

ADDRESSING TEACHER AND STUDENT EMERGING ETHICAL CHALLENGES

by:

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Discussing relevant ethical cases broadens teachers' understanding of their vocation and boosts their sense of dignity in the field of their work. Similarly, new teachers can benefit from such constructive discussions by becoming more aware of their own reflective behaviors and, as a result, more responsive to ethical perspectives. Many studies have focused on philosophical concerns connected to the moral and ethical education of teachers, exhibiting a continuous professional involvement in the moral nature of teachers' attitudes and behaviors.

Developmental theory models a basis for comprehending ethical complexities, how to understand them, and how to overcome them effectively. A framework of ethical education based on the study of Lawrence Kohlberg (1981) has been applied for use in other professional training courses, including teacher training.

The framework, which is based on the Four Component Models of Moral Maturity, suggests that ethical behaviors are constructed on relevant factors of a succession of component processes that lead to issue resolutions at one of three ethical judgment levels (Bebeau, Rest, & Narvaez, 1999). When considering a moral problem, the deeper these components are considered, the more sensible the resolution levels tend to be. The components are:

- The Moral Sensitivity. This entails the capability to interpret other people's reactions and being conscious of how our actions and decisions affect people around us.

- The Moral Judgment. Presumptions about what is really reasonable and ethical are referred to this.
- The Moral Motivation. When faced with an ethical issue, this is the significant action provided to professional moral standards over personal values.
- The Moral Character. This refers to a person's capacity to act on his or her moral beliefs.

Rest et al. (1999) identified three developmental ethical levels of moral judgment based on a study of how individuals address moral dilemmas utilizing the four components of moral decision-making. When faced with moral challenges, people tend to rely on the four components in various ways, resolving the ethical concern from one of the four developmental perspectives, each of which is becoming increasingly more mature.

- Personal interest is the most fundamental level of adult logical behavior. Problems are resolved at this level based on the direct benefit to the focus person in the case. That is, a viewpoint about sensitivity, assessment, motivation, and character is formed that centers on consideration of sustaining acceptance from friends or family and doing what is best for oneself, with less attention paid to the impact of one's behavior on others. At this level, the main factor in doing "the right thing" is to satisfy one's own demands or preferences.
- The next level of moral reasoning is the level of sustaining norms. At this level, the dilemma arrangement focuses on preserving the current legal system, guidelines, and/or norms of society and professionalism. When one fulfills the roles and responsibilities to which one has agreed or when one contributes to the community, organization, or commitment of the vocation, one's behavior is evaluated to be right. At this level, laws must be followed, and professional sensitivity, judgment, motivation, and character development as a result of how those laws and norms are interpreted.

- The post-conventional represents the highest level of ethical maturity. At this level, difficulties are resolved using general agreement procedures, due process, protecting basic human rights, or interest in moral principles. The end result should be to preserve a society's basic rights, values, and legal agreements, even when they contradict the group's concrete rules and laws (Bebeau & Thoma, 2003; Kohlberg, 1981).

Putting the elements and the resulting levels to use is a difficult task in schools that are already under accountability pressures and where teachers are already juggling full schedules of instructional-related professional growth. It is not always possible to expect teachers to be well-versed in ethical theory or developmental theory. However, it is normal for professionals to be involved in the ethical implications of their interactions with coworkers, students, and parents.

An educator works hard to support each student to realize his or her maximum potential as a valuable and effective member of society. As a result, the teacher works to foster a questioning attitude, the acquisition of understanding and knowledge, and the deliberate formulation of important goals.

References:

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1013919.pdf>