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Introduction

Teaching in a changing, diverse society has become a more complicated job than ever. Today we live in a world where the social structure has changed, information is increasing dramatically, and technologies are constantly upgraded. Life-long learning is not simply an ideal goal; it is actually a way to survive. When it comes to learning, there is teaching as well. Traditionally teachers stand on the top of social hierarchy because they process knowledge and skills to deliver knowledge. However, the change of our world has also given away teachers' privilege of processing knowledge. Everyone can be knowledgeable since knowledge has become very accessible.

Today the role of a teacher is no longer as same as it was decades ago. Personally I believe that teachers encounter a lot more challenges than they did before. At school teachers are challenged academically, professionally, and ethically. Teachers are not simply professionals to pass knowledge to students, but they also have to behave extremely professional to avoid ethical infringements. Since the society is diverse, teachers nowadays need to face all sorts of students, parents, and communities. It is normal that people have disagreement because of their different cultural and ethnic background, social status, and educational and personal experiences. When a teacher faces different group of students and parents, a teacher's behaviors as an ordinary individual might not be agreed or accepted. To be considered teaching as a professional career, the public has greater expectations on teachers, which often brings criticism too. In order to have the job done right, teachers need to know exactly what they are expected to do. That is why professional ethics are so important to be followed by teachers. Teachers need to behave as a professional teacher, rather than an ordinary individual. That is the expectation from the public, and the way to protect themselves from conducting unacceptable behaviors.

It is very frequent to read news of some controversial ethical issues in newspapers. When I was doing the research for the case study project, I learned several true stories related to ethics. There was one story about a teacher being blamed

for telling her students that Santa didn't exist. There was another story about a teacher advertising some products on test papers. There is no right or wrong answers for both stories, but it seems to be problems for teachers to do so. That's why both stories were controversial. The way to determine weather or not the teacher did the wrong thing depends on what the ethical standards stated in the school, district, or state policies.

I intend in this essay to explore ethical issues in teaching profession from several aspects: definition of ethical standards, underlying principles of ethical standards, current adopted ethical standards, ethical preparation in teacher education, and strategies of ethics training. The teaching profession is one of the professions that expect high standards of ethical behaviors from its members. The society we are living in values the importance of education and the responsibilities of teachers in the education and development of students. In some countries where teacher programs are not available, "teacher" means a knowable person and a role model who does not have to be certified but practice teaching. In most countries, "teacher" means a professional person who practices the profession under a teaching certificate or other equivalent certificate, issued by the education authority. We, as teachers, recognize the fact that teaching profession requires the high degree of professionalism. Therefore, with the public trust and professional responsibilities, teachers honor and follow the professional and ethical standards so that they are accountable to students and their parents, colleagues, employers and the community.

What are the Ethical Standards?

Ethics is a set of moral standards based on the common values that are accepted by majority of the population. Ethics tells us right from wrong, and how to live moral lives. Morals refer to generally accepted customs of conduct and right living in a society, and to the individual's practice in relation to these. The following are some quotes to help understand what ethics, morals, and virtuous are.

"Our moral sense dictates a clearcut preference for these societies which share with us an abiding respect for individual human rights" (Jimmy Carter).

"Ours is a world of nuclear giants and ethical infants" (Omar N. Bradley).

"The life of the nation is secure only while the nation is honest, truthful, and

virtuous" (Frederick Douglass).

People should be guided by ethics in their private and professional life if they accept and agree the common values in the society they live in. The teaching profession, like many others, has its own code of ethics, which describes the process of grading students and teacher's behavior in the classroom as well as outside the school. We might argue why teachers' behaviors outside the school need to be restrained. The answer is debatable, but agreed by most people. Our society expects teachers to be role models. People regard teachers as "teachers" in both their professional and private life. Teacher's behavior has significant potential influences on students even teacher's behavior outside school or in his/her private life.

The ethical standards for teachers, based on a set of principles, detail the ethical responsibilities and serve to guide ethical problems in teaching situation, but not necessary in teaching settings. The standards can go on, from violations of criminal laws, through commonly-accepted standards of good and evil, violation of public trust, to unprofessional job performance. The areas of many of them may overlap. Here are some unethical conducts in teaching.

- Having inappropriate relationships with students.
- Violation of school rules and educational procedures.
- Failing to perform duties.
- Imposing on students personal views unrelated to the subject of a lesson, for example, extreme political or religious views, views on controversial social issues
- Improper grading, partiality, and lack of fairness.
- Exposing students to embarrassment or disparagement.
- Invading students' privacy.
- Engaging students in unethical behavior.
- Accepting gifts and favors.
- Deceiving students and their parents.

We use ethical standards to judge a teacher. Normally decisions on issues pertaining to licensure and employment are based on the ethical standards. According to Ontario College of Teachers (2006), "the ethical standards for the teaching profession represent a vision of professional practice. At the heart of a strong and effective

teaching profession is a commitment to students and their learning. Teachers in their position of trust, demonstrate responsibility in their relationships with students, parents, guardians, colleagues, educational partners, other professionals, the environment and the public". The ethical standards (Hall, 1992) should define professional responsibilities, and discuss ethical problems that result from teaching as well.

Underlying Principles of the Ethical Standards

What are ethical standards formed? There are different kinds of principles that ethical standards are generated from. I found Piquemal's ethical framework fit well those ethical standards I am looking at. Piquemal (2004) proposes an ethical framework based upon four underlying principles: a commitment to difference or to the "relational other" (Lévinas, 1981); a respect for persons (Kant, 1956); a commitment to reciprocity (Buber, 1970); and a sense of care (Noddings, 1986).

Aristotle (1980) states that treating people fairly implies treating equals equally and unequals unequally. For example, a teacher has to take care of each student's learning need equally, but the teacher can not require a disabled student (unequal) to do the same task as other non-disabled students do. Through understanding the commitment to difference, teachers recognize their students' irreducible otherness and develop a classroom environment that students could truly be who they are.

Traditionally respect is considered one of the mandatory "behaviors" from students to teachers. Now we know respect is crucial in teacher-student relationship. Respect should be mutual. How do teachers have respect for students? Having respect for students does not simply mean the respectful manners, which might be superficial. The real respect generates from dedication to the profession and to their work. Teachers commit to rational aspect of work that they choose to get involved in students' community even if their students are unlikely to be part of their lives in the future.

Buber (1970) suggests that teacher-student relationships ought to be characterized by a principle of reciprocity. Reciprocal relationship is built up by I-You rather than I-It. Kottler (1997) argues that teachers should take an anthropological stance to explore how various factors affect different students in different ways while understanding a child's development from a psychological stance is also important.

We all know teaching academically is a primary responsibility of a teacher. However, students are not just “the objects with academic needs? Their well-being need be developed in a caring environment and guided by caring teachers. Noddings (1986) asks the question, “What effect will it have on the person I teach?” Learning can be a lot more effective in a caring environment. Sometimes students’ affective needs require more attention than academic needs. Gaining knowledge is not the only thing students look for at school. Students’ well-being includes every aspect.

A Glance of Ethical Standards for Teachers

Many schools, districts, countries have set their own ethical standards for the teaching profession. Three sets of the ethical standards are briefly reviewed in this essay: Board of Teacher Registration in Queensland, Connecticut State Department of Education, and Ontario College of Teachers. Through the review of these ethical standards, we have a general idea about what elements of ethical standards are considered important, what position do ethical standards stand in education policy, and how the ethical standards are organized into a formal guideline.

The ethical standards for the Board of Teacher Registration in Queensland (2006) cover four main types of teacher responsibility:

1. Responsibility to Students: to make the foremost responsibility the education and welfare of all students in care, and respect the uniqueness and dignity of each student.
2. Responsibilities to Students’ Parents/Guardians and Families: to build relationships with students’ families as appropriate, that contribute to students’ welfare and education.
3. Commitment to Colleagues and to the Teaching Professional Generally: to promote mutual respect and trust in the relationships with colleagues, and to assist newcomers to the professions, and behave in a way which enhances the status of the profession.
4. Responsibilities to Teacher Employers and to the Community and Society: to do the best to fulfill the responsibilities to the employer, the community and society.

Connecticut Code of Professional Responsibility for Teachers (2007) is based on the fundamental belief that student is the foremost reason for the existence of the

profession. The Code has three main types of responsibilities: Responsibility to the Student, Responsibility to the Profession, and Responsibility to the Community. Under each responsibility, teachers' obligation of to-dos and not-to-dos are specified. For example, the professional teacher, in full recognition of his or her obligation to the student, shall nurture in students lifelong respect and compassion for themselves and other human beings regardless of race, ethnic origin, gender, social class, disability, religion, or sexual orientation; shall not abuse his or her position as a professional with students for private advantage.

Ontario College of Teacher's ethical standards (2006) for the teaching profession aim to inspire members to reflect and uphold the honor and dignity of the teaching profession, identify the ethical responsibilities and commitments in the teaching profession, guide ethical decisions and actions in the teaching profession, and promote public trust and confidence in the teaching profession. There are four main standards:

1. Care: Members express their commitment to students' well-being and learning through positive influence, professional judgment and empathy in practice.
2. Respect: Members honor human dignity, emotional wellness and cognitive development. In their professional practice, they model respect for spiritual and cultural values, social justice, confidentiality, freedom, democracy and the environment.
3. Trust: Members' professional relationships with students, colleagues, parents, guardians and the public are based on trust.
4. Integrity: Continual reflection assists members in exercising integrity in their professional commitments and responsibilities.

Ethical Preparation in Teacher Education

Ethical issues happen in many professions. It is no doubt that ethical standards are significant for people to practice their professions. Unfortunately, it is unlikely for everyone to know how to behave professionally and ethically in their professional area. Do professionals need to be trained so that they could understand and honor their responsibilities and ethical standards? Is there any ethical education developed for any professions?

University of Minnesota launched a program of ethical education for dental professionals more than twenty-five years ago, which finds adaptations to other professional training programs, including the training for teachers (Rest & Narvaez, 1994). Code of ethics has started to play a significant role in teacher preparation programs. National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) now requires professional ethical dispositions of teachers to be addressed in accreditation process (NCATE, 2002).

A program called the Four-Component Model of Moral Maturity assumes that moral behaviors are established on a series of component processes (Bebeau, Rest & Narvaez, 1999). There are different and specific training strategies to train and enhance these components. These components are:

1. **Moral Sensitivity.** It is the awareness of how our actions affect other people. The sensitivity means knowing cause-consequent relationship of events in the real world, and empathy and role-taking abilities. Role-playing exercises to sensitize pre-teachers to professional dilemmas may be included in the training.
2. **Moral Judgment.** It is based on the theory of Piaget (1965) and Kohlberg (1984) that people have intuitions about what is fair and moral. Direct teaching of criteria for making professional judgment, such as informed consent, paternalism or breaches of confidentiality, might be a good approach for training.
3. **Moral Motivation.** In professional settings, moral values have a priority over personal values. The training might include profession-specific service activities, and the study of professional moral exemplars.
4. **Moral Character.** It is a character of individuals to act on their moral convictions. Problem solving and conflict resolution among and between children and adults may be used as strategies of training.

First we need to talk about character education. What is character education? Why character education is important to be provided to children? Basically character education focuses on fostering ethical, responsible, and caring youth by modeling and teaching good character through an emphasis on universal values that we all share in the society. It is considered as an important responsibility of education though families should also take the responsibility. It is the intentional, proactive effort to instill in

children essential core, ethical values such as respect for self and others, responsibility, integrity, and self-discipline. It aims at long-term solutions that address moral, ethical, and academic issues around us. There are many critical issues to be addressed in character education, such as student absenteeism, discipline problems, drug abuse, gang violence, teen pregnancy, and poor academic performance. At its best, character education integrates positive values into every aspect of our lives.

To make character education successful, we need well-trained teachers. Again, teachers are role models. Teachers play important role in children's character formation. Teachers provide children with a basic but essential moral education. Therefore, teachers need objective knowledge about how children form a basic sense of right and wrong and what education can do to reinforce appropriate development (Benninga, 2003). There have been many studies in regards to how to motivate children extrinsically and intrinsically. No matter how children are motivated, they need people to help activate and guide the motivation. It is best to be guided by able, caring, and concerned adults. Well-trained teachers are definitely the most suitable candidates for this job. A lot of time, well-trained teachers do better job than parents do. Teachers who receive appropriate training should be able to create a positive classroom environment which can enhance many positive dispositions in children and correct or improve at-risk behaviors. Many at-risk behaviors, such as impulsiveness and belligerency, stubbornness and indecisiveness, overreaction to irritation and so forth, can be traced back to school experiences, and affect social and educational success. Schools can be the places to develop or eliminate these behaviors. Schools need to have better plans for virtue and "emotional intelligence" in addition to academic excellence. Providing teachers with appropriate training should be the core of the plan.

Strategies of Ethics Training

In Carter's article (?), ethical decisions are made of three key components: relationships amongst individuals, values and cultural influences, and laws, rules, regulations and codes of conducts. He also concludes the approaches to ethical decision-making in the following ways.

1. Justice approaches focus on fairness and unfairness.

2. Rights approaches assume that each person has a fundamental right to be respected and treated as a free and rational person.
3. Virtue approaches focus on positive characteristics, attitudes and dispositions.
4. The utilitarian approaches regard ethical actions as those producing the greatest difference of benefits over harms.
5. Common good approaches believe ethical behaviors are best benefit the whole community.
6. Social relativism approaches consider the difficulty for a person from one culture to pass judgment on the values of another.

How can ethics training be delivered? Ethics training can be delivered as part of teacher preparation programs. It can also be delivered in the workplace. It can be a continuous process like professional development. There are pros and cons. Teacher programs normally have formal evaluation on any training or course taken by students. If the ethics training is part of the program curriculum, the training must be approved by higher authorities, which more likely assure its quality. However, students are lack of teaching experiences in the real world so that they might not look deep enough of ethics issues and might not realize what ethical conducts really mean. On the other hand, evaluation of ethics training in a workplace depends on the depth and breadth of experiences of supervisors and mentors. Those supervisors and mentors may be good at administration job or teaching students, but ethics training for teachers is a totally different area. Besides, it is difficult to implement a same training system on teachers with various experiences. However, a lot of teachers in workplaces probably eager to find some solutions to the ethical issues they have faced. They certainly have better motivation to take the training and better understanding about the contents.

What are the strategies of ethics training? According to the national survey by Character Education Partnership (2002), 90% of the respondents agreed that core values should be taught in schools, but only 24.4% of the respondents reported that their schools emphasized and implemented that content in their programs. The report identified some remarkable work done to offer students knowledge and skills to integrate character education into classroom practice. There are teacher preparation programs including ethics training in their formal curriculum by offering classes focusing

on moral responsibility of teachers to students, parents, colleagues, and community members, requiring students to take culture-related courses which will reflect on their future teaching, sponsoring regular conferences for presenting and discussing ethical dilemmas from their professional work, and actually having students get involve in community service and programs. NSW Department of Education and Training has proposed self paced learning modules of ethics training for the beginning teacher when skilled facilitators are unavailable (Carter, ?). This is an on-job training program. It is very flexible. However I think it still needs a timetable of completion in order to effective evaluation even though it is self-paced.

Training in ethical conduct may assist teachers' decision making, but it is impossible to cover all possible situations that teachers might encounter. Case studies are considered to be an effective strategy in the delivery of ethics training because decision-making in case studies is a dynamic process, not just passive acceptance of mandated practices (Carter, ?). Any case studies can provoke a range of possible responses, which may or may not comply with code of ethics. To determine appropriate responses, professional dialogue and the ability to acknowledge the implication of different decisions are necessary in ethical decision making.

Conclusion

Teachers are expected to be positive role models inside and outside the classroom. Teachers' conduct has a great and positive impact when it is credible, ethical and focused on the well being of students. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. The cost of unethical behavior can be very high. It can influence the quality, equity and the access level in the education. That is why ethical standards should be established for administration staff, teachers and students so as to prevent corrupt, harmful, and improper behaviors. Ethical standards in education embrace the accountability and enable good quality education. The aims of ethical standards should be focused on enhancing the commitments, dedications and efficiency of teaching and learning. They should also provide self-disciplinary guidelines and serve as a guide or reminder for teaching professionals. However, the effect of ethical standards are sometimes compromised due to limited access to them, difficulties in understanding them, absence of training for teachers, poor knowledge on complaints procedures, the

lack of capacity for their enforcement and pressure exerted by teacher unions. To increase the effectiveness of ethical standards, teachers need training. By Integrating issues on teachers' professional conduct into various pre-service and in-service teacher training courses, teachers have better understanding and knowledge of ethical standards and professional conduct. Implementing ethical standards increases the community's confidence in and support for the profession by emphasizing the social responsibilities of the profession towards the community. Ethical standards are necessary for building better teaching and promoting the quality of learning.

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