

# Teachers' Professional Ethics

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**Abstract:** *This article focuses on issues related to Teachers' Professional Ethics. There are some aspects related to professional ethics of teachers which are connected to other dimensions, such as the regulation and creation of a deontological code and the ethical, personal and professional conceptions of teachers. Teachers' Professional Ethics is concerned with teaching, mentoring process, assessment and evaluation, and their role in teaching and learning. Teaching is considered as the noblest of all professions in the world which is the consequence of long period of academic training by an organized body of knowledge on which the undertaking is based an appropriate duration of formal and rigorous professional training with practical experience in the field and a code of professional ethics. The Declaration on Professional Ethics (DPE) was adopted by Education International (EI's) 3rd World Congress held in 2001 at Jomtien, Thailand. The document was further updated at its 4th World Congress in Porto Alegre, Brazil in 2004. Its objectives are:*

- ✓ *to raise consciousness about the norms and ethics of the teaching profession;*
- ✓ *to help increase job satisfaction in education;*
- ✓ *to enhance status and self-esteem, and;*
- ✓ *to increase respect for the profession in communities.*

*Teacher's Professional Efficiency, true devotion towards teaching, mastery over subjects, fair knowledge of current affairs, Teacher's Academic Professional Training, Teacher's Accountability, Refrain from engaging in private tuition or private teaching activity, Co-operate in the formulation of policies of the institution and the authorities for the betterment of the institutions are the some facts related to teacher professional ethics. The teacher ought to maintain the dignity of the profession by respecting and obeying the law, and by demonstrating personal and social integrity.*

**Keywords:** *Ethics, Teacher Education*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Ethical issues, taken as complex and integrating dimensions pervade the reflection on values in the daily lives of people and communities, where the rational and emotional, affective and intuitive, thought and action, objective and subjective are layered upon each other, thus, contributing to the equation of individual and collective meanings. Education, as a social venture, a mediator between a past that is to be conveyed and a future that is to be prepared, presents tension on the one hand between socialization and conservatism, while on the other, is itself an interpreter, constructor and diffuser of meanings. Thus on confronting issues of meaning and aim, but also environments and processes, its participants,

organized around structures of various levels and ranges, also address ethical issues, whether they are aware of this or not. Each participant has to engage in a dialogue in the various contexts where these aspects are displayed. Decisions triggered by legislation determining and regulating the system and specific interactions established in schools and classrooms need to be taken on board and closely examined.

In 2001, Education International (EI), officially entered this debate when the Declaration on Professional Ethics (DPE) was adopted by EI's 3rd World Congress held in Jomtien, Thailand. The document was further updated at its 4th World Congress in Porto Alegre, Brazil in 2004. The DPE is mainly intended as a blueprint for EI affiliates' own guidelines. It is complementary to the International Labour Organisation

(ILO) Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (1998) and draws on the UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (1966) and the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (1948).

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## II. PROFESSION AND THE TEACHER

Professional ethics concerns 'those norms, values, and principles that should govern the professional conduct'. To ascertain what 'professional ethics' is, we should first of all define the concept 'professional', the biggest problem with this concept is that there is no real consensus as to what occupations are professions; some are contested, like engineers and nurses. There is a wide and a narrow sense of professional ethics. 'In the wide sense the professions are guided by general ethical rules and values; in the narrow, have specific tasks and thus values'. Michael Davis describes a profession as follows: 'a profession is a number of individuals in the same occupation voluntarily organized to earn a living by openly serving a moral ideal in a morally-permissible way beyond what law, market, and morality would otherwise require'. Ruth Chadwick states that the 'professions are defined by science and the service ideal'. The first justifies the professional authority, while the service ideal 'provides a profession with the values specific to itself and its special obligations'. In the case of doctors this is health, whereas in the teaching

## III. QUALITIES OF A TEACHER AND CODE OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

Teaching- the noblest of all professions in the world A profession is characterized a sufficiently long period of academic training an organized body of knowledge on which the undertaking is based an appropriate duration of formal and rigorous professional training with practical experience in the field and a code of professional ethics which binds its members into a fraternity. Teacher as a Role Model "no people can rise above the level of its teachers"-NPE dress, style and content of communication Teacher's Character Teacher's Personality Radiant, pleasing, impressive personality appearance, refinement, pleasant manners, industry, enthusiasm Teacher's Mental Health A neurotic teacher may spread fear, nervousness and worry in the classroom Teacher's Social Adjustment should not be quiet, retreating and introverted.

*The Code of Professional Ethics* – According to Oxford English Dictionary – 'science of morals; moral principles or code' Teachers move towards self regulation, to adhere to the ethical principles listed in the Code of Professional Ethics for teachers.

*Teachers and Their Responsibilities* - A teacher is constantly under the scrutiny of his students and the society - make professional growth continuous through study and research - contribution of knowledge Teachers and the Students - love and affection irrespective of their school performance -Encourage students to improve their attainments -Refrain from physical punishment, sexual abuse, mental and emotional harassment

*Obligations towards the Profession and Colleagues* - Strive for his/her continuous professional development; participation in study circles, seminars, conferences, workshops - treats other members of the profession with respect and dignity irrespective of levels, qualifications; Refrain from engaging in private tuition or private teaching activity.

*Teachers and Non-Teaching Staff:* - treat the non-teaching staff as colleagues and equal partners in a co-operative undertaking Obligations towards Parents, Community and Society - relationship of trust with parents/guardians in the interest of all round development of students -Recognize that education is a public service and strive to keep the public informed of the educational programmes - actively work for National Integration.

*Actions against violation of Code of Professional Ethics*  
*In-house Ethics Committee* - deal with the complaints regarding punctuality, regularity, completion of curriculum, engagement in private tuitions -Teachers Associations and Ethics Committees will decide not to support when disciplinary actions taken against him

*National Ethics Committee* - NCTE and All India Federations of school teachers may jointly appoint a National Ethics Committee comprising eminent educationists, representatives of Federations of Elementary and Secondary Teacher Organizations, National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) and parents.

A profession is a paid and learned occupation that serves a social ideal. Although there may be some controversy on the nature of the professional status of teachers but they are generally seen as professionals. Professional teachers are educators who strive to promote educational values to the best of their abilities. These educational values are tricky because they tend to differ. This paper was written with EI's educational values in mind. Education should have three main aims: practical preparation, preparation for society and individual development. In order to accomplish these educational aims a professional teacher should be able to work with reasonable autonomy. Intrinsic motivation is an important part of professionalism. With intrinsic motivation, the subject makes internal decisions and with extrinsic motivations the subject is made to comply externally. We should realize that teachers are part of larger structures such as school, community, ethnicity etc. Educators do not live just within the framework of professionalism, they are also members of society and other contexts (religious, political etc). In discussing internal controls, the esteem teachers are held in is important. The professional educator strives to create a learning environment that nurtures to fulfillment the potential of all students. The professional educator acts with conscientious effort to exemplify the highest ethical standards. The professional educator responsibly accepts that every child

has a right to an uninterrupted education free from strikes or any other work stoppage tactics.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

In order to assess the context in which professional ethics develops it is important to define the relationship between professionals and professional organisations. Next to autonomy of the teacher there is the autonomy of the teaching profession in which professional organisations play an important role. Contrary to what is commonly believed unions do not undermine professionalism, but are formed more or less as a result of deprofessionalisation. We can make a theoretical distinction between ways of representing teachers: a bargaining union, an association, and a council. The difference between the first two is that associations tend to shun collective bargain. This is only a theoretical distinction because in reality the terms are regularly mixed up. A teaching council is meant as an independent, statutory agency that does not bargain nor lobby but protects professional standards and advises on policy. Unions can participate in collective bargaining as representatives of teachers and at the same time represent teaching as a whole, though it might be difficult sometimes, especially when winning the trust of the public is concerned. Positioning them symbolically more as representatives of education might help to increase the trust unions are held in. The difficulty with creating a code or declaration is that it can never be as specific as we want it to be, it can't possibly address all moral dilemmas teachers face every day. Defining a hierarchy of values is difficult if one wants to do justice to cultural differences. From the viewpoint of EI, being a global organization, human rights and professional values should supersede national values. EI's professional values are based upon human rights, and meant to further these rights. Next to hierarchy comprehensibility plays an important role, first there is the clarity of the code itself, second there is the way its presented to affiliates, and in turn to the teachers. Since the DPE is mainly intended as a blueprint for the codes or declarations of the member organization, it would be appropriate to be more specific in these latter. To include everyone it must be broad and simple.

The most important point is that teachers themselves ought to take it seriously. It should be a declaration of the teachers, to control their own behaviour, and not an organizational tool to be used against them by other groups.

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