

ETHICAL PERSPECTIVES IN EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

The modern classroom is much more personal, social and flexible where teachers can enhance students' 21st century skills and create learning opportunities for promoting problem solving, critical thinking and collaborative skills among their students. But besides these 21st century skills what is also needed is knowledge of what is right and wrong. To swim through the ocean of knowledge available and identify what is authentic, ethical and useful is the need of the hour. A common notion is that the web is solution for all problems and it answers all possible questions. It should be realized that the web is simply a source of data and information. The ability to discover the facts, turn the data into information and derive knowledge is where effectiveness of learning should be tested. In this scenario ethics acquires immense importance. Teachers are held to a higher moral standard and must behave in ways that are consistent with community and professional standards. Academic integrity is the moral code or ethical policy of academic. This includes values such as avoidance of cheating or plagiarism, maintenance of academic standards, honesty and rigor in research and academic publishing.

Keywords: Ethics, Plagiarism, Social Media, Online Resources, I.P.R.

INTRODUCTION

Ethics are standards that make the actions right and wrong. It helps categorize different values such as integrity, discipline and honesty among others and apply them in daily lives. Ethics influences behavior and allows an individual to make the right choices. Without ethics it will be very difficult to regulate life and act responsibly and may also result in chaos.

Ethics are moral principles that govern a person's behavior or conducting of an activity. According to Merriam Webster Dictionary – "It is the discipline dealing with what's good and bad and with moral duty and obligation". It also means – the principles of conduct guiding an individual or a group. Ethics is the branch of philosophy which takes a systematic approach to define social and individual morality- the fundamental standards of right and wrong that a whole society, as well as individuals, learn from their culture and peers. Ethics has its origin in Greek Philosophy relating to inquiry of moral life. "Ethics" is derived from the Greek word "ethos" which means "character" or "conduct". Ethics is not limited to the actions or behaviors of an individual but includes all professions, organizations, or government agency. It refers to a system of principles that can change by challenging previously held choices and actions.

IMPORTANCE OF ETHICS IN EDUCATION:

While the importance of ethics can't be ignored in any walk of life but it's importance in the field of education is immense. Ethics in education are essential as they help run the system smoothly. It sets the standards of what's acceptable and what's not hence protecting the interests of all the stakeholders especially, educators and the learners. Ethics in education helps regulate the education system and ensures that this system positively contributes towards development

of humanity. The academic community consists of faculty and students and they have a responsibility to follow ethical principles regarding academic freedom, intellectual integrity, and the fair and respectful treatment of others. Teachers, as many other professionals, often face challenges that are complex and lead to ethical dilemmas. No training program are available to guide them towards ethical path.

COMPONENTS OF ETHICS –

When we think of Ethics in education, it involves both the teacher and the students. Ethics is essential for both of them as both of them are the main stakeholders. Every person has their own understanding of ethics and which one they adhere to - right, wrong, moral, principles, code of conduct, and professional standards. But, for the educators to be ethical they should have access to training in understanding the ethical issues involved in decision making. The ethical principles that guide the behavior of faculty are reflected in standards of ethics described in the documents of professional associations for faculty in higher education, such as the "Statement on Professional Ethics (1987)" published by the American Association of University Professors, also by the American Psychological Association, the American Sociological Association, and the Modern Language Association. Besides this, each college and university faculty handbooks often include a section for ethical standards or expectations regarding the behavior of faculty. Ethical standards for students may be found in student handbooks or college and university admission brochure. These documents guide both the activities and the behavior of those engaged in the academic field. For this review paper the researcher will concentrate only on ethical standards from the point of teachers.

ETHICS FOR TEACHERS:

Teaching and learning is a reciprocal process. Teachers and students rely on each other to access sources of knowledge and share their information, expanding the whole educational process to include not just instruction but the expansion of knowledge. The role change from the keeper of knowledge to facilitator of learning presents a challenge and an avenue for educators to dramatically change the way their students learn. This is where ethical behavior has a role to play. Faculty everywhere is guided by ethical principles that address their professional responsibilities as teachers, scholars and also as members of the educational fraternity.

Many teachers, students, and administrators embrace the principles of academic integrity because they know that the goals of teaching, learning, and research can only be accomplished in environments in which ethical standards are upheld. In the 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) states, "Academic freedom applies to both teaching and research." Freedom in research is fundamental to the advancement of truth..

Thus, the ethical aspect of teachers mainly revolves around two areas:

- Teaching
- Research

1.ETHICS IN TEACHING:

“Academic freedom in its teaching aspect is fundamental for the protection of the rights of the teacher in teaching and of the student to freedom in learning”. (Strike, Kenneth A. & Auster, Carol J., 1998, p.3)

“In teaching, as everywhere, core principles relating to virtues such as honesty, justice, fairness, care, empathy, integrity, courage, respect and responsibility should guide conduct and interpersonal relations” (Campbell, 2006, p.32). These virtues are desirable in an ethical teacher. The teacher’s knowledge of what ethics is and the practice of it will help the teacher in making the best decision when faced with ethical dilemmas in their educational settings.

One aspect of Ethics is Intellectual integrity which involves using ethical sources in the search for knowledge as well as being honest in the imparting this knowledge. Ethics also involves individuals' expectation of fair and respectful treatment when interacting with one another, administrators, staff, and others with whom they interact in their role as members of the academic community. “Fair and respectful treatment also extends, for example, to the evaluation of students' academic work and colleagues' scholarly work”. (Strike, Kenneth A. & Auster, Carol J., 1998). When a society’s educational institutions promote integrity, they help create stronger moral society as a whole. As far as, ethics in teaching is concerned it should begin with dedication to the Student, which means to advance the freedom to learn, equal opportunity, and protect privacy. The freedom-to-learn means that teachers should encourage student inquiry, should not deny students access to varying points of view and give authentic content. The teachers should create a constructive and creative environment and to try and achieve educational objectives, which might be associated with the pursuit of truth, individual autonomy, or democratic principles.

The next important aspect in ethics in teaching is "commitment to raise professional standards", which means to involve in activities that result in the professional as well as academic development of the teacher. A teacher has to be a lifelong learner and cannot allow him/her self to stagnate. For this they have to constantly reinvent themselves. They should be well versed not only with the current happenings but also the emerging trends in their chosen field. For eg. a teacher today cannot claim to be ignorant about the latest in the field of ICT and should be well versed in the knowledge as well as use of the latest innovations. So, ethics for teachers also involves –

- **Respect for Colleagues:** One important aspect of ethics and one which is sometimes ignored is respect. A teacher should respect colleagues and treat them fairly.
- **Social Responsibility:** A teacher should strive to promote social good and prevent or mitigate social harms through research, public education, and advocacy.
- **Responsible Mentoring and guidance:** A teacher should help to educate, mentor, and advise students. Promote their welfare and allow them to make their own decisions.
- **Competence:** Maintain and improve your own professional competence and expertise through lifelong education and learning; take steps to promote competence in science as a whole.

Nondiscrimination and fair evaluation: Academic fraternity should not engage in discrimination "based on age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status, or any basis proscribed by law" (American

Psychological Association, sec. 1.10). As far as, employment is concerned, members of the academic community should not "discriminate in hiring, promotion, salary, treatment, or any other conditions of employment or career development" (American Sociological Association, sec. 8). Besides this, teachers who have agreed to serve as reviewers of manuscripts, grant proposals, or other scholarly submissions, should evaluate those materials in a fair, objective, professional, and timely manner. These standards are also applicable to the evaluation of students' academic work. According to "A Statement of the Association's Council: Freedom and Responsibility", "Students are entitled to an atmosphere conducive to learning and to even-handed treatment in all aspects of the teacher-student relationship" (p. 135). The principle of fair and respectful treatment also applies to collaboration with and evaluation of the work of other members of the academic community.

2.ETHICS IN RESEARCH –

Research ethics provides guidelines for the responsible conduct of research. (David B. Resnik, David B., 2015). In addition, it educates and monitors scientists conducting research to ensure a high ethical standard. The following is a general summary of some ethical principles:

- **Honesty** : Honestly report data, results, methods and procedures, and publication status. Do not fabricate, falsify, or misrepresent data.
- **Objectivity**: Care should be taken to avoid bias in experimental design, data analysis, data interpretation, peer review, personnel decisions, grant writing, expert testimony, and other aspects of research.
- **Integrity**: Keep your promises and agreements; act with sincerity; strive for consistency of thought and action.
- **Openness**: Share data, results, ideas, tools, resources. Be open to criticism and new ideas.

Respect for Intellectual Property: This is a very important issue these days. With access to large online resources and data the cases of plagiarism is rising day by day. This calls for a more ethical approach. This can be done by –

- **Acknowledgement of contributions** - Acknowledgement of the contributions of others means appropriately recognizing and crediting those who have contributed to a scholarly work whether the work is a manuscript, exhibit, or performance. Both recognition and accountability come with allocations of credit. Depending on their contributions, such others, including students, may be deserving of credit ranging from acknowledgement in a footnote to co-authorship. Regardless of whether faculty members work with students or colleagues, the work of all parties should be equitably acknowledged in a manner appropriate to the norms of their discipline. Give credit where credit is due. Should not use unpublished data, methods, or results without permission. Honoring patents, copyrights, and other forms of intellectual property.
- **Plagiarism** - the appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit. Representing the ideas, words, or data of another person or persons as one's own constitutes plagiarism. Thus, a person's words, ideas, or data, whether published or unpublished, must be acknowledged as such. For example, the MLA (Modern

Language Association) Style Manual states, "To use another person's ideas or expressions in your writing without acknowledging the source is to plagiarize". (Gibaldi, sec.1.8) Proper citation allows others to trace the origin and development of ideas, theories, and research outcomes and helps support the integrity of the academic enterprise and needed mutual trust between those seeking and those disseminating knowledge.

- **Human Subjects Protection:** When conducting research on human subjects, minimize harms and risks and maximize benefits; respect human dignity, privacy, and autonomy.
- **Confidentiality:** Care should be taken to protect confidential communications, such as papers or grants submitted for publication, personnel records, trade or military secrets, and patient records.
- **Responsible Publication:** Teachers should publish in order to advance research and scholarship, not to advance just one's own career. Avoid wasteful and duplicative publication.
- **Legality of Data:** Researchers must acknowledge the source(s) of their data and accurately describe the method by which their data was gathered. Moreover, the fabrication or falsification of data or results constitutes a violation of ethical standards. While fabrication is defined as "making up data or results," falsification is "changing or misreporting data or results" (Committee on Science, Engineering, and Public Policy, p.16). Both of these actions interfere with the search for knowledge and truth and undermine trust both within and outside the academic community. Research misconduct does not include honest error or differences of opinion.

CONCLUSION

To be an ethical teacher can be a difficult task for many teachers, especially when he/she comes across events on a daily basis that will require them to make an ethical decision, which may not be the exact right answer or even practical. This decision could be challenging and a great responsibility for the teacher, no matter how long one has been in the profession. One can only hope that the years or months of teaching has taught them enough to know what to do when ethical dilemmas occur in the classroom or within the school system. Ethics must be universal, not reserved for special occasions. All teachers must learn about and apply them to educational and attitudinal practices to create an academic environment that inculcates and promotes the universal values of respect and responsibility, integrity and honesty. The need for ethics in research publication is the need of the hour with growing instances of plagiarism and data theft. This has tarnished the image of the academic fraternity. Therefore, ethical perspective in education is very essential but has been overlooked till now.

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