

ETHICAL ISSUES IN TEACHING PROFESSION

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INTRODUCTION

Teaching is deemed a profession with responsibility, trust and truthfulness. It demands highest standards of professionalism which the teachers are expected to demonstrate not only within the boundaries of an educational institution but beyond the boundaries as well. Teachers through teaching transform the society and set examples for the coming generations. The society expects that their behavior reflects ethical and moral integrity. They are role models and their conduct significantly influence upon their professional image. Their professional role expects commitment to the students, the profession, the community and the family. With the advent of technology and impact of social media, ethical standards are being questioned and multiple challenges are coming up. Teachers deeply feel that they should develop a keen awareness and sensitivity to a variety of issues and situations they may encounter in daily contact with students, families and the community. In order to cope with the ethical issues embedded with social and cultural contexts, the teachers must practice ethical standards of the teaching profession. Besides this, there has been a concern among ethics experts about the general decline of ethics in teacher education programs. This unit will discuss ethics, ethical conflicts and issues in teacher education. It will also highlight ethical theory and practice for prospective teachers.

OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

1. Explain Ethics and its importance.
2. Differentiate between Ethics and Morals.
3. Discuss Professionalism in Teacher Education.
4. Identify General Principle of Ethics in teaching.
5. Elaborate ethical issues pertaining to Role of Teacher.
6. Describe issues related to education and Schooling.

1. DEFINITIONS OF ETHICS

Ethics are the fundamental ways of human behavior or basic principles of social and personal life. It studies the values of all men and women, human or natural rights, concern for health and safety in natural environment.

Ethics are concerned with the moral philosophy or codes practiced by a person or group of people.

Ethics a set of moral principles: theory or system or moral values. The discipline dealing with what is good and bad.

Ethics can be viewed as a 'philosophy of morality' as it deals with ought and ought not.

(Mohony, 2009).

Ethical principles provide guidance on how individuals live their lives according to defined criteria. Many thinkers discussed virtues of an ethical life. It has been a great debate on role of ethics or ethical behavior in professional life. The demand of ethics is essential part of life most importantly to perform duties in professional setting. In every field of life ethical demand becomes crucial day by day. Doctors, lawyers, accountants, scientists and several professions follow rules and regulations. They are all restricted to follow ethics for the benefit of their stakeholders. Teaching is a moral and ethical activity. Teachers are representative of moral values and virtues. Hence, the duty of principals and teachers increases more. They are the true exchangers of values to next generation.

1.1 Difference Between Ethics and Morals

Ethics and morals relate with human attitude, behavior and ways of interacting with each other.

These are the code of conduct 'what is right' and what is wrong'. Usually, both terms used

interchangeably but they are different from each other Ethics considered to be the rule or code of conduct provided by external sources in the workplace or governing bodies. Morals are the internal principles of an individual life.

Ethics Morals

These are the rules of conduct recognized in respect to a particular class of human actions or particular group. Principles of habits with respect to right or wrong conduct. While morals also prescribe dos and donts morality is ultimately a personal compass of right and wrong.

Social system-external Individual-internal

Society says it is right thing to do We believe in something right or wrong

Ethics are dependent on others for definition. They can vary between context Moral are consistent whenever individuals belief cannot change

A person strictly follow ethical principles may not have any moral at all. A moral person although perhaps bound by a governing body to follow a code of ethics.

1.2 Professionalism in Teacher Education

1.2.1 Profession

The concept of profession consists in a system of ethical principles expressible as duties or obligation (David, 2012).

Profession Professional Professionalism

- They get paid what they do.
- Ground for generalization Activities of different occupations. Requirements of particular class or category of occupation.

1.2.2 Professional Ethics

Professional ethics are acceptable standards of personal and business behavior, value and guiding principles, Code of professional ethics are often established by professional organization to aid and direct members in performing their functions and duties according to required consistent ethical principles.

Professional ethics is conceived as an extra theoretical component in courses of professional education, or the ethical aspects of professionalism are reduced to just so many extra practical competencies acquired through training (David, 2000).

1.2.3 Criteria for Professionalism

- Professions provide an important public service.

- They involve a theoretically as well as practically grounded expertise.
- They have a distinct ethical dimension ethical dimension which calls for expression in a code of practice.
- They require organization and regulation for purposes of recruitment and
- Professional practitioners require a high degree of individual autonomy or independence of judgment for effective practice (Carr, 2000).

2. **TEACHING**

Any professional enterprise is deeply implemented in ethical concerns and considerations. Teaching is also an enterprise which deeply and significantly implicated in ethical concerns and considerations.

“Teaching is a kind of activity in which human being engage”.

It brings changes in human learning. Teaching skills can be leaned through specific practical skills. It can be professional one in terms of acquisition of skills.

2.1 **Why Teaching is Called Profession?**

There are several different occupations such as doctor, lawyer, accountants, plumber, and electricians and so on. But some are called by occupation and others profession

so what is the difference between them. How occupation is transformed into profession?

Occupation and profession is different with regard to “moral values”. “Teaching is regarded as the kind of occupation which people enter for love rather than money” (David, 2000). Teacher are the employers of wider community those who serve with the interests of people, society, culture and religion.

Teaching is called profession due to:

- Its social obligation
- Social prestige
- Community demand
- Social service
- Transformation of values and traditions

2.2 **Teaching Professionalism**

Professionalism is a measure of social strength and authority of an occupational group, teaching profession is notion of regulated autonomy because it acts on behalf of the state in the best

interest of its citizens. Teacher professionalism is what teachers actually practice. These practices involve:

- Transfer of knowledge
- Presentation of content
- Facilitating learning
- Developing skills in monitoring and enhancing learning
- Ability to exert educational judgment (Frelin, 2013).

3. GENERAL PRINCIPLE OF ETHICS IN TEACHING

3.1 Justice

An action is considered to be right when all people treating fairly. Justice is mainly related with the duties and rights of all stakeholders and its emphasizes the fairness and equity of an action (Dempster & Berry,2003).

3.2 Care

The care perspective emphasizes empathy and caring as well as the network of relationships. An action is right when it satisfies stakeholder's needs and desires and leads to their growth (Feng, 2011).

3.3 Utilitarianism

Utilitarianism perspective is concerned with outcomes. It emphasizes that the consequence of an action determine its moral worth. An action is right because it leads to the greatest good and the least bad on the basis of utilitarian considerations. Teacher, principal should always act to maximum benefit of students and minimum harm for the greatest number of stakeholders (Feng, 2011).

3.4 Critique

The critique perspective emphasizes decision makers' recognizing inequities in both schools and society. An action is right when it leads to equal opportunities for stakeholders by breaking oppression, privileges, and inequalities. School leaders should critically reflect on the ideology that people take for granted and probe unreasonable details when making decisions. Overall, the focus of this perspective is on addressing inconsistencies and inequalities in life to achieve real social justice.

3.5 Virtue

The virtue perspective emphasizes a person's moral character. Virtues are a person's disposition to act in a certain way and are cultivated by practice in daily life to facilitate a certain way of acting and living.

4. ETHICAL ISSUES PERTAINING TO THE ROLE OF TEACHER

Teaching is associated with physical, mental, social, psychological and moral upbringing of students. Teacher plays a significant role in development of all aspects of life. The demand from the teacher increases when she is performing her duties that what is the major responsibility of teacher? To answer this question considered the major assumption which society expect that teacher is a moral agent. Teacher is a role model; he/she has to perform according to the requirements of cultural or traditional values. Carr, (2000) stated, the teachers are conceived as the representative or custodian of a specific set of civilized standards and value predicted on a traditionalist idea of education as the transmission of culture.

Teachers play multiple tasks in daily life; an imperative role is transmission of morality towards next generation. Teacher performs moral duty formally and informally, he/she is considered to be same role inside and outside the classroom.

Ways to transmit moral messages:

- Show moral and ethical behavior himself
- Model good behavior and attitudes in classroom
- Story telling
- Respecting students
- Peaceful environment
- Being nice, polite and thoughtful
- Well behaved

The moral duty of teachers

- Handle students with care
- Positive relationship with students and other staff members
- Acting best interest of students
- Classroom environment (Catherine. E, 2011).
- Knowledge and expertise of teachers
- Academic and theoretical knowledge

- Cultural custodian
- Facilitator of inquiry
- Communicator, management, organization for effective teaching (Carr, 2000)
- Using rapid incremental innovation
- Empowering others
- Emphasizing thinking over memorizing
- Applying knowledge
- Fitting one's teaching to one's own style
- Maintain dignity of the student
- Fairness
- Responsibility (Joyce & Rober, 2003).

4.1 Ethical Role Pertaining to the Role of Teacher

4.2 Moral Person

Campbell,(2013) presented notion of teacher as a moral person. Teacher conveys his/her thoughts, ideas, values to next generation deliberately or in deliberately. The all positive and negative aspect of teacher personality is being part of student's personality. So, it is necessary for the teacher that he/she possesses good ethical attributes. Now days, it is a big ethical issue towards teachers responsibility.

4.3 Moral Educator

Teachers does not always been a good moral character. While this is the process exchanging these virtues to their students. Teacher should consider consciously that students are gaining these ethics directly or indirectly.

4.4 Student Teacher Relationship

Teacher deals with students in their daily life, in these days student teacher relationship is not based on attitudes, intentions and good moral values.

4.5 Self Awareness

Awareness of what is right and wrong? This should be part of teacher's character that he knows what the criteria of being right and wrong.

4.6 Fairness and Care

It is the right of students to treat students evenly, fairness in dealing day to day activities, conversations, and teachings. Provide opportunities to every student fairly. It is mandatory for teacher:

- Enforcing school and class rules
- Marking and assessing students
- Displaying their work publically
- Assigning tasks
- Granting favors
- Calling on them to respond to question in class
- Arranging them in groups and seating patterns
- Engaging them in personal exchanging with individuals
- Assigning and enforcing test dates and homework deadline.
- Participation of all students in performing classroom duties (tidying up room, row monitoring, cleaning the black board)
- Same students does always do the same duty

4.7 **Formal Responsibility**

The formal responsibilities of teacher are an immense ethical issue for the whole educational process such as at planning phase, classroom management and classroom control.

Teacher formal responsibility in terms of:

- Academic objectives
- Efficiency strategies
- Control techniques
- Effective planning (selection of reading material according to the wellbeing of students)
- Structuring lessons

5. **ETHICAL ISSUE PERTAINING TO EDUCATION**

5.1 **Right to Education**

Due to the importance of education in Islam, The Holy Prophet (PBUH) said: “Getting knowledge is obligatory to every Muslim man and woman”. It is the moral duty of government and concerned authorities to provide opportunities for students.

5.2 **Should Teacher Students be Friends?**

Schooling is the act of interacting people with each other towards the mutual goal. Here the related persons are student and teacher. Nowadays, the renowned philosophy of education leads towards the friendship relationships of student teacher. But, the addressing question here is that should teacher exceed the limits or should provide some measures to maintain positive relations.

5.3 To What Extent Help is Required?

This issue is more considerable that is more required in relationship of principals, teachers and students.

5.4 Communication

Communication is the heart of any educational process whether it is carried in classroom or beyond the classroom. Being polite and humble can uplift the ethical environment of schools.

5.5 Conflict Management

Conflicts can be easily resolved, by adopting ethical frameworks. (www.miamiherald.com/news/locals/ethics)

5.6 Language of Learning

Biesta (2006) found concept of the language of learning. In this regard, he has identified four contributing trends which influence on ethic in educational system:

- 1) new theories of learning which shifted the attention to students and their activities rather than teachers and teaching, where learning became more central and teaching conceptualized in terms of facilitating learning;
- 2) postmodern doubt framed education as a modern project in need of questioning;
- 3) the growing market for non-formal adult learning as a mainly individualistic activity has made use of the word learning
- 4) with the destruction of the welfare state the relationship between governments and citizen has been, in many cases, re-conceptualized into an economical relationship between the provider and the consumer of public services. All of these trends contribute to rise of the language of learning. Above mentioned trends in education narrows teachers' possibilities for professional influence on the educational system.

5.7 Teacher Autonomy

The concept of teacher refers to the professional independence of teachers in schools, especially the degree to which they can make autonomous decisions about what they teach to students and

how they teach it. Due to the market influence in education it decreases the independence of teachers (Hargreaves, 2000).

6. **ETHICAL ISSUES PERTAINING TO SCHOOLING**

6.1 **Relational Professionalism**

Relational work skill is the term used to describe the ways in which professionals interact with each other. Relational skills go beyond knowledge of business models and professional experience to include personal traits. As with professional skills, relational skills differ from person to person. Teacher interact with students what they practice in relational manners are: knowledge of students, pedagogical knowledge, principles of classroom management. Teacher should adopt relational qualities (engagement, authenticity, understanding) to enhance positive environment in schools. This relational professionalism impacts on overall school ethical environment (Frelin, 2013).

6.2 **Social Diversity**

There are different groups in a school. They have cultural, religious and economic differences. Ethically to cope up all these diverse people is the challenging tasks.

6.3 **Discipline**

Due to the lack of ethical considerations in all educational setups, the discipline problems are increasing day by day. Practice of ethics and morality is lead towards the fulfillment of educational goals.

7. **SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS**

1. Define ethics. Differentiate between ethics and morality.
2. Discuss ethics in teaching.
3. Describe three accounts of professional teaching from your experience of school life.
4. Highlight ethical issues which one should keep in mind as teacher.
5. Discuss ethical issues related to education.

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