

Professional Ethics In Teaching Profession

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ABSTRACT

Higher education institutions play a major role in preparing the younger generation for a propitious future. Apart from giving quality education, they need to instill high ethical values and practices amongst the students as they have become the victims of materialistic desires and attitudes leading to a loss of basic values. Teachers, as professionals are engaged in most ethically demanding jobs. Thus it is important that teachers should constantly reflect the ethics in their activities to ensure that they exhibit the best ethical example in their work to those they are morally educating. A teacher can raise the morality of students by encouraging the ethical practices. Ethics involves systematizing, defending and recommending concept of right and wrong conduct. Ethics in teaching is the practice of ethical codes and a formal perception of behaviour and relevant disposition of the teacher. This paper tried to explain the meaning of professional ethics and code of ethics for teachers.

Keywords: Professional Ethics, Teaching Profession, Code of ethics, Teachers.

INTRODUCTION

When an occupation organizes itself as a profession, a code of ethics appears. Educational ethics apply to those professionals that are active within education. "Ethics deals, amongst other things, with right and wrong, ought and ought not, good and evil (Mahony 2009)." Ethics in teaching is the practice of ethical codes and formal perception of behaviour and relevant disposition of the teachers. It involves systematizing, defending and recommending concepts of right and wrong conduct. Teaching is the noblest of all profession. To maintain there professional status, teachers have to own certain responsibilities both as individual and as members of a respectable professions. Every profession is expected to evolve a set of ethical principles to guide the conduct and behaviours of its members. The ethical principles provide the basis to differentiate between desirable and undesirable professional conduct and behaviour. Ethics is divided into two parts; theoretical ethics and applied ethics. Theoretical ethics includes normative ethics, descriptive ethics and meta ethics. Applied ethics refers to professional ethics. Normative ethics is the study of what makes actions right and wrong. Meta ethics is about the theoretical meaning and reference of moral propositions. Descriptive ethics is about facts. It examines ethics from observation of actual choices made by moral agents in practice. Applied ethics examines the particular ethical issues of private and public life. Professional ethics is one of the important branch of applied ethics. In general professional ethics can be defined as standards or codes to provide people to guidance in their professional lives. The code of professional ethics defined as a set of self imposed professional ideals and principles, necessary for the attainment of professional excellence and self-satisfaction. A code of professional ethics is generally based on two principles, namely, professional integrity and ideals of service to the society.

Objectives

1. To discuss the concept of Professional ethics.
2. To discuss the code of Professional ethics for teachers.
3. To discuss strategies to promote ethical standards among teachers

Professional Ethics

Every profession has its own professional ethics which is different from general ethics. Professional ethics is a combination of two words, Professional+Ethics. Here, Professional means an expert, skilled, trained, specialized etc. Ethics means morals, beliefs, moral values etc. In this way professional is a term denoting a level of knowledge and skills possessed by an individual to perform an assignment and ethics is a science of character, habits of activity or behaviour of human being. Thus professional people exercise specialised skills and knowledge. How this knowledge should be used in providing public service can be considered a moral issue and is termed as professional ethics. Professional ethics is a set of standards adopted by a professional community. Professional ethics are regulated by standards which are often referred to as codes of ethics. The code of ethics gives us boundaries that we have to stay

within our professional carriers. It is a written set of guidelines issued by an organization to its workers and management to help them conduct their actions in accordance with its primary values and ethical standards.

Code of Professional ethics for teachers

It is felt that status of teaching profession requires to be raised to ensure its dignity and integrity. So it is necessary that there should be a code of ethics which may be evolved by the teaching community itself for its guidance. A teacher has to play various roles both inside and outside of classrooms. Teacher can develop morality among the students by setting the examples of their ethical behaviour. Harris (1995) summarized that code of ethics first serve as a collective recognition by members for its responsibility. Second, it helps to create the environment where ethical behaviour is a norm. Third it can act as a guide in many situations. Fourth process of developing and modifying the code of ethics help in profession. Fifth, it acts as an educational tool to give focus point in classes and meetings. Finally, it indicates that the profession is concern about responsible and professional conduct. National council for Teacher Education has come out with guidelines of code of professional ethics for teachers in December 2010 which are framed keeping in mind the following considerations:-

- Recognising that every child has a fundamental right to receive education of good quality.
- Recognising that education should be directed to all round development of human personality.
- Realising the need for developing faith in the guiding principles of our polity viz. Democracy, social justice and secularism.
- Recognising the need to promote through education, our rich culture heritage, national consciousness, international understanding and world peace.
- Recognising that teacher's being a part and parcel of the social environment, share the needs and aspirations of the people.
- Recognising the need to organise teaching as a profession for which expert knowledge, specialised skills and dedication are pre-requisites.
- Realising that the community respect and support the teaching community is dependent on the quality of teaching and teacher's proper attitudes towards teaching profession.
- Realising the need for self-direction and self-discipline among members of the teaching community.

There are five major areas of professional activities which encompasses the work of a teacher except teaching.

Responsibility of Teacher towards Students

The teachers should:-

1. Be punctual in attending their duties in the school;
2. Teach the curriculum after making thorough preparation for the lessons to be taught;
3. Treat all students with love and affection and be impartial to all irrespective of caste, creed, sex, status, religion, language and place of birth;
4. Guide the students in their physical, social, intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual development;
5. Take notice of the individual needs and differences among students in their socio-cultural background and adapt his/her teaching accordingly;
6. Refrain from accepting remuneration for coaching or tutoring his/her own students except for remedial teaching under an approved scheme;
7. Refrain from divulging confidential information about students except to those who are legitimately entitled to it;
8. Refrain from inciting students against other students, teaches or administration;
9. Set a standard of dress, speech and behaviour worthy of example to the students; and
10. Respect basic human dignity of children while maintain discipline in the school.

Responsibility of Teacher towards Parents/ Guardians

The teacher should:-

11. Seek to establish cordial relations with parents/ guardians;
12. Provide information regularly to parents regarding the attainments and shortfalls of the wards;
13. Refrain from doing anything which may undermine students confidence in their parents or guardians.

Responsibility of Teacher towards Society and the Nation

The teacher should:-

14. Strive to develop the educational institution as a community and human resource development centre providing knowledge and information and developing skills and attitudes needed for such development;
15. Strive to understand the social problems and take part in such activities that would be conducive to meet the challenges passed by the problems;
16. Refrain from taking part in activities having potential to spread feeling of hatred or enmity among different communities, religious or linguistic groups;
17. Work actively to strengthen national integration and spirit to togetherness and oneness;
18. Respect Indian culture and develop positive attitudes towards it among students; and
19. Respect and be loyal to the school, community, state and nation.

Responsibility of Teacher towards Colleagues and Profession

The teacher should:-

20. Treat other members of the profession in the same manner as he/ she himself/herself wishes to be treated;
21. Refrain from lodging unsubstantiated allegations against colleagues or higher authorities;
22. Participate in programmes of professional growth like in-service education and training, seminars, symposia workshops, conferences, selfstudy etc;
23. Avoid making derogatory statements about colleagues especially in the presence of pupils, other teachers, officials or parents;
24. Cooperate with the head of the institution and colleagues in and outside the institution in both curricular and co-curricular activities; and
25. Accept as a professional and individual responsibility of reporting to the concerned authorities in an appropriate manner about all matters that are considered to be prejudicial to the interests of the students and the development of the institution.

Responsibility of Teachers towards Professional Organisations

The teacher should:-

26. Take membership of professional organizations treating it as a professional responsibility;
27. Participate as a matter of right in the formulation of policies and programmes of professional organizations and contribute to their strength, unity and solidarity; and
28. Always function within the framework of the Constitution of the organization concerned.

Responsibility of Teacher towards Management/ Administration

The teacher should:-

29. Recognize the management as the prime source of his sustainable development; and
30. Develop mutual respect and trust through his professional activities and outputs.

Educational Implications

If the teacher bears good professional ethics in relation to his profession, the ethics are automatically transferred to the coming generations. The deteriorating status of the profession will gain back its potential status. Professional ethics will help in the spread of peace and international understanding across the Globe.

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