



Ethics in teaching– A subtle step in right direction

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Abstract

Ethics derived from an ancient Greek word “*ethikos*”, which means “arising from habits” and in modern time considered as what is right and wrong. In teaching profession, teachers are supposed to impart knowledge and skills, in addition to that teacher thought to be a cultural custodian. A classroom is smallest unit for the transformation in the society. So, whatsoever happens in the classroom can produce a ripple effect in the society. For this teacher has to adjust himself in different circumstances, so to simplify and give a professional touch few things or behavioural approaches have to be codified, besides introducing common teaching strategies/technologies for all will yield low output. Teacher is not reel actor who is producing some moves and flashing some catchy dialogues to get the attention of audiences. But teacher is celebrity of transformation who consistently inculcates honesty, transparency, creativity, imagination and self-confidence etc. in naive minds. The behaviour and approach of teaching in the classroom have long lasting impacts on the learners and through them on society. In present studies six different postulates have been enlisted for ethical values to be maintained.

Keywords: honesty, classroom, educator, missionary, accountability, confidentiality

Introduction

Ethics is a collection of moral standards by which each person should be guided in their private and professional life. It tells us right from wrong, and how to live moral lives. Such standards have been suggested to strengthen the status and prestige of teaching in the society by different philosophers (Plato, Aristotle and Confucius) and thinkers such as Rousseau and Dewey. An ethics code in teaching has been recommended by (Strike and Soltis, 1985 and Airasian, 2005) ^[9, 1]. Teaching is not only concerned with imparting the subject knowledge, but also includes the development of moral citizen in an egalitarian society and the assessment has to be done from accomplishment of the objectivity of the curriculum (Carr, 2006) ^[3].

The teaching profession, as many others, has its own code of ethical values, which describes the process of grading students and teacher's behaviour in the classroom as well as outside the premises of the institution. The profession requires that the teachers should be calm, patient and communicative by temperament and sociable in nature. Teachers are supposed to have higher standard of ethical behaviour than any other profession.

Teaching is a missionary profession. It is service-oriented. It has the potential to have a great impact in the moulding of the next generation. In Indian context there are several examples of great teachers such as Kautilya, whose teachings and ethical standard remain the source of inspiration and transformed the whole generations. This might be the reason that education valued a lot in the society and teachers are placed on a respectable position. The personality and personal characteristics of an educator have long lasting impressions on learners. While a great majority of teachers carry with their heads high with this noble tradition and even innovate and teach beyond the classroom setting, a teaching profession can also be riddled with corruption. We have heard of teachers who sought material or sexual favours from students and parents in exchange for a higher academic ratings, recommends books of particularly publication, not including quality material in teaching and demotivation or discouraging the students. While some have lost enthusiasm in teaching and few are doing it to just fulfil the given obligations. In most of the cases the ethical principle developed by the respective institution. But such type of rules sometimes lower the standard of knowledge transfer, so these principles should be remain as guiding principles and not imposed types. So it becomes pertinent for the sake of society and teaching profession that there should be some guiding postulates for the educators.

The main objectives of the present studies are

- To encourage the peers to consider and defend the honour and integrity of the teaching profession
- To determine the ethical obligations and commitments of the teaching profession
- To encourage public belief in the teaching profession.

Discussion

1. The fundamental ethical values/standards in the context of teaching

One must analyse teacher ethics from two different vantage points while talking about them. The first is administrative, where all facets of a teacher's conduct, instructional methods, and student evaluation are outlined in a set of rules created by the Board of Education, a university, and specific institutions. The teacher's own attitude and behaviour that is not otherwise forbidden or permitted by law, or whose violation may never be discovered or followed in a grievance process, are included in the second category. The duties, responsibility attitude, integrity, honesty, and fairness of the instructor, all fall under the category of ethics.

Teaching that seeks and promotes the moral, psychological and physical wellbeing of the students is what is considered good teaching. Good teaching is not only teaching that is incidentally effective or personally pleasant. Teaching is a sort of missionary activity, and it should be carried out with a passion for the overall improvement of society (Saha and Dworkin, 2009) ^[7].

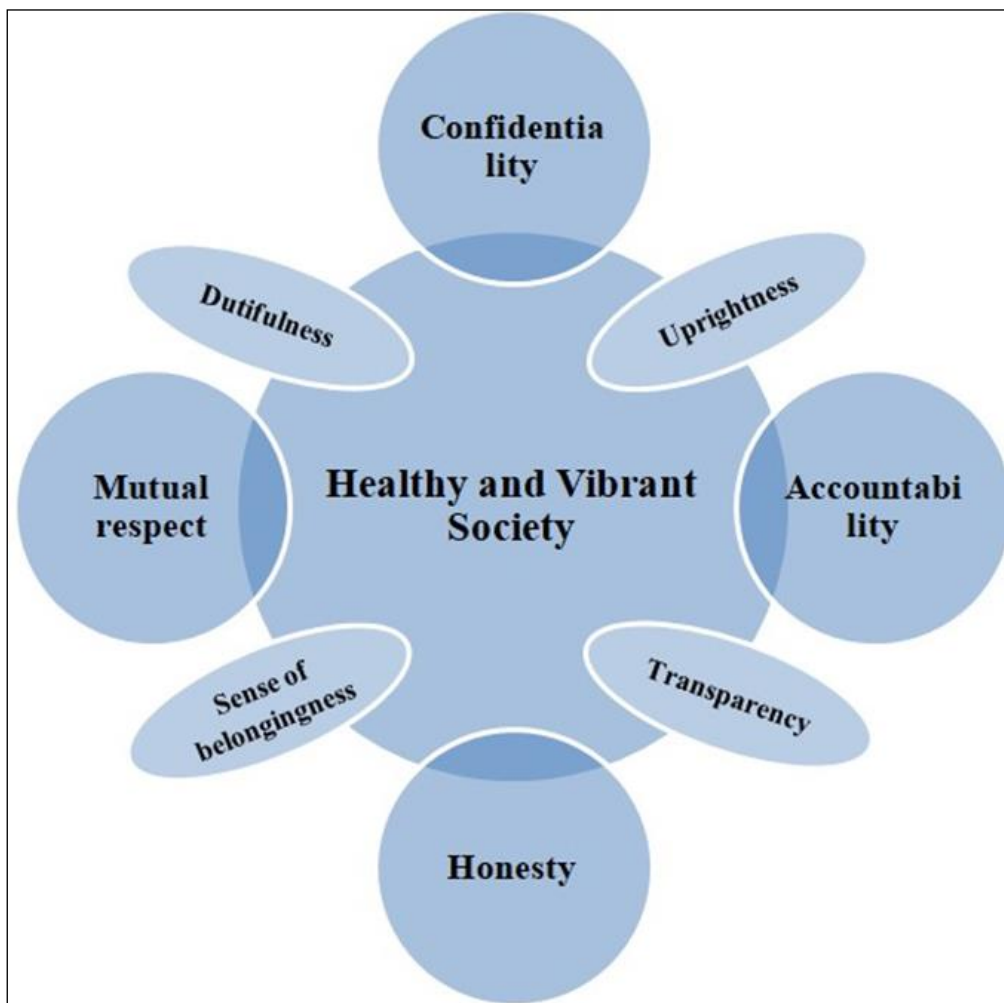


Fig 1: Wheel of ethical values showing healthy and vibrant society as its outcome

When the wheel equipped with spokes of Dutifulness, Uprightness, sense of belongingness and Transparency will move then outcome will be in form of Confidentiality, accountability, Mutual respect and honesty. These outcomes are the main foundations for a vibrant society.

There are few postulates hypothesized for teachers to develop above mentioned characters in the learners.

1. Teachers must strictly adhere to the subjects specified in the syllabus and handle them responsibly. This is not good practice, as personal biases about the subject can show up in lectures. Further Teachers must ensure that their skills are used appropriately.
2. Teachers have built confidence and credibility with the learners.
3. Neutral behaviour of teachers in respect to class, caste, creed, culture and religion.
4. Teacher should be competent and well versed in the subject. The topics should be delivered in scholarly manner without any fallacious information (Singh *et al.* 2018) ^[8].
5. Demand for physical relation or sexual favour from students in teaching is considered most unethical and amoral (Keith-Spiegel and Koocher, 1985) ^[5]. So such type of behaviour by the teachers in the class room or outside is detrimental to the prestige of teaching profession and has a ripple effect in the society regarding the teachers. To avoid such type of incidents teachers should limit their social contacts with students to only institutional functions and events.

6. Asking for private tuitions and accepting publishers rebate for recommendation of particular text is also ruinous to teaching profession. Such practices are maligning the teaching.
7. All the students should be equal in the eyes of teacher and there shouldn't any bending of rules to favour selected students (Ball and Wilson, 1996) ^[2].
8. Teachers should recognize that education is a public service and strive to keep the public informed about educational programs. Work to improve community education and strengthen the moral and intellectual life of the community. Recognize social problems and participate in activities that contribute to the progress of society and the nation as a whole. Refrain from participating in, subscribing to, or supporting activities aimed at fostering feelings of hatred or hostility between different communities, religions, or language groups, but actively working for national unity.

In real world ethics are very ambiguous and complex, where it is quite difficult to make any decision and then the interpretation of that decision by society (Nash, 1996) ^[6]. Teacher has to adopt a complex and multivoiced perspectives at the time of deciding right and wrong (Husu and Tirri, 2003) ^[4]. In addition to above mentioned postulates for ethics in teaching, Teachers should treat other professionals as they would like to be treated. Talk respectfully about other teachers. Refrain from making unsubstantiated claims against senior colleagues. Also, refrain from considering caste, creed, religion, race, or gender in your professional activities. Further teachers should treat non-teaching staff as peers and equal partners in joint ventures within the institution. Support the functioning of the Joint Staff Council, which includes both teaching and non-teaching staff (UGC, 2010) ^[10].

2. Breaches of the Teacher's Code of Ethics

1. Having inappropriate relationships with students (sexual, business partnership, after school buddies, drinking binges, etc.)
2. Violation of clearly stated school rules and educational procedures
3. Failing to perform duties assigned other than teaching
4. Imposing on students personal views unrelated to the subject or promoting such, especially some that do not represent the main stream (extreme political or religious views, views on controversial social issues, interest of a particular social group, etc.)
5. Exposing students to embarrassment or disparagement (emotional or psychological harassment)
6. Invading students' privacy
7. Engaging students in unethical behaviour
8. Accepting gifts and favours (for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous)
9. Deceiving students and their parents.

Conclusion

As teachers, we have the great privilege of influencing the character of our students by instilling them with basic ethical values such as Dutifulness, Uprightness, sense of belongingness and Transparency. When such characters inculcated into the personality of a students than Confidentiality, accountability, Mutual respect and honesty automatically come out and these are the pillars of a healthy and vibrant society. At the same time, because we are in a position of power, we have a great responsibility for the moral development of our students. When planning your course and individual lessons, think not only of the knowledge and skills you want your students to acquire, but also the values you want them to develop. This is because classroom behaviour conveys values. Students treat others as they are treated. We expect you to act with fairness, honesty, respect and trust, both in the classroom and with your students. Make the teaching profession so attractive with ideals and practices that competent young people aspire to pursue it.

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