support this organizing theme. Following a national recession, the 1980s proved to be relatively prosperous for schools. Nationally, state revenues allocated for education increased by more than 41% (Feir, 1995). States allocated the majority of funding for schools. For many states, increases in school funding are met with increasing accountability for student learning. During a decade of considerable change in American schools, 1980s society takes an active role in increasing student achievement. Eighty percent of states enact education reforms to increase high school graduation requirements; 66% of states establish or expand state testing requirements; 46% of states enact curriculum materials and standards (Feir, 1995). With an increased focus on student achievement, the quality of the teacher is also scrutinized.
The 1980s is a decade of economic and professional struggle for the teacher. The teaching profession is noted as an example of a profession where clients have little control over service providers (Popham & Kirby, 1987). Students are noted as being at the “mercy” of teachers, and the adverse effects of bad teachers on children’s academic progress and growth become a topic of academic discussion (Popham & Kirby, 1987). The teacher is also scrutinized in the entertainment industry for creating student indignities (McPherson, 1981).

In the 1980s, the profession of teaching continued to be considered a profession of consciousness. The teacher is criticized for attempts to increase their economic status (McPherson, 1981). The conflict between teachers achieving the status of being dignified and unionized is also attributed to the diminished public image of the teacher. (Judge, 1988; McPherson, 1981). Shanker (1986) asserts that collective bargaining makes the members of the education profession similar to that of an industrial worker. The public
expects teachers to be above economic issues because of the teacher’s role in acting “in loco parentis” (McPherson, 1981). The teacher’s privacy continued to be a topic of public debate in the 1980s. Problematically, the teacher perceives economic issues to be central to their dignity.

Multiple economic issues during the 1980s were of concern to teachers. In the 1980s, 41 states (82%) increased their standards for teacher entrance into the profession. Additionally, 66% of schools enacted salary reforms (Feir, 1995). Unions, layoffs, and teacher pay became central issues for teacher dignity in the 1980s. For teachers, unions are perceived as a tool to preserve their dignity (Carillon & Sutton, 1982). Teacher layoffs are attributed to a lack of teacher dignity (Scharffe, 1983). “Teachers are also dehumanized by the lack of job security. School boards frequently terminate teachers in the spring and recall them after the budget has been passed. Being laid off is an emotional process. And when being laid off is done without proper administrative planning or concern for human dignity, the teacher is dehumanized” (Calabrese, 1986, p. 258).

Teacher wages are also connected to teacher dignity (; Chall, 1986; Griffin, 1983; “The Case of the Vanishing Teacher”, 1984). During the 1980s, three different compensation reforms became common: career ladder programs, merit pay plans, and salary increases (Feir, 1995). Particularly, merit pay is considered a challenge to teacher dignity (Bird & Little, 1986; Chall, 1986; “The Case of the Vanishing Teacher”, 1984). For some, it is considered a “…Band-Aid on the festering wound of inadequate pay for teachers” (“The Case of the Vanishing Teacher”, 1984, p. 234). For others, it is considered an assault on the professionalism of teachers to act cooperatively (Bird & Little, 1986; Chall, 1986).
Many teachers have been reported to suffer from a diminished sense of worth and dignity, and some from burnout. If they can work collaboratively with educational researchers in experimentation and research, or as scholar teachers in their own classrooms, they would gain a new sense of excitement, competence, and hope (Chall, 1986, p.794).

In addition to facing economic challenges, teachers also face professional challenges in the 1980s. The dignity of work also emerged as an organizing theme in the 1980s. Within this theme, the professional status of teachers and teacher autonomy emerged as basic themes in the literature while the teacher's professional status was a topic of debate. For many teachers, diminished professional dignity is associated with poor work conditions (Blase, 1986; Recker, 1985; Rosenholtz, 1989; Ohanian, 1987). Organizational conditions like lack of staff induction, low self-esteem among teachers, and teacher isolation are connected to a lack of dignity (Rosenholtz, 1989). Asking teachers to take on extra duties beyond the classroom is considered a challenge to a teacher's dignity. "Requiring teachers to monitor playgrounds, lunchrooms, and lavatories destroys their professional dignity and reduces the amount of time and energy they can spend pursuing educational goals. By limiting their assignments, teachers can focus on instructional issues, acquisition of additional teaching competencies, and the development of curriculum" (Calabrese, 1986, p. 258)

Having the autonomy and authority to support fellow teachers and provide formal and informal training is also associated with teacher dignity (Griffin, 1983). For many teachers, sources of dignity appear very basic. The ability to arrange the classroom is also associated with teacher dignity (Griffin, 1983). Administrative support is associated with
teacher dignity: "The administrator felt that the only way he could control the staff was through fear--I was harassed....my dignity violated when I would not change a grade" (Blase, 1986, p.25). The inability of administrators to take care of basic teacher needs, such as purchasing toilet paper that fits in the dispenser, is identified as an assault on the dignity of a teacher. The teacher later discovered that OSHA's standards did not apply to schools (Ohanian, 1987)

A study conducted on teacher sick leave found that treating adults working in schools with dignity will increase productivity, happiness, and the professional dignity of the teacher in the workplace:

Probably the most valuable thing an administrator can learn in solving problems is that the teachers want to be treated as professionals…. Treat people as adults. Treat them as partners, treat them with dignity, treat them with respect'. Surely, they will respond in kind (Murray, 1987, p. 52)

Expanded teacher responsibilities and reforms are also an organizing theme from the literature in the 1980s. Basic themes in education reform include reforms to increase student achievement, teacher competency, and action research. As society focused on student achievement, there was an increasing focus on education reform and protecting student dignity. The treatment of students with dignity is deemed by many a fundamental responsibility of teachers (Eberlein, 1989; Grossnickle, 1986; Madden, 1988). During the 1980s, teachers were called upon to reform their classroom techniques so that they act like mirrors-- that teachers should treat kids in a way that would reflect the worth and meaning of their professional dignity. (Lee & Souers,1984). For example, Madden (1988) called upon teachers to give up using classroom management techniques similar to those
used in “dog training” and instead treat students with dignity.

It is obvious that canine pets can never be independent and are merely the loved property of their owners, but students are not possessions. They are unique individuals who have the right to self-determination and the joy of personal worth and dignity based on the undisputed value of their personhood” (Madden, 1988, p. 144).

With an increased emphasis on human dignity, it is not surprising that multiculturalism gained prominence in universities and schools in the 1980s. The topic of dignity is implored in multicultural education programs in colleges. On the one hand, researchers attribute teacher training in multicultural education to help instill dignity in the teacher in preparation programs like that of a doctor or lawyer (Bergen, 1989). Yet, at the same time, classroom teachers are blamed for “bring[ing] to the classroom biases and prejudices toward people different from themselves” and lacking factual information about ethnic and cultural differences among students (Manning, 1989, p. 15).

Preserving teacher dignity is cited as an impetus for educational reforms. Some educational reformists assert that for teachers to gain professional status and dignity, the university (and teacher preparation programs) need to be altered to instill dignity in the candidate teacher before entering the classroom (Bergen, 1989; Recent Reports on Education, 1983). University professors in education are criticized for not taking the art and science of education seriously (Bergen, 1989; Lyons, 1980; Ornstein, 1981). “....[C]ollege professors who find it beneath their dignity to be concerned with the philosophy, the science, and the art of effective teaching (Bergen, 1989, p.74) are blamed for not meeting the needs of school districts for competent teachers (Lyons, 1980;
While some point to universities as a point of reform, others see teacher competency tests (and proof of teacher stills) as a way for teachers to maintain teacher dignity (Haney et al., 1987; Griffin, 1983; Popham & Kirby, 1987). To restore dignity in teaching, states like Texas started to promote the use of college graduates with content degrees, not degrees in education, to fill the role of classroom teachers (Lyons, 1980). By the mid-1980s, 86% of states instituted policies having teachers pass a state or national examination before entering a teacher preparation program or receiving a teacher certificate (Feir, 1995).

Teacher attrition and the need for reform in the 1980s are also associated with teacher dignity. Preserving the intellectual energy of the classroom teacher is considered a point of protecting the professional dignity of the teacher (Carbone, 1983; Hill, Vance & Kelley, 1984; NCTE to You, 1985;). Protecting teacher dignity is reflected in an increased focus on how educational research is conducted and by whom (Chall, 1986; Griffin, 1983;). Concern is widely addressed about experts dictating education from universities or policy-making institutions without direct access to the classroom (Chall, 1986; Chattin-McNichols & Loefferl, 1989; Ornstein, 1981; Weiner, 1989). Teacher research is associated with enhanced teacher dignity (Chattin-McNichols & Loefferl, 1989; Weiner, 1989). Action research based in the classroom is seen as “liberating teachers” from systems that previously denied them the authority and control to ground classroom instruction in their experience (Weiner, 1989;).

Doing research in your own classroom gives dignity and a sense of worth in your mind to what you are doing. You are not 'just a teacher.' What you are
doing has more value. Carrying out research allows you to provide a measure of validity to the things that before were only hunches” (Chattin-McNichols & Loeffler, 1989, p. 25).

Ultimately, there is a recognition that historically teachers have not been respected and supported by society. As a result, teachers who want or need professional dignity are encouraged to “look within themselves to find their own worth and dignity” (Griffin, 1983, p. 302).

Like aerosol hairspray, many reforms passed in the 1980s came with a tradeoff. As teachers try to increase their status as a profession, they are increasingly criticized for working for economic gain. During the decade, attempts to increase the professionalism of teachers and preserve dignity within the profession are challenged by societal goals to increase the student’s dignity. As teachers struggle to define dignity inside themselves, through their wages, and from society, teacher dignity enters a phase of redefinition and recollection in the 1990s.

**1990-1999**

A decade of acid-washed denim, crushed velvet, and sitcoms such as “Friends” and “Cheers,” the 1990s is well known for its contributions to fashion and entertainment. Like the 1980s, the 1990s was also a decade of educational reform. Steps made to reform teacher training and curriculum standards during the 1990s will lay the foundation for the iconic education reforms of the 2000s and No Child Left Behind (2001). During the 1990s, the population of students in public schools increased and became increasingly diverse. As a decade, the 90s is clouded with ideas of content standards, measuring student progress, performance standards, and statewide assessments
(National Center for Education Statistics, 2003). The 90s is also recognized in education for the emergence of new concerns over student dignity. Two organizing themes are prominent in the 1990s: Education Reforms and Teacher Professionalism and Competency (See Figure 17).

Another basic theme of the 1990s was educational reforms. Reform efforts of the 90s fell into four broad categories: 1) curriculum standards and assessment; 2) school finance; 3) teacher training; and 4) school choice (National Center for Education Statistics, 2003). Teacher dignity emerges as a theme in reform efforts affecting curriculum standards and assessments as well as teacher training.

During the 1990s, reform strategies were supported by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). ESEA sought to encourage states to set academic standards and collect data from student assessments to produce state estimates about student’s educational attainment. Part of ESEA is to hold schools accountable for student learning outcomes (National Center for Education Statistics, 2003). Education reforms were generally seen to have effects on teacher perspectives of teacher dignity including concerns regarding teacher dignity with curriculum reforms and split perspectives of reforms amongst teachers and between teachers and administrators.
A basic theme emerging from reform efforts made in the 1990s is concern about implementing broad curriculum reforms. Reforms based on federal and state legislators formed during the 1990s are said to deskill teachers. Described as the “clerks of the movement,” the voices of teachers are mainly considered absent from reform efforts (Giroux, 1994). As a result, diminished teacher dignity is associated with implementing a standardized curriculum primarily devised by policymakers (Giroux, 1994; Kaufman, 1996; Shoho et al., 1994; Smyth, 1992; Troman, 2000).

Politically, the U.S. lived through twelve years of reforms when teachers were invited to deskill themselves, to become technicians...legislators and government officials are ignoring the most important people in the reform effort, the teachers (Giroux, 1994, p. 38).
While some education reforms of the 1990s concentrated on implementing a standardized curriculum, others focused on teachers themselves. Federal and state education authorities began calling for the testing of teachers to ensure that highly qualified teachers enter the classroom (Giroux, 1994).

For many teachers, the educational reforms of the 1990s resulted in a gap between perceptions of what school systems “ought” to value and what was practical to implement in the classroom (Duffy 1998; Kaufman, 1996; Shohe et al., 1994; Sunstein, 1994). In this way, researchers during the 1990s began to compare effective teaching (and the acquisition of teacher dignity) to the act of balancing round stones (Duffy, 1998). The struggle between society and teachers (oppression and power) for the acquisition of dignity could be seen within Hegel’s dialectic (Weil, 1998).

With new reforms, some teachers perceived professional dignity at risk with changes in school hiring decisions made during labor shortages that occurred in the 1970s. One attribute associated with diminished teacher dignity was a split in the profession between a “core and a marginal labor force” (Ohmann, 1998). For others, the detached role of administrators from that of a teacher creates a source of tension that affects the teacher’s dignity in the 1990s. To enhance teacher dignity, administrators are called upon to treat teachers as individuals with distinct abilities, areas for growth, and needs within a professional environment. (Phillips & Young, 1997, p. 119-120). For some teachers, this results in a tendency to defend their professional “dignity” by protecting their “turf” in the classroom (Howarth & Cockeireas, 1993).

In addition to the movement to create standards-based education, the 1990s also saw a movement for schools to teach students about the dignity of work. On the one
hand, the dignity of work concerns the profession of teachers themselves. Concerns about
top-down management and structured inequality within schools, is attributed to rationing
and manipulating the teachers’ dignity (Kincheloe, 1995; Purpel, 1999). Some teachers
challenged the notion that only summers could help teachers realize the dignity that was
left in the profession (Jones, 1991).

On the other hand, In the 1990s, schools and teachers were increasingly called
upon to teach students about the dignity of work. Teachers are criticized for emphasizing
relationship building and caring for each other rather than examining and investing in the
value and dignity of work in students (Noddings, 1993). Failures of teachers to teach
about the dignity of work is credited for creating a lack of motivation, creativity, and self-
development among workers (Kincheloe, 1995).

Like the 1980s, the conversation surrounding teacher dignity during the 90s
involves the idea that the teacher is a professional. Three basic themes emerged from the
research on teacher professionalism in the 1990s: 1) increased teacher cognizance of
“dignified behaviors”; 2) teacher autonomy; and 3) teachers increasingly associating their
consciousness of meeting public expectations with their dignity. For some teachers,
dignity means seeking excellence in the classroom. In the 1990s, a dignified teacher is
thought to be motivated through “tenacity” and “purpose” and to engage in a community
of learners. Test scores alone cannot be a measure of excellence (Franks, 1996).
Cognizant of the social pressures exerted on public schools in the 1990s, for many
teachers, the public’s perception of the teacher is increasingly associated with their
dignity. For others, dignity is achieved when a teacher appears “statelee” and “modest”
(Simmons, 1996; Caldwell, 1991). Cognizance surrounding the teacher’s physical
appearance is associated with dignity in showing the teacher’s “preparedness.”

Professional dress is also seen to help teachers “...impert an air of authority and dignity” that could prevent them from being associated with those charged with the molestation and harassment of children (Simmons, 1996). Still, others caution that increasing teacher consciousness of changing cultural perceptions of educators has led them to believe that they may be losing their professional status and that they may be “just a teacher” (Hinchey, 1998)

The teacher’s dignity in the 1990s is also associated with classroom management and their ability to protect the student’s dignity. Teachers who hold high standards for students and maintain their respect and attention are associated with having dignity (Lipman, 1995). Conversely, teachers who struggle to manage student behaviors and react severely to enforce rules are associated with losing their dignity (Hinchey, 1998; Nichols, 1992;). The teacher who fails to model lifelong learning relying on worksheets and reusing tests is also considered a threat to teacher dignity.

For many teachers, concerns surrounding their autonomy as professionals emerged in the 1990s. Dignity is increasingly associated with the teacher’s individualism and autonomy. As a result, multiple reform efforts were made to promote teachers’ efforts to succeed professionally and prevent them from falling into “economic slavery”. These include merit pay, calls for collective bargaining, and requests to change teacher evaluation systems (Block, 1992, p. 35). “Courage” and “...pursuing one’s sense of what is right " were also increasingly associated with the teacher’s professional dignity (Duffy, 1998, p.780). The abolition of department chairs was called for, stating, “Teachers simply behave with greater dignity and authority when they are responsible for their own
actions” (Goldberg, 1996, p.329).

A movement to use reflection to empower teacher dignity also occurred in the
1990s (Smyth 1992). The teacher’s consciousness of perceptions of dignity was
considered the difference between playing “.... the role of well-paid babysitters who get
summers off” and that of a professional” (Hinchey, 1998). Thus, reflective practices were
associated with teacher dignity. Hargreaves (1994) attributes the need for teacher
reflective practices in teacher evaluation to balance teacher “empowerment and
narcissism.” Reflective processes that emphasize the “And it gives much needed
credibility and dignity to teachers’ own personal and teacher as a person assist them in
self-understanding processes grounded in their life and work. practical knowledge of
their work in relation to policymakers” (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 73)

Topics concerning student dignity range from classroom management to the strip-
searching of students and those involved in school safety issues will become prominent in
the 1990s (Foldesy & King, 1995; Wilson, 1991). By the late 90s, events like the
Columbine shooting and Mathew Shepard beatings raised awareness of student dignity
issues including bullying behaviors and the treatment of students identifying as
homosexuals. With these events, the conversation concerning dignity will gain continual
momentum specifically toward ideas of student dignity. In addition, as schools and states
seek to integrate national and state education initiatives, teacher perceptions of “dignity”
shift to reflect the pressures of educational reforms.

Sources related to teacher dignity became increasingly scarce in the 1990s. While
there is little reference to the concept of teacher dignity during this decade, the sources
that do exist consistently point to the influence of state and federal reforms as a source of
stress to the teacher’s dignity. The scene for education reforms, including teacher competency, resulted in tension between administrators and teachers charged with implementing reforms on a building level. During the 1990s, dignified teachers were increasingly called upon to find dignity within themselves. In addition, public pressures associated with changing demographics of students, student achievement, and the bad behavior of select teachers increasingly affected the teacher’s perception of dignity. Feeling left out of reform efforts, teachers increasingly criticize themselves and others for not being professionals, not being skilled practitioners, and failing to manage a classroom.

2000-2009

As the ball dropped on New Year’s Eve of 2000, the world was thrust into the uncertainty of Y2k, the world wide web, and the dreams of a technologically advanced society. With innovations like Myspace, flip phones, and American Idol, the new millennium also ushered in unprecedented changes for students, families, and schools. During the first ten years of the new century, teachers will relate dignity with the organizing themes of educational reform and the dignity of work (see Figure 18).

Educational reform is an organizing theme that emerges between 2000 and 2010. Education in the early 2000s is shrouded in school accountability, educational standards, and ideas about testing. Therefore, it is not surprising that in an era remembered for “No Child Left Behind” (NCLB), the conversation about teacher dignity became encased with ideas about educational policy changes, interest groups, and the subsequent impact on teacher performance and student achievement. Within the organizing theme of educational reform, two basic themes emerge from the research—
teacher’s voice in curriculum design and administrator/teacher stress.

Figure 18

2000-2009 Theme Matrix

A centerpiece of educational reform for George W. Bush, NCLB, called for creating educational standards and testing to ensure that schools make adequate yearly progress in improving learning among specific sectors of students. NCLB also resulted in the formation of state standards for education. The path through which reforms are made with NCLB can essentially be described as “top-down” (Klein, 2016). Lack of teacher input or voice in the formation of standards, teaching objectives, testing, and evaluation standards for NCLB, resulted in diminished dignity for teachers.

Teachers were considered largely absent from policy-making decisions that dictated “No Child Left Behind” school reforms. The formation of state standards in NCLB is attributed to making teachers “pawn[s] in a cult of expertise” (Kincheloe, 2001). Rozycki (2003) compares teachers to cannon fodder—expendable personnel used
to attain policy objectives. Subject to the curriculum and decision-making of federal and state authorities, teachers lose the ability to provide input into the skills and content taught in classrooms, the methods used to reach content and skill standards, and how to determine if teaching was effective. For many teachers, a conflict emerges between the mechanism of teacher reflection considered an attribute of professional training programs (Kincheloe, 2001; Rozycki, 2003) and new systems that emphasize “taking orders from experts…. [driven by] efficiency and scientific management of schools” (Kincheloe, 2001).

Teacher dignity between 2000 and 2010 is consistently attributed to teachers having the autonomy and authority to design and adapt curriculum based on teacher reflection (Gelberg, 2007; Orelus, 2008; Rozycki, 2003). NCLB is considered “...an insult to teacher dignity since it assumes that teachers are too ignorant, dumb, and/or lazy” to critically evaluate content goals, manage student learning, and think critically about teaching and learning (Kincheloe, 2001). As workplaces impose teaching objectives, testing, and evaluation procedures, teacher dignity is considered diminished as teachers lose the autonomy to make classroom decisions. Instead of being called upon to intellectually engage in educational reforms, teachers are “.... required to manifest allegiance to the latest fashion in educational ideology that subtly threaten their grades, dignity, and self-esteem” (Rozycki, 2003). Alsup (2005) calls on teachers to stop martyring themselves for the profession (Alsup, 2005).

The self-sacrificers’ will eventually give so much of themselves that they will have nothing left to give, becoming bitter, empty reflections of their former teaching selves. Such teachers are commonplace—those who seem to dislike their
students, their jobs, and themselves (Alsop, 2005, p.20).

Emotional disengagement and loss of dignity are cited as resulting from the required use of scripted lessons (Orelus, 2009).

Instead of focusing on teacher training or improving conditions in schools, teachers perceive NCLB as converting schools into models for free-market competition (Stotsky et al., 2004). “Don’t just replace us with young first-year graduates throwing us away with the bathwater. Let us use our skills… Don’t take away our dignity” (Ojalvo, 2010). In the reform model of NCLB, teachers who are part of the labor market must produce students who can meet educational outcomes. Teachers not able to get students to achieve educational outcomes are considered expendable (Stotsky et al., 2004).

The second basic theme that emerges from the research is teacher/administrator stress. While teachers struggle to meet educational reform goals, a rift is created between teachers and administrators. Administrator walkthroughs of classrooms are compared to “command inspections” to ensure teacher compliance. “Such visitations are supposed to be helpful, but in the real world, they often intimidate, interrupt the natural flow of learning, spread fear, and rob teachers of their dignity and passion.” (Alsop, 2005). Student failures are considered a threat to teacher dignity. For some teachers, this stress emerges from the unattainable standards set by NCLB. For other teachers, the stress of student failures is perceived to be placed upon teachers by administrators. One teacher recounted meeting with an administrator twice about a student who failed their class. Those two meetings “attempted to destroy my dignity, and it did destroy my faith in education. It effectively ‘disillusioned’ me” (Freedman & Applemen, 2008, p 121). Other teachers felt the stress of educational reforms after using prescribed district materials.
While using these materials, teachers felt dismayed by low standardized test scores and the potential to increase them. Lack of teacher autonomy left teachers feeling less engaged in the curriculum (Orelus, 2009).

Tension with administrators is associated with confusion about the personal identity of teachers. Administrators are blamed for not recognizing teachers’ social, emotional, and personal needs in the profession (Alsup, 2005). Administrators are charged with taking away teacher dignity by “jeopardiz[ing] teachers’ self-confidence and professional self-image (Normore & Floyd, 2005, p. 771). Charging that teachers deserve to be treated with dignity and respect, Alsup (2005) suggests that teachers must reject the assumption that they are simply mechanisms for curriculum delivery, babysitters, “...or people who chose to teach because they couldn’t ‘do’ anything else” (Alsup, 2005, p.20). Dignity is associated with the mutual respect of teachers and administrators and their ability to work collaboratively (Alsup, 2005; Normore & Floyd, 2005). Administrators are also called upon to build relationships with staff members to increase teacher dignity (York-Barr & Duke, 2004).

A second organizing theme that emerges in the literature between 2000-2010 is the dignity of work. The creation of a dignified workplace for teachers is in many ways derived from concern about the self-esteem, self-efficacy, and morale of teachers (Anagnostopoulos, 2006; Raymond, 2005; Rozycki, 2003;). Undoubtedly, the dignity of work is affected by teacher reforms. Student competency is associated with teacher dignity (Anagnostopoulos, 2006; Cahnmann, 2005). The dignity of teachers in schools with merit promotion policies in failing schools is considered “at risk” (Anagnostopoulos, 2006). For some, improving work conditions improves teacher dignity (Raymond, 2005).
However, the dignity of work as an organizing theme focuses not on the impact of educational reforms. Instead, the impact of hierarchical decision-making, student discipline, and professional development on teacher dignity are evaluated as basic themes in the research.

An effort to integrate staff into the power structures of schools is associated with teacher dignity during this decade. References to the concept of “democracy” emerge in context to teacher dignity (Jenlink & Jenlink, 2008; Kincheloe, 2001) The formation of democratic learning communities where teachers have a voice, and there is “...concern for the dignity of rights of individuals” is associated with building the dignity of teachers (Jenlink & Jenlink, 2008, p. 315). Team environments where decision making is distributed is further associated with increased teacher dignity (Jenlink & Jenlink, 2008; Kincheloe, 2001; Zuorick, 2010).

Direct participation of teachers into administrative structures is said to help teachers “... regain their dignity, identify sources of inspiration and motivation, and become revitalized” (Zuorick, 2010, p.122). Teachers having control over decision-making in the school curriculum is consistently associated with teacher dignity (Alsup, 2005; Baptist, 2002; Gelberg, 2007; Kincheloe, 2001; Orelus, 2009). Having teachers engage in action research and the right to make decisions based on data is also associated with shared decision making and teacher dignity (Kincheloe, 2001). While teachers continue to struggle with the idea of hierarchy in decision-making within schools, there is increasing emphasis on symmetry and the abolition of power relationships in classroom management.

Classroom management is increasingly associated with teacher dignity between
2000 and 2010 (Algozzine et al., 2000; Roscoe & Orr, 2010; Ullucci, 2009). Effective classroom management is associated with increasing dignity for students and teachers (Algozzine et al., 2000; Roscoe & Orr, 2010; Ullucci, 2009; Willie, 2000;). Contrarily, poor classroom management and written and verbal attacks on teachers are associated with diminished teacher dignity:

The kids were vicious…. nowhere in my wildest imagination had I ever pictured myself being the object of that kind of hostility…. I mean rowdiness and that kind of thing I was ready for, but I was totally unprepared for these kinds of personal attacks. (Muchmore, 2001, p.98)

In the early 2000’s, there was increasing emphasis on professional development and incentive programs for teachers to address issues surrounding deteriorating teacher dignity. Professional learning communities become a popular mechanism for increasing teacher dignity. It does so by enabling “….an open flow of ideas [and] concern for the dignity and rights of individuals” (Jenlink & Jenlink, 2008, p.315). Teacher teams are also used to help increase professional enthusiasm and participation in the organizational hierarchy of schools (Bowman, 2005; Zuorick, 2010). Activities like teacher journaling are cited as connecting teacher dignity with efforts to build teacher agency. Support groups that connect parents, students, and teachers are cited as needed interventions that can result in “promoting academic achievement and human dignity” (Joyce, 2008, p.92).

Principal Shelley Harwayne proposed a system where there would be a thirteenth for every twelve working teachers to provide the necessary support to build teacher dignity. This “‘white space’…would add to the dignity of teaching, give a boost to morale, and a training ground for first-year teachers!” (Raymond, 2005, p. 4). For
others, restoring teacher dignity involves improving work conditions, including teacher pay and training (Stotsky et al., 2004). While schools have increased efforts to rebuild teacher dignity, there is also a movement outside the classroom for teachers to politically advocate for changes to enhance their dignity within the profession (Mitchell, 2010).

The years 2000-2010 will usher in new challenges and trends in education. The pressures of educational reform to produce student outcomes will create stress within the educational system for both teachers and administrators. This created several issues concerning teacher dignity. As schools work to adapt to new trends in education, technological change, and the stress associated with No Child Left Behind, teachers increasingly associate teacher dignity with items they feel are under their control. Increasingly, providing teacher voice in professional communities, shared decision-making structures in schools, and effective classroom management. Conversely, a lack of dignity is associated with conditions which teachers feel are outside their grasp: holding teachers accountable for student test results, lack of teacher voice in curriculum development, and poor classroom management.

With the start of a new millennium and the pressures of educational reform, teachers' dignity will undergo considerable change from 2010. While in American Idol, the singing voices of aspiring pop stars rose loudly from 2010-2020, in American schools’ teachers were relegated by policy makers to be the “back-up” singers of education reform.

2010-2019

Fabulous fads and fantastical flops appear to be the overwhelming themes associated with the decade between 2010 and 2020. During this decade, people “got
down” by dancing Gangnam style, doing the floss, and even taking a knee Tebow style. The superpowers of social media apps like tick-tock, Instagram, and Twitter connected people to their devices at unprecedented levels. At the same time, some spent time perplexed about how "the dress" could appear blue to some while gold to others. Other trends like the tide pod challenge and cinnamon challenge left kids in desperate need of medical attention. In education, the years from 2010 to 2020 will feature themes that range from what can be considered "blasts from the past" to new trends that are just plain deadly. Organizing themes that emerge during this decade include the impact of reforms on teacher dignity, the dignity of work, and a new highly contagious virus of pandemic portions—Covid 19 (see Figure 19).

From 2010 to 2020, education reforms will continue to emerge as an organizing theme. During this decade two basic themes are associated with education reform: issues with teacher autonomy and disconnect between lawmakers, administrators, and teachers.
Educational reforms are associated with stripping teachers of dignity and autonomy in the classroom (Fradkin-Hayshlip, 2021; Giroux, 2012; Kaplan, 2011). Teacher competency between 2010 and 2020 becomes defined according to a standardized curriculum and objective learning measurements. Described as "clerks of the empire," education reforms are associated with teachers "los[ing] most of their rights and protections, and dignity" (Giroux, 2012, p.9-10) "Teachers who refuse to implement a standardized curriculum…. are judged as incompetent" (Giroux, p.3). For some, educational reforms are problematic because they diminish the competency or intellect needed in the profession (Bullough, 2020; Giroux, 2012; Giroux, 2016). Reforms like Common Core and Race to the Top are associated with diminishing teacher dignity through scripted curriculum programs. "The script tells the teachers and students, at all
times, what to say and do. The Common Core ELA curriculum does not treat teachers or students with dignity" (Tampio, 2019, p.5)

During the second decade of the second millennium, teacher dignity is increasingly associated with democracy and public schools. Some authors fear that educational reforms will lead to the demise of public schools and public-school teachers (Giroux, 2012; Rosa et al., 2015). At the same time, during this decade, recognition that teacher autonomy and intellect are valuable in promoting the value of democracy began to emerge (Giroux, 2012; Weiner & Kaplan, 2014). Teacher autonomy is referenced as a form of dignity to engage students "...to become fully responsible and critically engaged citizens rather than one that views them as customers, low-skilled workers, or criminals (Giroux, 2012, p.36). During this decade, labor unions are called upon as a tool to protect teachers' autonomy and labor (Giroux, 2016).

Perceptions of teacher dignity indicate a rift between teachers and lawmakers. For teachers, the teacher's intellect is a mark of the teacher's dignity. Teachers perceive that dignity is associated with teacher reflection. After a teacher tries instructional strategies, they seek dignity by trying to know why strategies work and applying new knowledge to their practice (Bullough, 2020, p. 20). Conversely, to state lawmakers, teacher dignity is associated with teachers "...defying victimization” (Kaplan, 2011, p. 211). Instead of “acting sorry for themselves” teachers can gain dignity by holding themselves “accountable” to state and federal mandates (Kaplan, 2011).

While lawmakers associate teacher dignity with teacher accountability, teachers consistently equate efforts to associate teacher quality with testing results to diminished teacher dignity (Giroux, 2012; Kaplan, 2011; Porter, 2012). One teacher who left the
profession after NCLB “... felt overwhelmed by her loss of dignity. She could not come to terms with the way teachers are controlled, maneuvered, and cornered by forces outside of their control” (Carrillo, 2010). For other teachers, education reforms are associated with creating a negative environment where teachers are held accountable for factors beyond their control (Rosa et al., 2015; Porter, 2012). Teachers are left to hold the bag for things that are completely beyond [their] control… Instances of poverty, broken families, violence, hunger, and homelessness cannot be reflected in a teacher’s evaluation…. teachers' reputations [are] being held up as experiments in as much as reforms have not been proved or appropriately vetted (Porter, 2012).

For others, educational reforms are perceived as unfair because when teachers are forced to adopt new educational reforms, they are "[S]ubordinat[ing] [teachers] to the authority of security guards" or "scapegoating…them as the new ‘welfare queens’” that is in turn is associated with diminished teacher dignity (Giroux, 2012).

Other teachers see a contradiction between teaching about liberties like freedom of speech and expression, when teachers themselves do not have these rights in the classroom (Grumet, 2010). This is evident not only through the standardized curriculum teachers are told to implement in the classroom, but also limitations put on teacher’s speech. One teacher who posted their negative feelings about a professional development program implemented in the district to their private social media account was penalized for failing “to maintain the honor and dignity of the profession” (Schreiber, 2015, paragraph 3). The push for teachers to secure academic freedom that is lost to NCLB is cited as needing to be taken to courts, lawmakers, and unions (Grumet, 2010). For some
Wisconsin teachers, this results in a teacher strike. In the strike, teachers protested that students' standardized test results be used to determine "...the market value of their teachers and schools" (Kaplan, 2011).

The dignity of work emerges as another theme in the literature. During this decade, the dignity of work will be thematically organized into two primary themes based on Herzberg's Two Factor Theory. According to Herzberg, there are motivating factors that lead to employee satisfaction. Conversely, there are hygiene factors that lead to job dissatisfaction. Hygiene factors include pay, benefits, job security, and work conditions. Motivational factors include recognition, autonomy, and meaningful work (Masterclass, 2020).

Motivational factors that emerge from the literature on teacher dignity include collective leadership and ideas about professional development. Between 2010 and 2020, educational leaders emphasize the increasing importance of engaging teachers in school decision-making (Holmes, 2018; Acker-Hocevar & Touchton, 2011; Burnham, 2016).

To ensure that ideas of social justice are reflected in the organizational structure of schools, it is recognized that teachers can also be leaders: “.... treating all people with fairness, respect, dignity, and generosity" including teachers” (Holmes, 2018, p. 254). Effective administrator practice is associated with motivating staff by instilling dignity in the teacher (Acker-Hocevar & Touchton, 2011; Burnham, 2016). “Open channels of communication” within schools are said to enhance “teachers’ work and dignity while providing respect and trust....” (Burnham, 2016, p. 36). However, educational leaders who give more voice and power to some teachers over others or act in a way that is considered "an affront to the teacher's dignity and respect" is recognized as a negative
effect on dignity (Acker-Hocevar & Touchton, 2011, p. 261). Basically, neglecting teacher dignity "creates negative conditions for teachers' work in schools" (Acker-Hocevar & Touchton, 2011, p. 261). Hansen (2018) maintains that for a teacher to impact dignity upon a student, the teacher as a person must have their dignity upheld. Like a doctor, counselor, pastor, or social worker, a teacher is engaged in "dignity-oriented work" because they work with humans. If dignity is instilled in a teacher, they will be compelled to act ethically and follow "school protocols carefully" (Hansen, 2018, p. 36).

Professional development models begin to consider restorative practices to enhance teacher dignity between 2010 and 2020 (Elliot, 2013; Vaandering, 2014). It becomes noted in the literature that the formation of collaborative relationships among teachers fosters dignity (Aleccia, 2011). Several strategies for increasing teacher dignity are cited in the literature. Circle dialogue allows teacher dialogue and is associated with ".... the development of respect, concern, and dignity for all" (Vaandering, 2014, p. 520). Mentoring and the use of mentor texts are effective tools because teachers are able "...to be vulnerable, to share openly without fear of reprisal or loss of dignity" (Laminack, 2017, p. 753). Teacher groups that use "reflective practice" are shown to "encourage teachers themselves to grow in the face of a dehumanizing educational climate…leading to sustainable education for dignity and democratic empowerment (Elliot, 2013, p. 220). Hygiene factors that emerge from the literature include teacher pay, work conditions, and job security.

Teacher pay was a hot-button issue in 2010-2020. Teachers in West Virginia went on strike for "...more than livable wages… it's about workers' dignity" (Peace, 2018). Chicago Teachers also went on strike to push for "pay and benefits that give us dignity
and respect" (Mattera et al., 2019). At the same time, North Carolina teachers called for the ability to organize for dignity and better pay in a state that bars teacher strikes (Flanigan, 2016). The literature also notes that increased pay is needed for double-dignity jobs like preschool teachers (Leonhardt, 2019). In Oklahoma, teacher Brooke Bolding Coney wrote an opinion response to the Tulsa World about data on government employees' pay in the state of Oklahoma. She discovered that the legislature in Oklahoma paid high school graduates more than certified teachers in the state. In her discussion of how this violates teacher dignity, it is noted that teachers are frequently "told no or make me" by students. Lack of salary is also considered an insult to teacher dignity as teachers are often "...hit, kicked, cursed at, spat upon, etc., by a student (or parent)" while conducting their daily duties. Meanwhile, teachers are continually told by schools and society to "have the courage, and fervor, to keep trying to make a difference" (Coney, 2016).

Merit pay also emerges as a hygiene issue. Merit pay is considered a problem for many teachers because it is felt that it is hard to determine who should receive it (Weiner & Kaplan, 2014; Hahn, 2014). One problem associated with merit pay is the belief that teachers' outputs need to be measured beyond standardized tests (Hahn, 2014; Weiner & Kaplan, 2014). Merit pay is cited as a problem for pitting teachers against each other and for teachers placing “...their own interests ahead of their students’ interests. It is an anathema to our professional dignity (Hahn, 2014, p.1).

Teaching is a complicated kind of work, not so easily categorized. Yes, it's paid work, but education is not a business and should not be run like a corporation. As workers, we have a right to the dignity of our labor. Done well, teaching requires
skill and knowledge. As professionals, we need autonomy to do our work well, but we also have to hear what parents want for their children and keep in mind that we are preparing the next generation and therefore shaping society. We change the world! That's why we are so dangerous (Weiner & Kaplan, 2014, p. 215).

Work conditions are a significant hygiene factor for teacher dignity. When examining dignity in United States schools, research indicates that teachers being "disrespected" in public schools is "a norm" (Meier, 2011).

My future depended on responding 'appropriately' to such rudeness…We hid in our classrooms, kept an eye out for the principal when escorting children to the bathroom, and never asked for help for fear it would look like you were incompetent (Meier, 2011, para 5).

Compared to other professions, teaching is considered a "dignity challenged profession" with little praise, low wages, and few opportunities for advancement (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2011).

The management of student behaviors in a school and a classroom are frequently associated with teacher dignity (Pajak, 2012; Roscoe & Orr, 2010). Effective classroom management techniques are associated "with minimum outlay of time, effort, and resources" and "maintain the student's and teacher's dignity" (Roscoe & Orr, 2010). Teachers can mobilize their "behavior, voice, and facial expression…. to protect teacher dignity (Pajak, 2012, p. 1195). Notably, "Conferred dignity" from students providing unwanted flirtation or admiration with a teacher is considered "empty, because it was unearned" (Pajak, 2012, p. 1191).
Described as "franchise players," it is recognized that teachers are indispensable to the education system. Nevertheless, labor unions are consistently referenced as key to protecting teacher dignity (Giroux, 2016; Institute for Educational Leadership, 2011). Fundamentally, the teaching profession is challenged due to the minimal "...representation [teachers have] in the key organizational, political, and pedagogical decisions that affect their jobs, their profession, and, by extension their personal lives" (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2011, p. 86). Therefore, labor unions are considered indispensable for "preserving the rights and working conditions necessary for public school teachers to teach with dignity under conditions that respect rather than degrade them (Giroux, 2016, p. 358).

At the forefront of dignity issues involving job security and teachers is the cell phone incident when a South Carolina Teacher left her phone on her desk unattended. A student gained access to the phone and scrolled through the teacher's photos to find a nude picture the teacher had taken of herself for her husband on Valentine’s Day. The student sent the image to his friends. Later the teacher would be accused of corrupting students by the district superintendent. The students faced no discipline. Teachers perceived the incident as one where the teacher's "personal dignity [was] pilfered, for reasons having nothing to do with her work performance" (Flanagan, 2016; Nelson & Lewis, 2016). Another issue surrounding job security is terminating teachers and the proper process for doing so. During this decade, it is perceived that to secure their jobs, administrators "...are willing to sacrifice good teachers in hopes that they are seen as allies to the almighty State (Kjlalonde, 2018 para 49). Studies indicate that a best practice in terminating employees is to ensure that the "staff member was treated with respect,
dignity, and fairness" (O’Brien & O’Brien, 2013, p.3). Specifically, ensuring that the administrator waits a day before the decision to terminate and to act and using a third party to general counsel or a human resource officer is encouraged to protect dignity.

Another organizing theme that emerges between 2010-2020 is the emergence of the Covid19 pandemic that also supports new ideas about teacher dignity. Within this organizing theme two basic themes emerged: Teacher safety as essential workers and public perceptions of teachers.

As schools start to plan to reopen during the fall of 2020 and teachers are added to society's list of essential workers, issues surrounding their dignity emerge. Between 2010 to 2020, teachers are described as "essential workers," "martyrs," and professionals who work "in the trenches" (Moone, 2020; Reihs, 2020; Ullman, 2020). The act of teaching during a pandemic presented a fundamental challenge to teacher dignity: "No other essential worker has to spend 7 hours a day in a small room with poor ventilation with 30 other kids" (Moone, 2020). For many teachers, having dignity is associated with having access to personal protective equipment (PPE), ventilation, and sanitation equipment (Moone, 2020; Ullman, 2020,). Given the uncertainty of opening schools after a public health lockdown in the spring of 2019, teachers associate the power imbalance between those who make decisions and those who implement them to diminishing teacher dignity.

Just when you thought teacher dignity and morale couldn't get any lower, it would appear the very real prospect of martyrdom has now become a job requirement for those who do the actual heavy lifting in pedagogical trenches. Meanwhile, the power brokers who will never have to enforce mask wearing for children,
coordinate social distancing (or, really, the illusion of it), or go anywhere near an actual classroom are presenting themselves as the real heroes for kids. (Ullman, 2020)

The lack of substitute teachers and full-time certified teachers left considerable gaps that schools were forced to address in the fall of 2020 (Singer, 2021). For example, in Arizona, the struggle to acquire "worker's rights, dignity...[and] Covid-19 prevention and relief" led to a "teacher sickout" when teachers felt like the district did not develop an adequate safety plan for the reopening of schools. Teachers specifically referenced that the district plan made teachers "perceive their lives to be at risk" (Moone, 2020).

Teacher dignity also became a social and political issue during the pandemic. As millions of school-aged children were sent home during the spring of 2020, teachers became a popular subject of public conversation. As parents engaged in homeschooling early in the pandemic, they gained fast and hard understanding of how valuable teachers are to children's education. As a result, it was not uncommon to hear teachers referenced as "superheroes" early in the pandemic (Perry, 2020).

Nevertheless, significant cuts to schools’ budgets, low salaries, difficult working conditions, and a lack of respect are associated with dignity problems in education during the beginning years of the pandemic (Singer, 2021). These issues became rapidly politicized in presidential politics. While Donald Trump pushed for schools to reopen for in person learning in the fall of 2020 (Shapiro, 2020), Joe Biden took a decidedly different approach that was focused on the preservation of teacher dignity. In Joe Biden's presidential bid, increasing teacher dignity and the professionalism of teachers is consistently associated with increases in teacher pay (Glueck, 2019). Biden recounted:
"I've seen firsthand how hard our educators work for little pay with few resources. They deserve better. It's time we support our educators by giving them the pay and dignity they deserve (Biden, 2020). Sentiments regarding teacher dignity are also reflected in Joe Biden’s selection of the Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona. Miguel Cardona cited the need for "...every educator… [to have resources they need to do their jobs with dignity and success" (Green et al., 2020).

Educators during the decade of 2010-2020 are faced with both educational fads that took root in previous decades as well as new challenges associated with the coronavirus pandemic. While the pandemic magnified teacher work conditions and society's reliance on schools the same issues confronting educational reforms and the dignity of work will remain. As teacher shortages started to emerge in the years after the pandemic, more research will need to be conducted on how the pandemic affected teacher dignity into a new decade.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

From the revered school master of colonial times to the modern urban schoolteacher, the teacher is reputed for the economic, political, and social functions they serve. Society leans on the school (and the school on the teacher) to provide ever-widening social services and support for students of diverse backgrounds and abilities. However, before this study the dignity of teachers themselves has lacked focus in academic research.

In defining the phenomena of “teacher dignity” throughout the United States, the first phase of this study provides an overview of research, articles, periodicals, and legal cases beginning in the 1840s and through 2021. From the research findings emerging from each decade, a final matrix was developed including the themes from the literature (see Figure 20).

In studying the concept of dignity, this study has revealed trends in the (and for the) personal values and goals of the teacher with the structure of schools. From the research, the teacher’s dignity has been situated with the organizing themes of hygiene factors, teaching as a profession, and the character traits of teachers. From the trends that emerged from the decades examined, insights can be gleaned about changes that could allow teachers to function more effectively within school systems. Notably, studies should be conducted to further explore areas to enhance each of the areas examined below.
Figure 20

1840-2020 Theme Matrix

Conclusions

The findings from the data indicate three organizing themes: the Dignity of Work as defined by Hygiene Factors, Teaching as a Profession, and the Character Traits of Teachers.

Hygiene factors.

The dignity of work emerges as an organizing theme from the literature. The themes as identified by Hersberg were identified as hygiene factors. According to Herzberg, there are motivating factors that lead to employee satisfaction. Conversely, there are also hygiene factors that lead to job dissatisfaction. Hygiene factors include pay, benefits, job security, and work conditions (Masterclass, 2020). Notably, teacher autonomy and meaningful work also emerged as basic themes in work conditions. According to Herzberg these are associated with motivational factors.
As an element of teacher dignity, teacher pay was considered important during an examination of at least fourteen of the seventeen decades studied. Notably, wages were mentioned and related to the teacher's dignity in every decade of research conducted. Research indicated that decent wages are necessary to elevate teaching into a profession (1850-1859, 1880-1889, 1910-1929; 1960-1969, 1980-1989; 1990-1999; 2010-2020). Teachers being treated like those in other professions was akin to earning fair wages. Similarly, teacher dignity is associated with the teacher making a living wage (1910-1929; 1930-1939; 1950-1959; 1970-1979, 1980-1989; 1990-1999, 2010-2020). In place of wages, some suggest that the best people to fill teaching positions are those who are "called to the profession" (1840-1849, 1850-1859, 1890-1899, 1940-1949) or who find the social esteem of the teacher to be higher than the compensation received (1840-1849, 1900-1909, 1980-1989) Teacher pay is also considered an essential tool as a motivator for individuals to want to enter the profession (1850-1859, 1860-1869, 1870-1879, 1960-1969).

Work conditions emerged as a consistent basic theme associated with teacher dignity starting in the 1870s. Notably, work conditions became increasingly associated with dignity after the introduction of the common school as well as school reform efforts starting in the 1960s.

Teacher dignity is also said to be affected by work conditions. The literature often indicates oppositional perspectives of teacher dignity between teachers and administrators. The ability of teachers to embrace work needed to make the school a more effective learning environment is associated with increased teacher dignity in society (1900-1909, 1910-1929, 1970-1979; 1980-1989). Lack of school funding and
needed classroom materials is also associated with a lack of dignity among teachers (1970-1979; 1980-1989). Moreover, teachers asked to perform duties that exceed their classroom responsibilities are cited as decreasing their dignity (1870-1879, 1980-1989). Increased class size is further associated with decreased teacher dignity (1870-1879, 1930-1939, 1960s).

The hierarchical structure of schools also contributes to work conditions that affect a teacher's dignity. Top-down management and structured inequality are referenced as reducing teacher dignity. Administrative actions are consistently associated with being a threat to teacher dignity (1900-1929; 1960;1980-1989; 1990-1999). On the other hand, cooperative efforts between teachers and administrators are associated with favorable work conditions and dignity (1960-1969). Teachers feeling alienated from the communities in which they teach or from other teachers is also associated with a lack of teacher dignity (1960-1969; 1980-1989).


**Work Conditions Implications**

This study indicates that while work conditions vary significantly between and within school districts, access to basic materials is associated with teacher dignity. The literature supports that dignity issues often emerge because of perceptions that work conditions are below acceptable norms between schools or in different professions. The
literature validates that teachers feel more dignity when they have access to work environments where teachers feel that they are safe from environmental and physical harm. When teachers lack access to bathroom and lunch breaks, bathrooms and bathroom supplies, and planning time free from students, teacher dignity is said to be at risk.

The literature supports that efforts are needed to define the actual responsibilities of the teacher are needed to limit the scope of the job. Asking a teacher to be an instructor, a substitute teacher for other teachers, disciplinarian, counselor, nurse, a police officer, or a custodian is overwhelming for most people. Having clear job parameters (and allowing teachers to stick to them) could help alleviate much of the stress associated with the job and increase teacher dignity.

This study also supports that teacher dignity would be improved if school employees’ health and welfare was considered when decisions about potentially violent or mentally unstable students are made. Transparency in school discipline policies is supported as enhancing teacher dignity. More research is needed to evaluate the legal rights entitled to guarantee teacher dignity.

To be able to make classroom decisions is associated with teacher dignity. Teacher autonomy and the ability to design, implement, and adapt curriculum based on classroom needs are also associated with having teacher dignity (1970-1979, 1980-1989; 1990-1999; 2000-2010; 2010-2020). The ability of teachers to use reason, have a voice in curricular decisions, and conduct their own research is seen to enhance teacher dignity (1930-1939, 1980-1989, 2000-2010,)

The security of income provided by tenure programs consistently appears as a
basic theme associated with teacher dignity (1870-1879, 1880-1889, 1890-1899, 1910-
1929, 1930). Increase teacher dignity is associated with tenure programs. It is essential to
protecting the teacher's dignity by enabling teachers to have freedom from being
frivolously terminated by trustees, boards of education, and administrators who do not
like specific methods or approaches to learning (1880-1889, 1890-1899, 1900-1909,
1940-1949).

Lack of protection from problems that emerge from classroom management and
teacher disrespect is widely associated with diminished teacher dignity (1970-1979;
1990-1999, 2000-2010). Legal protections aimed at protecting the property and health of
teachers enhances teacher dignity (1850-1859, 2010-2020). Legal protections aimed at
protecting teachers as practitioners is further associated with teacher dignity (1850-1859,
2010-2020). Additionally, legal protocols for terminating employees are linked to teacher

**Implications for Security**

Since tenure laws were passed, research indicates that security has been seen as a
positive trait associated with teacher dignity. However, the intersection between a
teacher’s life on social media and through technology needs to continue to be examined.
In addition, teachers need to be aware that their role as a teacher and how they choose to
represent themselves as a public citizen on social media platforms can impact that role.

Consistency and transparency in discipline processes can also increase a teachers
dignity. Simply communicating expectations and following through on teacher
expectations for students with appropriate consequences can create enhanced dignity and
security among teachers. Lack of administrative follow through on student behaviors
diminishes teacher dignity.

The Research supports that teachers need to be aware of their legal rights and responsibilities as a part of their core training before employment. Providing ongoing training on safety measures on how teachers can protect themselves during emergencies and their legal responsibilities is essential to protecting the teachers’ dignity. The research supports that teachers need to know how to respond if a student attacks them. It also supports that teachers need to know when they need to intervene in fights and what protection districts and families will provide in return for potential injuries that are incurred. When students physically harm teachers the research indicates that clear legislative paths are needed to ensure that students receive the help they need while the teacher’s dignity is protected.

*Equity*

Equity issues associated with teacher dignity is a basic theme from the research. For example, inequity in pay and the treatment of females is associated with lower dignity among women teachers (1880-1889; 1950-1959). Top-down organizational structure in schools is further associated with diminished dignity among teachers (1990-1999, 2000-2010). Conversely, involving teachers in decision-making is associated with making fewer policy mistakes and adding dignity to the teacher (1930, 2010-2020).

*Equity Implications*

Equity issues have existed in education since the inception of American Schools. The research indicates that part of the equity issue persists because of the gender gap that has existed between male dominated administrators and prevalent numbers of female teachers in schools. Since there appears to be a disconnect in the research between
teachers and administrators, studies that look for patterns within districts among those selected to lead may provide valuable information on perceptions of teacher dignity and retention.

The literature strongly suggests that increased prevalence of administrators and administrative roles in schools has led to decreased teacher autonomy and perceptions of dignity. As such, schools that employ a full-time legal staff at the district level need to consider the functional roles of district administrators in schools. Too often, these individuals spend their time outside the classroom and at conferences. Problematically, doing so creates a distorted sense of reality and priority within schools. To lower costs and increase the number of highly qualified, certified teachers in a district, many of these positions could be reevaluated to benefit students and their communities more directly. Moreover, studies of dollars used to fund administrative roles, the number of jobs allocated to such roles, and how those have changed over the past twenty years should be examined. Similar studies should be performed regarding the number of teachers and paraprofessionals and the money allocated to those roles.

This study indicates that when individuals and teams are granted the ability to make decisions, their dignity is enhanced. Provided the right professional learning opportunities, teachers feel enhanced dignity when they are able to make decisions such as selecting books and curriculum materials, assessments criteria, and problem solve aligned with student needs in the classroom independent of administrator oversight. Administrative action to forcibly implement anything from curriculum materials to grading practices on teachers is shown to impede their dignity and perceived ability to maximize teacher effectiveness. While the research indicates that no teacher should be
given unchecked dignity in the classroom, providing individual teachers and teams with
decision-making abilities enhances the teacher’s dignity. Special considerations for
teachers new to the field or building should be made to lessen teacher loads and allow
them to fully hone their skills.

**Teacher as a professional.**

Teaching as a profession also developed as an organizing theme. Within this
theme, teacher qualifications, professional organizations, and competency in professional
practice emerged as basic themes. Teacher qualifications is a basic theme from the
research. Holding teachers to higher professional standards is considered a way to add
dignity to the profession (1850-1859; 1910-1929). The idea that anyone can be a teacher
is associated with lower teacher dignity (1840-1849; 1850-1859). As such, efforts to
increase teacher training through normal schools and university programs that instruct
teachers about practical approaches to teaching/learning are associated with increased
teacher dignity (1860-1869). Notably, attending universities not specializing in teaching
are seen to lower the dignity of teachers (1890-1899). Teacher certification (1870-1879,
1930-1939) and teacher competency tests (1890-1899, 1990-1999) are also associated
with increased teacher dignity.

Professional organizations also materialized as a basic theme from the literature
on teacher dignity. Participating in professional organizations is associated with increased
teacher dignity (1890-1899,1930-1939) as it is associated with increasing teachers’ skills
(1850-1859; 1890-1899; 1930-1939). Sharing observations from teaching is linked with
increased teacher dignity (1850-1859; 1910-1919; 1930-1939). Professional
organizations like unions also start to emerge in the second half of the 20th century as

Competency in professional practice also appeared as a basic theme from the research. In efforts to make teaching a profession, competency tests are often suggested (1890-1899, 1980-1989, 1990-1999, 2000-2010). Within the classroom, multiple characteristics are associated with dignified teachers. Competent teachers are historically known for earning dignity when they strongly understand pedagogy and teaching methods (1870-1879, 1880-1889, 1890-1899, 1900-1909, 1960-1969, 1980-1989). In addition, dignified teachers are known for being good at decision-making (1890-1899, 1950-1959) and for being able to make amends for errors made when teaching (1890-1899, 1910-1929).


Teachers are known for having dignity when they use reason, logic, and reflection in the classroom (1930-1939, 1940-1949, 1950-1959, 1960-1969, 1980-1989, 1990-1999, 2000-2010). Moreover, teachers consistently reported that being able to make decisions and have a voice in curriculum decisions is associated with enhanced teacher dignity (1960-1969, 2000-2010, 2010-2020). Notably, asking teachers to teach large numbers of


There are significant challenges to defining teaching as a profession. Historically, states have made adaptations in teacher requirements during times of teacher shortages. These have consistently resulted in criticism regarding the quality of education and the value of the teacher. While not all teachers have equal expertise, states should be aware of the systemic effects of reforms that can drive highly qualified master teachers out of the profession. As states seek to lower teacher requirements by eliminating professional exams, education requirements, and student teaching experiences, the status of a teacher as a professional should be reevaluated. Perceptions of dignity issues may change if it is widely recognized that teaching is a trade rather than a profession. Notably, a change in teaching status from a profession to a trade may alter who is willing to go into the field of education.

Implications for Teachers as a Professional

Decisions made during the Covid 19 pandemic have changed the landscape of education. While standards for reaching competency in the classroom were generally
considered attainable before the pandemic, students and their needs have changed. As such, the teacher’s job has become more demanding. There is a need for updates in educational research regarding teacher competence. New research regarding teacher effectiveness to guide professional practice is needed. Moreover, research such as that conducted by Hattie & Yates (2013) on visible learning and teacher effect size given different scenarios needs to be reevaluated. The Covid19 pandemic has demanded that teachers provide more individual attention to students and their individual needs. As such, looking at the impact of effective teachers, including ideal class size, is needed. Administrators who have not taught in a classroom since the Covid 19 pandemic (and researchers who have not updated studies since that time) should be cautious in advising teachers who are likely working in very different environmental conditions than were common before the pandemic.

The literature supports practices like mentoring and the use of mentoring texts to support teacher dignity. Moreover, embracing the skills that make teachers distinct from trainers, is seen to enhance teacher dignity. By allowing teachers to select appropriate instructional strategies based on their understanding of educational methodology and their appropriateness for child development is seen to enhance teacher dignity. Efforts to diminish the “dehumanization” of teachers embrace the use of collective decision making in schools and team based decision making where teachers are the drivers of decision making (Elliott, 2013).

The research clearly indicates that so long as the salary divide between administrators and teachers remains significant, dignity issues among teachers will continue. However, in professions, the professional’s hour per dollar value is used to
evaluate the most profitable use of a person’s time. If schools cannot afford to increase a teacher’s dollar-per-hour value, eliminating extra duties that diminish the efficient use of the teacher’s time in their professional practice and perceived dollar-per-hour value would increase dignity. If teaching is to embrace the status of a profession, job responsibilities that include cleaning, playground duties, chaperoning dances, and lunchroom supervision should be reevaluated for congruence with the skill set needed for teachers. Minor alterations in teachers’ roles and alignment with what a competent practitioner looks like could significantly impact the teacher’s dignity.

The research indicates that teachers’ unions like the NEA need to employ union dollars to provide professional negotiators to negotiate the wages and benefits for teachers. Asking teachers to fulfill the role of negotiator with little or no formal training, no knowledge of standard cost of living adjustments, or formal studies of comparable school districts creates an ongoing cycle of pay and benefits issues for teachers. Moreover, without accurate and transparent comparisons between the percentage of salary and benefits increases of administrators and teachers are unfair and perpetuate teacher poverty and dissatisfaction.

**Character traits of teachers.**

The character traits of teachers also represent an organizing theme from the research. Within this theme, the basic themes are personal qualities of teachers and the ability of teachers to fulfill social responsibilities.

The personal qualities of teachers emerged as a basic theme from the literature about teacher dignity. In constant contact with children, the character of a teacher in their public and private lives, although changing dramatically over time, is considered a mark
of the teacher's dignity (1840-1849, 1850-1859, 1860-1869, 1870-1879, 1890-1899, 1900-1909, 1910-1929, 1930-1939, 1940-1949, 1960-1969). A teacher who is polite (1870-1879, 1880-1889, 1890-1899, 1910-1929), has good manners (1840-1849, 1850-1859, 1860-1869, 1890-1899), and is truthful (1880-1889, 1910-1929) is valued as having dignity. Dignified teachers are also known to have neat classrooms (1840-1849, 1870-1879, 1910-1929) and dress well (1840-1849, 1890-1899, 1940-1949, 1990-1999). A dignified teacher is confident and personally secure (1910, 1940-1949, 1960-1969). Teachers also are valued if they have a good work ethic (1870-1879, 1910-1929) and are resourceful (1870-1879; 1940-1949.). Being scholarly (1910, 1940) and having high standards for students (1930-1939, 1940-1949) is also associated with a dignified teacher.


Holding teachers to high levels of social conduct is consistently associated with teacher dignity (1850-1859, 1950-1959). Good manners and social etiquette (in person and later online) are associated with teacher dignity (1850-1859, 1860-1869, 1870-1879, 2000, 2010). Similarly, teachers who dress well are associated with enhanced dignity
(1890-1899, 1930-1939, 1940-1949, 1990-1999) as well as those with good etiquette (1890-1899, 1930-1939). Teachers who fulfill societal expectations for behaving morally (1850-1859, 1880-1889, 1900-1909, 1940-1949, 1990-1999) are praised for their dignified behaviors. Frequently, teachers who are called into the profession (as opposed to doing it for reasons of personal profit) are praised for having dignity (1850-1859, 1890-1899, 1900-1909, 1930-1939, 1940-1949). Notably teachers who are anti-social (1850-1859, 1860-1869) or cynics (1850-1859, 1860-1869) are considered not to possess the qualities of a dignified teacher.

Teachers who employ democratic techniques in the classroom are praised for preparing future citizens and are considered dignified in the literature (1940-1949, 1950-1959, 1960-1969, 1990-1999). Notably, teachers are also deemed dignified when they have a "Christian dignity." Having a "Christian dignity" is associated with teachers not teaching their political views in the classroom but instead adapting a fair and balanced perspective of learning political issues. In addition, teachers who can effectively engage students without divulging their own political views are considered dignified (1850-1859, 1880-1889, 1890-1899, 1960-1969). Humane classroom approaches that embrace a just treatment of students is also praised as dignified (1850-1850, 1960-1969, 1990-1999) as well as teachers who care about kids (1850-1859, 1930-1939, 1990-1999).

From the inception of the common school in the United States, the quality of the teacher is considered symbolic of the intellectual promise of future generations and the productivity of its workforce. Invested with the responsibility of preparing generations of workers, thinkers, and citizens, the literature validates that teachers have a prominent role in the development of children. Concurrently, the teacher’s personal and private life
becomes associated with their dignity as a worker. Moreover, the literature supports that there are high stakes for the teachers' dignity if they are unable to meet society's educational goals.

Public concern with the aptitude, knowledge, and ability of teachers indicates that the teacher is valued in his or her capacity to provide an essential social service. Yet the self-respect of the teacher, the worth of teaching as a respectable profession, and prideful reflections of teachers is illusive during the common school and public-school period.

*Implications for Character Traits of Teachers*

There are good people who work for low wages. However, to create a school system where hardworking, ethical, and academically savvy practitioners thrive and maintain character, school systems must learn to embrace and reward these characteristics. This study has revealed that teachers and administrators act according to their lived experiences and define their values accordingly. As such, embracing the dignity of teachers will require a change in how the structures of schools make decisions.

The research would support placing term limits on administrators for time spent outside of the role of a teacher. Term limits would help create more congruency between teachers and administrators who based on their context may grow to have distorted senses of reality about one another. Creating opportunities for both the teacher with administrative ambitions (and credentials) as well as the administrator (with teaching credentials) to experience the other side of education could make significant inbounds to increasing teacher dignity. This also emphasizes that the teacher is the most esteemed position within a school system. It encourages the formation of solid relationships where
decisions can indeed operate based on collective leadership.

From a research perspective, this study indicates that there is real value in the taking the time to collect qualitative data from workers. The literature has shown that the lived experiences of teachers cannot be quantified to understand the full human experience of concepts like dignity. Moreover, if teachers are to be held to the highest standards of ethics, schools should carefully reflect these values in the data collection methods used to gain an understanding of teacher perspectives. This study would lend caution towards the use of surveys constructed to illicit pre-constructed responses that support administrative agendas. While there may be quantitative support that can be cited from such surveys, such practices will only provide an example of unabashed character issues in the field of education that ultimately lead to deteriorated dignity among teachers.

Teaching is a unique and multifaceted profession. As families and community members continually lean on the school and, thus, teachers to meet the increasing needs of students, the teacher’s dignity and that of their trade has been lost as a focus in academic research and professional practice. When not met, hygiene factors, including security, work conditions, pay, and fairness are consistently attributed to diminishing teacher dignity. Most recently, a dignity challenge was evident in the Richneck Elementary School treatment of teachers who reported their suspicion that a six-year-old had a gun. Eventually, the student’s teacher, Abigail Zwerner, was shot by the student (Tucker, 2023).

Teacher dignity, as the concept examined in this study, is a term that is descriptive of the teachers practical training and ability to competently meet educational goals for
students. While some may argue that the term dignity itself is antiquated and may be the cause for the failure of the lack of the term in the literature, the educational literature reviewed during this study finds that its use is prevalent in education literature spanning the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries. The historical study conducted in these phases of the research would call into question whether teaching meets the criteria for a profession in the United States. Indeed, despite increases in the education, rights, and wages of teachers, the dignity of the teacher continues to be questioned by the government, local communities, and teachers themselves into the 21st century

**Discussion**

The words chosen by teachers to convey meaning have significance to understanding historical and current trends in education. While individuals do not consciously reinvent language each time they speak (Blank, 1999), the way words are used provides important insight into their condition as workers. In this way, word usage can be utilized as a tool to establish the meaning of words (Blank, 1999). Before this study, no clear structural framework for understanding teacher dignity in the United States existed. As schools seek to resolve continued issues with the recruitment and retention of teachers, this study has provided a framework for understanding the teacher’s dignity from societies, the schools, and the teacher’s perspectives.

Semantics are impacted by the experiences of the writer. Blank (1999) affirms that when writers have a personal stake in a topic or it may be considered “taboo,” they tend to soften language usage and adopt “euphemistic strategies” that then tend to weaken the message. This may then result in a change in language use. This has undoubtedly happened whether unconsciously or intentionally among some of the authors
cited in this study resulting in messages seeming more socially acceptable and politically correct. As I have embarked on the process of researching and writing this dissertation, I have had multiple experiences sharing my topic with friends, colleagues, administrators, and fellow academics that have led me to believe that the topic may be considered taboo by some while a breath of fresh air to others. I have found myself wanting to apologize on occasion for researching and writing about a topic so seldom openly discussed. As a current classroom teacher, I have also become very sensitive to the issues surrounding teacher dignity.

As indicated in the literature review, there are a significant number of countries that have incorporated dignity into their constitutions after World War II. The United States did not amend its constitution to incorporate dignity but has referenced it in Supreme Court decisions. This complicates the semantics of teacher dignity in the United States compared to that of other countries that have a clearer view of dignity as a right. In its decisions, the United States Supreme Court has associated dignity with the concepts of “equality, autonomy, and basic humanity” (Lindell, 2017, p.416). While teacher dignity is unique to an occupation, the fundamental attributes embraced by the Court are also valued by teachers. To date, the teacher’s dignity, as such, has not been addressed by the United States Supreme Court.

This research has shown that the formation of public schools and increased administrative structures in schools has profoundly impacted the teachers’ dignity. Likewise, educational reforms such as Race to the Top and No Child Left Behind have created structural changes resulting in less teacher autonomy. Ultimately, while teachers have had glimpses of dignity in the twenty-first century—such as during the initial phases
of the Covid19 pandemic—there has been a struggle to keep dignity within teaching.

As teacher shortages confront schools, understanding historical trends in teacher dignity can provide information about policy decisions and changes and their impacts on employees’ dignity. As this study has shown, there are predictable patterns in thoughts about teacher dignity. Awareness of dialectical trends can help districts navigate challenges that diminish the teacher’s dignity while avoiding historical pitfalls.

There is an argument to be made that respect is given, but that dignity comes from within the human. Should schools be safe places for employment, there is an argument to be made that supports the suppositions of Griffin (1983) that teachers must look within themselves to find dignity. However, when students are shooting teachers (Tucker, 2023), given food as an assignment that contains students’ semen (McKeneith et al., 2017), or “scream[ed], kick[ed], punch[ed] [at],” threatened with knives, and having objects thrown at them (Rosales, 2019, para 3), there is reason to raise the alarm on behalf of the teacher’s dignity.

Unexpectedly, the research also pointed heavily to the need to provide limits on the dignity of teachers. This was particularly reflected by the tendency of teachers to present themselves as sages of wisdom that are not to be questioned by students or as disciplinarians with the ability to physically harm children. Of course, teachers who engage in sexual relationships with students also point to the need for limits to the dignity of a teacher.

American schools are simultaneously being confronted by a movement within schools to place the student’s dignity above all else and the need for those who work within them to have their dignity valued and protected. A fragile balancing act must take
place if schools in the United States want to continue to retain and recruit highly qualified teachers. Teacher dignity is no longer a topic that can be neglected, ignored, or assumed to be sacrificed as a part of formal job responsibilities.

**Future research.**

This study presents the first attempt to comprehensively study and understand characteristics associated with teacher dignity in the United States. The collective efforts of the individuals who contributed the data for this study provide an initial glance into understanding the meaning, benefits, and challenges associated with teacher dignity. This study also provides a means for future examinations of potential personal rights violations where teachers are forced to abandon or set aside their dignity to fulfill job requirements. While schools and policymakers struggle to retain and recruit quality teachers, this area of educational research can provide information about how dignity issues influence decisions of people to enter the field and stay in it.

As this study has revealed, teacher dignity encompasses hygiene factors (pay, benefits, job security, and work conditions), ideas about teaching as a profession, and the evolving character traits required of teachers over a long period of time. Through the patterns that emerge from this research, it becomes evident that there are factors that lead to teachers feeling as though their dignity is enhanced or depleted. While it was noted that dignity is constitutionally protected, this study has not breached the legal rights of teachers to dignity—a topic that merits examination.

This study was fundamentally limited to the opinions and writings of teachers willing to publish their thoughts. An essential next step is to include current and previous teachers in interviews to create a more comprehensive data set. Creating a more extensive
qualitative data set is essential to understanding dignity issues that affect teacher
satisfaction within the occupation. In addition, this data set is critical in defining teaching
in the future as being a trade, an occupation, or a profession.

Within the constructivist lens of thematic analysis, a significant number of
interviews is will be required to identify themes. Hagaman & Wutich (2006) have
suggested that at least sixteen interviews should be used to support identifying themes.
However, that number may need to be expanded to between twenty and forty interviews
to reach the standard of data saturation for subjects with different institutional
backgrounds (Hagaman & Wutich, 2006). To ensure the reliability of the data collected, it
is suggested that all data be transcribed into a textual source and coded prior to the
transcription of that data (Creswell, 2009).

Broader studies delving into the realities of dignity-enhancing and diminishing
policies and approaches in schools are essential to understanding the complexities of the
teacher’s experience. A legal examination of the concept as it applies to teachers would
also be beneficial. Simply knowing the limitations of actions that violate the teacher’s
dignity would be a decisive first step to creating limitations on school policies that leave
teachers feeling that their dignity has been violated.

Summary.

Teacher dignity is not a new topic in the field of educational research. However, it
is a topic that has lacked definition, comprehensive understanding, and analysis prior to
this study. For nearly two centuries, teacher dignity has been the elephant in the room—a
prominent topic yet hardly acknowledged or discussed. From the inception of American
schools, teachers in the United States have considered dignity a necessity and, when not
attainable, an ideal to which to aspire. Yet, astonishingly, aside from the individual accounts of teachers, administrators, and community members, the dignity of teachers working within the school’s walls has largely been ignored in any comprehensive way.

Schools will continue to grapple with teacher retention and recruitment problems so long as gaps in understanding persist about the reality of teacher dignity. The dignity needs of teachers continue to need more examination and understanding. This study is an essential first step in initiating a conversation in the field of educational research that desperately needs to take place. Policymakers, administrators, educational leaders, and teachers have for too long considered dignity issues as isolated incidents that are tradeoffs for the choice to enter the occupation. At the same time, the news media has scrutinized the misconduct of miscreant teachers, creating a negative image of people who chose to teach. A lack of understanding coupled with a negative perception of teachers has created the image of teaching being either an undesirable profession or a job of public service (and personal sacrifice).

From the schoolmaster of colonial times to the common schoolteacher of the Industrial Revolution, the idea of a teacher having dignity has captivated the minds of teachers since the inception of the United States. At the same time, a teacher with unlimited dignity has instilled fear into the minds of children, parents, and community members alike. Regardless of perspective, understanding the factors that lead to dignities and indignities among teachers provides valuable information for staff retention and recruitment. The study of teacher dignity also supports the growth of a teaching profession where practitioners are treated as humans with constitutional rights. It is time for teacher dignity to be raised to a new level of awareness and acceptability in dialogue
about educational policy. Teacher dignity must be discussed, studied, and analyzed to improve teacher effectiveness, retention, and recruitment. Only then can the image of the dullard teacher who cannot find work outside of teaching, the old maid schoolteacher, the authoritarian drillmaster, and the careless kibitzer be shed for the image of a progressive profession that values its practitioners.
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