

**Teaching and Learning in the Humanities  
and Social Sciences:  
Perspectives of Competence**

**Teaching and Learning in the  
Humanities and Social Sciences:  
Perspectives of Competence**

*Edited by*

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## Foreword

I feel privileged to be requested to write the foreword to this book entitled: *Teaching and Learning in the Humanities and Social Sciences: Perspectives of Competence*, a publication put together by the School of Arts and Social Sciences, Adeyemi Federal University of Education, Ondo, Nigeria. The contributors to this book are seasoned scholars in their various fields with solid academic standing. Each of them has unveiled the most salient points in the emerging issues in multi-dimensional pedagogical perspective.

The three-module book, has been broken down into units, which no doubt provides a clear discussion of each of the topics. Of great interest are the first five units of the first module which engaged critical areas of teaching profession. The second module centres on lesson planning and methodology of teaching courses in Arts and Social sciences. Module three focuses on instructional materials for teaching and learning. This ranges from improvisation to utilisation of materials that could be gainfully used in the teaching of courses in Economics, Theatre Arts, History, Geography and Political science in Nigeria school system.

I wish to commend and congratulate the Dean and her team for coming up with this noble idea and nurturing it to fruition. The quality, readability and language used to convey ideas in this book will appeal to students, educational practitioners and general readers.

I therefore, strongly recommend the book as a special and general text for students at all levels as well as practising teachers in tertiary educational institutions.

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## UNIT 2

# A Critical Analysis of the Ethics of Teaching Profession

Ifedolapo OLANIPEKUN (Ph.D)

### Introduction

Code of ethics is important for an occupation where the worker's behaviour or act of conducting the services must be guided by certain principles. As much as this concerns professionals in all fields, it is particularly applicable to the teaching profession because of the role of education in societal formation. Teachers may have special knowledge, skills, and academic and professional qualifications, but there are boundaries in the discharge of their professional duties. Like other professions such as medicine, law, and journalism, there are sets of concepts and principles that guide the teaching profession to determine acceptable behaviour within the school setting. The ethical standards to meet that dignify the teaching profession are also known as the code of ethics. Ethics is a branch of philosophy concerned with moral principles of what is right and wrong (Sultana, 2014). Ethics of the teaching profession simply refer to the moral principles of the profession. It is important for teachers to have adequate knowledge of the ethics of their profession. This serves as a guide that eases the teachers' ability to impart the learners and achieve the desired behavioural changes in the students. The goals of education include knowledge impartation, skills acquisition, and gaining value through the personal development of intellectual, social, emotional, and physical aptitudes (Rothstein & Jacobsen, 2006; Sultana, 2014). Therefore, teachers have a wider and more meaningful role to play beyond subject teaching, there are other responsibilities of a contemporary teacher. Ethics of the teaching profession are tailored toward achieving the primary objectives of

teaching. The code of ethics will guide members in many situations because members of the teaching profession are able to recognise their responsibilities toward achieving these goals.

### **Importance of Ethics in the Teaching Profession**

The argument on the need to develop teachers' ethical competence as explained in Colnerud (1997) stems from concern for students and concern for the teaching profession. His submissions include:

- (a) Since teachers have the power and higher responsibility, they stand the risk of abusing power or using it in a manipulative way to the students' disadvantage.
- (b) Teachers' actions in the classroom are free from external control, hence the need for teachers to develop self-control.
- (c) Students are obliged to be in school, in order not to put students in a vulnerable state, the fair and just treatment of the students must be guaranteed to justify the need for parents to enroll their children in school.
- (d) Teachers need to secure public trust in their profession and give assurance to parents that their children are in safe hands.

A more comprehensive analysis of why ethics are important for the teaching profession is presented below.

#### **1. Positive Impartation**

Ethical issues are important components of the teaching profession because of the role it plays in how the students are imparted. Beyond subject teaching, the teacher creates certain awareness that shapes the mind and projections of the students. Through this, the vision of students is inspired. The students develop their dreams, career goals, and stance from what they learn on daily basis, and their interaction with their teachers is a major part of their daily interaction. The personality of a teacher may either motivate students or breed pessimism in the mind of the students.

## **2. Positive Character Formation**

The teaching profession depicts societal ideals, therefore, teachers are agents of morals in society. Teachers have the capability of raising or lowering the moral standards of students. Student-teacher relationship goes beyond classroom learning. The routine, actions, and words of the teacher in the classroom, among colleagues, as well as relationships with parents, and attitudes to the institution, have implications for students' character formation and for society altogether. When good manners become the lifestyle of the teacher, the student finds it easy to master and develop the right manners. If students must have mutual respect for one another and we expect this culture to transcend into society, then this must be promoted in the classroom by promoting friendship tolerance, and mutual understanding (Gluchmanova, 2015).

## **3. Students' Management**

To facilitate learning, a teacher should be able to maintain a stable relationship with the students and should be able to manage tension in the student-teacher relationship. An understanding of the ethics of the profession will alleviate the difficulty faced by teachers in the discharge of their duties. It helps the teacher cope with the difficulty of integrating into the students' environment (Kamolova, 2022). This will help teachers know what to do when faced with difficult classroom situations, dealing with recalcitrance, or managing exuberance. According to Kamolova (2022), the proper management of these strengthens the relationship between the teacher and the student.

## **4. Promotion of Cultural Diversity**

There is diversity among ethnic groups. Teachers may need to teach students from different cultures who are most likely to exhibit different characteristics. The teacher should be able to respond to such diversity with all fairness. Ethics of the teaching profession help educators to maintain a balance between local, national, and

global norms and moral standards (Gluchmanova, 2015). Attitudes that accept and promote diversity such as anti-racism and human rights perspectives are important rules of engagement in the teaching profession.

### **5. Preventing Abuse of Position**

The relationship between the student and the teacher places the student in a position of dependency in such a relationship. Since teachers may have to make decisions independently at times, they must not abuse their freedom, hence discretion is a necessary tool in their moral responsibility to the students and society (Colnerud, 1997). Where ethical behavior is the norm of the profession, the code of ethics will serve as a guide for the teachers to make the right judgment or decision.

### **6. Maintaining the Dignity of the Teaching Profession**

As the educational system changes according to the evolving needs of society, the interests of the students are also changing. This requires that educational goals and objectives should also be changing (Sherpa, 2018). The code of ethics places professionally acceptable boundaries in the teaching profession such that the dignity of the profession remains upheld despite the evolution.

Despite the variations in cultural values around the world, some basic principles are generally the essential components of the teaching profession. The general ethics include honesty, fairness, integrity, transparency, accountability, confidentiality, objectivity, respectfulness, and obedience to the law (Sultana, 2014). Weinstein (2011) emphasized five basic principles at the core of ethical intelligence. These include: (i) Do no harm (ii) Make things better (iii) Respect others (iv) Be fair (v) Be loving.

Ethics in the teaching profession advance these principles. The ethics in the teaching profession are detailed and they specify the ideal relationship with individuals and stakeholders in the school setting that meet the standards stated above. Here, they are sectionalized to express separately, what is expected of teachers in

relation to students, parents, colleagues, and the institution where they carry out their services. Even though teaching should take the interests of all human factors into account, teachers' highest obligation is to their students, because without learners, there would be no need for teachers, it is essential to understand the best student-teacher relationship that easily facilitates the achievement of the educational and professional goals. The objective of this study is to analyze the professional duties of the teacher to the students, parents, colleagues, institution, and the community. This analysis becomes necessary based on the rationale that teachers help shape the society. Their proper conduct in the delivery on their duties go beyond the classroom and such must be done in a way that promotes positive values in the society.

### **Student-teacher Relationships**

The professional code of ethics and teacher's relationship with students include the following:

#### **1. Mutual Respect for Persons**

A teacher should treat all students with fairness and impartiality regardless of their cultural, social, or economic background, there should be no form of discrimination or favoritism. Considering the cultural differences that a teacher might witness in the school setting, every student must be treated with the same level of respect and understanding regardless of their origin (Gluchmanova, 2015). Teachers should show respect and appreciation to every student and should not impose their personal beliefs on their students. Teachers will be able to promote courtesy development and mutual respect for others by demonstrating such to students during interpersonal interactions. Teachers should avoid the use of derogatory or offensive words that could contend with the confidence and self-esteem of students.

## **2. Direct and Indirect Exploitation of Students is not Acceptable**

Teachers should not accept special remuneration for teaching students in the classroom outside the arrangement made by their employers (Powers, 1925). This kind of remuneration makes the teacher feel obligated to favor some students over the others (Powers, 1925). Teachers should never take advantage of their position to exploit their students. Therefore, teachers should avoid acceptance of gifts that might generate conflicts of interest and should not feel entitled to any special form of appreciation from students as these breed prejudice in the actions of the teacher. All these can put some students at a disadvantage and undermine their development. Teachers should, therefore, provide maximum and equal opportunities to all students without hindering their chances of excelling in all aspects of their development (Sherpa, 2018).

## **3. Discipline**

Teachers should be firm and uncompromising. According to Jackson (1968), teachers should balance the act of kindness and fair consideration given to students with maintaining order and discipline. However, a punishment that humiliates human dignity should be avoided (Gluchmanova, 2015). The teacher should respect the dignity of every student. Verbal abuse and physical abuse should be avoided at all costs. Under no condition should a teacher hit a student. There are other measures of punishment that can be used to instill discipline. Teachers must carefully choose their words while trying to discipline, angry or while in the classroom. Avoid foul language, jargon, aggression, or aggressive tones while dealing with students. Such actions may arouse the anger of the students and cause chaos that may be difficult for the teacher to handle.

## **4. Love for the Students**

Teachers should have a friendly and welcoming personality, and their relationship with their students should be reverential. As much

as the teachers' relationship with students should be characterized by kindness, the student-teacher relationship should be professional and should not fall short of that. Getting too casual or breeding familiarity may reduce the integrity of the teacher. Teachers' personal interests should not affect their work in any way, or cause victimization of students. The teaching profession frowns at sexual abuse and it is punishable under the law. It is better to avoid such acts that conflict with their professional ethics.

### **5. Openness**

Students should find relief when they approach a teacher about their problems, concern, and the barriers they face in their developmental process. Teachers should not discuss the weakness of the students or personal details they know about a student in such a way as to embarrass them as this creates a negative perception of teachers in the mind of the students. Rather, teachers should show empathy and proactivity in their efforts to help the students.

### **6. Personality**

The personality of the teacher should be the type that inspires and motivates students, a detestable personality is a turn-off for the students. When a teacher demonstrates a passion for the job they do, it inculcates the right attitudes in the students, but a lackadaisical attitude can also affect the success of the students. Teachers should have the right comportment within and outside the classroom. Avoid bad mannerisms such as tardiness, unprofessional appearance, lack of etiquette, uncouth vocabularies, etc. that could make the students label them. The personality of a teacher should dignify the profession and market the profession to prospective teachers.

### **7. Students' Welfare**

The safety and welfare of the students within the classroom or school premises should also be an important consideration by the teacher. Activities that expose students to potential danger should be avoided.



They should avoid impulsive actions or actions that are harmful to the students. Teachers should also show concern for the welfare of their students. When the teacher pays adequate attention to every student, it is easy to note abnormalities in their health and behavior that may put them at risk of danger and make appropriate reports or recommendations.

## **Teacher's Relationship with Students in Handling Academic Issues**

### **1. Impartation**

Each student should be treated as an individual, not as a class (Powers, 1925). Teachers must be kind enough to pay attention to the academic needs of each student. They should understand the individual differences in the intellectual capability, interests, and gifts of the learners (Sherpa, 2018). It is better to interact with the students according to the average level of the general class and according to the level of the individual where necessary. This will help to alleviate the perceived student-teacher barrier. It is okay to repeat or recap words for clarity or use diverse forms of communication such as gestures, citing local examples, storytelling, audiovisual or visual aids, or music, etc. to convey a seemingly complex idea. It is important to select the best method of instruction that will cater to the needs of every student in the class. This is important because the ability of the teacher to communicate will aid in the achievement of class objectives.

### **2. Special Needs**

The primary responsibility of the teacher is to contribute to the intellectual development of the student. Teachers should go the extra length to care for the special students in their class, such may include the indigent, physically challenged, mentally retarded, specially gifted, or ignorant students. A teacher must not judge this set of students but must regularly communicate the noticeable difficulties observed in a student with the parents/guardian, and must treat such cases

with maximum confidentiality. A teacher can make further professional recommendations to help a student who might be facing challenges in their academics and should also cooperate with all agencies responsible for assisting such students.

### **3. Equality**

Teachers should not be biased while imparting. All students must be treated equally while passing information that is useful for their curricular activities irrespective of their gender, background orientation, religion, disability or special abilities, social status, age, etc. With this attitude, every student is can feel important and they will develop more confidence in the educational process (see also Sherpa, 2018).

### **4. Proficiency**

It is important for a teacher to possess a high level of content of the subject matter. Adequate and contemporary knowledge of the subject builds up the level of confidence that is needed in the classroom, a teacher should therefore keep abreast of current issues in the subject matter, and must be able to provide accurate information to students. Teachers must align the classroom goals with the objectives of the course, institution, and societal goals. Teachers should also have a precise plan of their vision on how they will meet the educational needs of the students. Their actions and plans must be definite toward achieving the educational objectives, these must incorporate the global educational needs and contemporary demands of students. A teacher cannot be passive in the classroom or in the discharge of their duties because that is their primary duty. A teacher should be the most active person in the classroom.

### **5. Inspiring**

A teacher must have the vision to develop and nurture the potential of the students. As much as the teachers should not assume that the students already know certain things, they should be able to

challenge their students to stimulate their potential. They should be able to motivate and reinforce students' learning by using different strategies and techniques. For instance, the teacher can graduate from known to unknown by beginning with what the students already know and gradually challenging them to discover what they need to know.

## **6. Reliability and Consistency**

It is important to communicate the course objectives and reading materials to students. An instructor should endeavour to keep promises made to students at any point during the period of teaching a subject or course. There should be consistency in the delivery of promises related to the syllabus and its coverage, continuous assessment, grading principles, deadlines for projects and assignments, schedule of classes, and office hours (Sultana, 2014). Teachers must always endeavor to respond promptly to students' questions and need for guidance. Providing feedback to the students is important because this shows that they can rely on the teacher. Openly deal with sensitive topics without shying away from the truth, and emphasize the positive aspects. Students should be able to rely on the teacher for useful information, therefore a good teacher should not hoard useful information from students.

## **7. Empathy**

Teachers should demonstrate empathy, affection, care, and love in the classroom (Sherpa, 2018). Even though both the teacher and students need to make effort in the learning process of the students, the students are subtler, therefore, the teacher should try and understand students' circumstances in order to assist the students in the realization of their goals (Colnerud, 1997). This becomes easier when there is a good reverential relationship between the students and the teacher, communication becomes easier and the students too can learn easily. A poor student-teacher relationship cannot facilitate learning. Therefore, teachers need to avail their students some level of freedom so that they can express their academic and

emotional concerns without any fear of being judged while helpful solutions are being provided.

## **8. Grading**

Make assessment and evaluation fair and transparent without any form of bias. Most importantly, test measurement should be valid and should be tailored towards achieving the subject's goals and objectives. Subjective grading should be as least as possible while objective grading is encouraged. Avoid ambiguous evaluation processes in order to have more objective grading. Teachers should treat students' grades as confidential and should only be released for academic purposes.

### **What is Expected of Teachers in Relation to Students' Parents and Guardians and Families**

The professional code of ethics and teacher's relationship with student's parents, guardians, and other members of the family include the following:

#### **1. Mutual Respect and Courtesy**

The relationship of the teacher with parents/guardians or families of students should be cooperative. It should be based on mutual respect and courtesy. Teachers must respect the family background of each student irrespective of their cultural, religious, financial, or social status.

#### **2. Trust**

The parents/guardians and families should be able to entrust their children in the care of the teachers based on mutual trust. This can be enhanced by open communication, confidentiality, welcoming constructive criticism, and avoiding prejudice (Powers, 1925). Teachers can share information regarding each student and the student's interests with their respective families in order to help the student.

### **3. Respect for Privacy**

The privacy of every student's family should be respected. Teachers should avoid taking advantage of families, demanding gifts, or feeling entitled to special privileges by the relations of their students.

### **What is Expected of Teachers in Relation to Colleagues**

The professional code of ethics and teacher's relationship with other staff of the school include the following:

#### **1. Mutual Respect**

There should be mutual respect in relationships with colleagues. Showing respect for their colleagues unifies the enforcement of authority in the best interest of the students. Molestation, bullying, abuse, and any act that could make other colleagues feel unsafe within the work environment should be avoided. Avoid judging or ridiculing your colleague in the presence of the students. If you feel a colleague may not be right, a private conversation with such a person is a better way to help correct the wrong.

#### **2. Mentoring**

Assist, support and mentor those who are new to the profession. This can be facilitated by openness and effective communication. Avoid judging a younger colleague for making mistakes, rather, correction should be made in love and in accordance to the principles of the institution. Assistance given to new entrants into the profession will help them navigate easily while learning on the job.

#### **3. Respect for Privacy**

Teachers must respect the personal freedom and privacy of their colleagues. Teachers should know their limits in their relationships with other people. As much as friendship can be taken beyond official, it is also important to where boundaries may exist. However, personal interest in relationships with colleagues should not affect the work

and must not humiliate the teaching profession.

#### **4. Mutual Trust**

There should be mutual trust among teachers in the work place. Both personal and official confidential information should be kept confidential. Except it is otherwise required by the policy of the institution, teachers must not reveal information about a colleague to other people. If you must reveal such information by policy requirement or for legitimate reasons, ensure that it is true. Giving false information about a colleague would be misleading, it is better to be quiet when adequate information is not available.

#### **5. Welfare**

Teachers should show concern for the welfare of other colleagues, empathize motivate other teachers. They should show care to colleagues who might be passing through difficult times.

#### **6. Selflessness**

Teachers should not be selfish, their personal interests among their colleagues should not hinder the achievement of educational goals. A teacher should not sabotage the efforts of other teachers in making the students better, they should cooperate with one another for the benefit of the students. Information about progress and career development that could assist others should be made open. Teachers should provide complementary aids to other colleagues that could make the work easy for them.

### **What is Expected of Teachers in Relation to Institution/Employee**

The professional code of ethics and teacher's relationship with the school management and employees include the following:

#### **1. Respect for the Institution**

A teacher should respect and support the institution of assignment

and the policies of such institutions. This will be revealed in the words and actions of the teacher. The institution must not be ridiculed in the presence of the students. Teachers must understand the system run by their institution and cooperate with the school management. Matters such as discipline, achievement of objectives, extracurricular planning, etc. are areas where the school may require the cooperation of the teacher. The teachers' actions of discipline and impartation should not conflict with the institutional and professional code of ethics. Criticism should be constructive and directed to the appropriate authority.

## **2. Commitment**

Teachers should show commitment and dedication in attending to all duties assigned to them by the authority, including duties outside the classroom.

## **3. Understand the Contractual Commitments**

Teachers should understand the terms of their engagement by the institution. The terms on leave, remuneration, marriage, the welfare of staff, unionism, termination of appointment, etc. should be considered before engagement because all these must be obeyed. Any agreement to the institution's terms and conditions implies that the teacher cannot go against their policy in the future.

## **4. Administration**

Teachers and the school administration must operate as a team. A teacher should never obstruct or violate administrative procedures in the institution. A well-structured organization will have a formal line arrangement for getting the job done. Bypassing protocols or jumping ranks in the delivery of information could easily disrupt the school system and this does not uphold the institutional policies.

## **5. Record Keeping**

A teacher should be a good record keeper and should be ready to

make them available whenever it is required. Operation and transmission of records should be done with all honesty and confidentiality.

## **6. Loyalty**

Teachers should promote the improvement of the institution. They should not influence the appointment of duties and delegations for selfish reasons. Rather, they should make nominations and recommendations that will enhance the collective development of the institution. They should not withhold useful or harmful information. Teachers should fearlessly but constructively expose any form of depravity, covering up such may do more harm than good to both the students and the institution. This must be guided by the truth, especially when reporting about the competencies and qualifications of others (Sultana, 2014).

In addition to the above ethical principles guiding the conduct of teachers in relation to those with whom they have a direct relationship in the course of the job, there are other moral principles that are needed for a teacher to be most fulfilled in the profession.

## **Responsibilities Toward the Community**

The professional code of ethics and teacher's relationship with the community include the following:

1. The personal conduct of teachers within their community should be such that positively portrays the teaching profession. Teachers are not far from public figures in society because of the many contacts they make with students and their families. They should therefore avoid public conflicts or conducts that could degrade their personality. This is important because they are seen as custodians of societal norms.
2. Teachers should also fulfill their civic obligations such as payment of taxes, elections, etc. and play active roles in community development. A teacher should be a problem



solver in society rather than creating social problems.

3. Teachers' services to society should be standard and professional. Teachers may frown at unprofessional advice that laymen may offer especially when it may negatively affect students. They must be firm and uncompromising if considering advice from the public.
4. Teachers should not be involved in the commercialization of educational materials. For instance, receiving commissions on books may blind the teacher from recommending the best books that meet the needs of the students. It is essential to note that the students are the priority in every decision of the teacher, therefore accepting public favors may undermine the ability of the teacher to judge rightly.
5. It is important that teachers should not consider themselves as second to God in society. They should not try to dominate or impose their personal spiritual and cultural values and ideals, on everyone.

### **Responsibilities Toward Self**

The professional code of ethics and teacher's personal habits include the following:

1. Self-development is essential for the fulfillment of the teacher. Teachers should regularly update their knowledge by traveling, taking courses, and reading books that expose them to the contemporary global movement especially as it relates to the job they do.
2. Recreation and socializing also help the teachers' mental health improvement. Teachers should adequately take proper care of their health as this enhances their performance on the job.
3. Teachers should never ridicule the teaching profession. As much as teachers have the right to separate their

professional life from their social life (Powers, 1925), teachers should consciously uphold the dignity of the teaching profession.

### **Conclusion**

The teaching profession requires a high level of commitment dedication and sincerity toward their learners and other stakeholders. Their services must be carried out with integrity and dedication otherwise it would negatively affect the overall performance of the students, and this will affect the society. The ethics of the teaching profession have been fashioned out primarily to protect the rights of the students who are considered to be the weaker arm of the student-teacher relationship and the object of the teaching profession. This will also help to achieve job satisfaction for the teacher as it enhances the performance of both the students and the teachers. The teachers should be aware of their roles and responsibilities to the students and their families, their colleagues, the institution and the society. A positive attitude towards these groups of people is essential because this is part of what the students see and emulate.

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