

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

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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 3

Professional Codes of Ethics in Teaching

Tosin A. OMOLADE (PhD)

Introduction

Teaching is a noble and respectable profession that nurtures competent professionals, provides gainful living and enhances the prosperity of the people. It implies that teachers are the creative brain-power that educates, trains and empowers the cream of the society. Hence, only the trained and registered teachers who have imbibed adequate subject matter and professional ethics with commitment for moral rectitude, academic excellence and effective service delivery in their day-to-day activities should be allowed in classrooms (Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN), 2014). Ethics, as a concept belongs to the realm of moral philosophy. Ethics is referred to simply as the system or science of moral principles, the rules or standards of conduct or moral judgement. A code on the other hand is a system of rules and principles that has been adopted by a society or a class or group of people. From the foregoing definitions, a code of ethics can be considered as short statements of rules and/or principles that have been accepted by a group of people or society to govern certain aspects of their conduct. According to Burrup (1972), a code of ethics, as related to the teacher, is concerned with the teacher's conduct in situations involving professional duties and responsibilities. In effect, a professional code of ethics refers to the specific set of ideals, principles and standards of individual professional conducts and responsibilities as approved and enforced by the membership of the professional group.

Professional ethics are the basic habits made up of equitable principles or rules which serve as worthwhile standards and guides

to good conduct of the teacher (Oyekan, 2000). They are the morally acceptable values, traditions and practices that provide ethical orientations and standards for self-control, human relations and educational excellence. Ethics of the teaching profession and teachers' classroom operations are worthy of examination for the growth and development of the profession, learners and the teacher themselves (Adebile and Ogunyemi, 2013). Awareness, internalization and exhibition of professional ethics can guide rational behaviours of teachers towards the mastery of the subject matter, operational efficiency and excellence in service delivery.

The objectives of this study unit include amongst others:

1. Clearly define professional code of ethics.
2. Explain the importance of code of ethics for teachers.
3. State the ethics that guide teachers' behavior in relation to the students, parents, the community and the employer in Nigeria.
4. Identify acts of the teacher that constitute professional misconduct and
5. Make recommendations for better performance in the teaching profession.

Professional Code of Ethics: Towards a General Definition

Ethics as a concept, belongs to the realm of moral philosophy. Ethics is referred to simply as the system or science of moral principles, the rules or standards of conduct or moral judgement. In most cases, a professional code of ethics prescribes the appropriate relationship between the practitioner (teacher) and the client (student) in such a way as to protect the client. It also states the appropriate relationship between practitioners themselves for their mutual protection (Hoyle, 1969). Similarly, Burrup (1972) points out that a code of ethics as related to the professional educator, is concerned with the teacher's relationship with the children, parents, the general public, other teachers, administrators, supervisors and the educational

profession. Based on the foregoing, professional code of ethics for teachers are divided into relevant subheadings as principles or commitment to the student, commitment to the public, commitment to the profession, commitment to the employer and so on.

Objectives of Teachers Code of Conduct (TCC)

The Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (2005 Revised Edition) spells out the objectives of the Teachers Code of Conduct among others, to be:

- (a) Re-awaken the sense of self-esteem, dignity, honour, selfless service and moral rectitude in the teacher.
- (b) Protect the teachers' age-long position of mobility and leadership in the social, moral and intellectual world.
- (c) Build a strong moral foundation for the actualization of the educational system that can compete favourably in the global community.
- (d) Boost public confidence in the ability of the teaching profession to regulate itself and to bequeath to the nation products that are capable of making maximum contribution towards the development of the nation in particular and the world in general.
- (e) Provide objective yardstick for the assessment of the teachers' conduct and discharge of professional duties.
- (f) Help to guarantee the safety of the professionals and sustenance of the desired prestige of the teaching profession
- (g) Spell out the type of relationship that should exist between the teachers on one hand and severally their Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) for the legal profession and the Nigerian Union of Teachers for the teaching profession.

Ethics in the Teaching Profession

The Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT) which was founded 8th July, 1931, developed the "Code of Ethics of the Teaching Profession in Nigeria". It is divided into five major areas or principles. They are:

1 Responsibilities for Professional Development

It is mandatory for diligent instructional leaders to:

- (a) be professionally educated, trained and qualified in their areas of specialization;
- (b) attend lectures, conduct practical exercises, and participate in examinations with due punctuality, dedication and decency;
- (c) be objective and fair to all the students in marking their examination scripts and reporting their result;
- (d) attend professional education and training programmes that are consistently relevant to their academic work e.g. higher educational courses, conferences, seminars, workshops and exchange schemes;
- (e) engage in meaningful teaching, creative research and scholarly publications in referenced books and learned journals;
- (f) obtain the minimum teaching qualification of Nigeria Certificate in Education or Postgraduate Diploma in Education; and

2. Relationship with the Student

Being the facilitators of meaningful learning, instructional leaders should:

- (a) set exemplary leadership to their students in decent dressing and language, manners, willingness to learn and accept change and effective performance of good duties;
- (b) keep away from exploitation and extortion of the students in any form;
- (c) avoid having carnal knowledge or indecent relationship with any student;
- (d) dislike smoking, hard drugs and alcoholic drinks in any students' assembly;
- (e) display a benevolent attitude of love; and care for their needs, interests and aspirations;

- (f) give advisory exhortations on effective studentship, citizenship and relationships regardless of their gender, ethnicity or religion;
- (g) instill a vibrant spirit of hard work, caring love, humility, brilliance, confidence, trust and hope in self-development and self-reliance for personal fulfillment;
- (h) discourage anti-social behaviours typified by alcoholism, banditry, cultism, academic malpractices, drug addiction, stealing, vandalism, ethnicity and religious intolerance and unfair practices of exclusion;
- (i) attend classes regularly with a variety of technology-assisted instructional materials, methods, assessment, and support services; and
- (j) encourage academic excellence and career development with entrepreneurship initiatives.

3. Responsibilities of Academic Staff to the Employers

- (a) be loyal to the institution/head of the institution with due respect to the Provost and colleagues in the presence of students;
- (b) display firmness, coherency, thoroughness and sincerity in constructive analysis of issues and creative resolution of problems e.g. in Departmental/Board of Studies and Committee meetings, classrooms;
- (c) avoid being absent from work without express permission of the head of the institution or his/her delegatee;
- (d) produce, keep and make all relevant academic records available in the institution for future reference and credibility of the institution;
- (e) accept and respect the authority of the head of the institution by accepting and discharging official assignments given to them to the best of their abilities;
- (f) keep confidential institutional matters secret especially examination question, educational certificates, reference reports and critical decisions on staff/students;

- (g) avoid defamatory statements or comments about the head of the institution and their colleagues before the students or to members of the general public;
- (h) avoid misappropriation of funds, taking bribes or engagement in fraudulent practices in academic, social and venture activities;
- (i) maintain consistent discipline, merit, decorum, and due process in all the school programmes;
- (j) participate actively in co-curricular activities that can enhance school image and healthy development of staff/students;
- (k) refrain from activities that are unrelated to normal school duties during working hours except with the permission of the head of the institution;
- (l) avoid joining any organisation which is likely to be detrimental to the progress of the institution, and cooperate with the head of the institution in preventing the introduction of such an organisation into the institution;
- (m) embrace peace, harmony, development and progress of the institution as our collective duty;
- (n) give sufficient notice, say of three months, about any change of status position or services as withdrawal of service is only acceptable at the end of the academic session;
- (o) make no statement or comment that is detrimental to the interest of the institution in any classroom, print or electronic media;
- (p) communicate with the head of the institution through the Head of Department and the Dean; and
- (q) embrace the safety, security and maintenance culture of all the institution buildings, furniture, equipment, working tools and electrical installations.

4. Responsibilities to Other Teachers and Students

Instructional leaders should always:

- (a) maintain a pleasant, approachable and courteous personality with staff and students;

- (b) establish cordial relationships with other staff in academic, personal, and career matters;
- (c) be fair in all the recommendations that are given, concerning the work of other teachers and staff;
- (d) exclude identified quacks or unqualified teachers from teaching, instructional supervision and school work;
- (e) prevent any inferiority complex among teachers at any level of education and work;
- (f) promote effective teaching, research and community service among colleagues;
- (g) consult and dialogue with colleagues on issues pertaining to enhancement of professional development, healthy living, peaceful retirement and corporate image of the college at any level of education and work; and
- (h) promote dignity, integrity, decency, trust, peace and harmony with caring love.

5. Duties to the Living Community

As diligent fellows of honour, character and vision of quality life, instructional leaders should:

- (a) serve as role models in their living community with humility, integrity, transparency and caring love for their ways of life;
- (b) obey and adjust to their laws, traditions, rules and regulations which promote cordiality, harmony development and synergy with the community;
- (c) display an end uring tolerance for constructive criticism and diversity of religion, culture, ideology and economic interests in a plural society;
- (d) keep the community duly informed about life-supporting educational programmes associated with universal literacy, scholarships and survival information;
- (e) encourage good school-community relations through friendship, mutual trust, and support of self-help projects in human capacity and infrastructural development; and

- (f) live a worthy professional life of dignity, prestige and harmony with the community.

From the above exposition, professional ethics which promote rationality, productivity, integrity, accountability, equity, and excellence in education, workplace and the community among the educators in the Colleges of Education, Polytechnics and University are inexhaustible. No wonder Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (2010) noted that inability of a teacher to meet the professional standards will injure the pride, integrity and quality of the teaching profession. Upholding the moral code of conduct of the community, and complying with the extant professional standards by education stakeholders will enhance prompt success, access, achievement, harmony and satisfaction in our instructional activities. Higher education system promotes effective teaching, research and community services. Educators should balance their professional roles and ethics to enhance quality education, decency, equity, service excellence and continuous improvement with global best practices. Adoption of a professional code of ethics underscores the rationality and responsibility of instructional leaders to their learners, employers, colleagues, community and own professional development.

What happens if there is a breach of the codes of ethics in the teaching profession? Some sample cases of unethical practices and attendant results are listed below.

Some Cases of Unethical Practices and Attendant Results

The following cases were taken from a tertiary institution's Code of Ethics Committee file with permission (COEASU, 2015).

Case 1: Refusal to attend to a student's complaints about his performance in a course

A student went to a lecturer to complain about the score recorded for him in a course. He believed that he was supposed to do well more than what was recorded for him. Instead for the lecturer to

exercise patience to go over his record for possible error, he shunned the student. The student was a final year brilliant with good Grade Point Average (GPA) and had never repeated any course before then. After series of attempts by him for the lecturer to attend to his case, he resulted to writing to the Institution's Authority. The Authority constituted an investigation panel into the case. It was discovered that the student actually passed the course with a good grade but was wrongly credited with another student's score. The lecturer was reprimanded for this. This is a case he would have resolved privately.

Case 2: Sexual harrassment of a student

A member approached a female student for an amorous relationship. The student refused his proposal. At the end of the semester, the student failed the course the lecturer taught her. She wrote to protest against her result in the course. A panel of investigation was set up to look into the matter. It was discovered that the lecturer deliberately failed the student. In the course of investigation, many other atrocities committed by the lecturer were exposed. He was dismissed from the service of the Institution.

Case 3: Case of poor handling of Continous Assessment (CA)

The result in a course indicated that a student failed the course. He actually had 30 marks in the examination and was credited with 2 marks in the CA. This summed up to 32% as the overall score in the course. The student protested, claiming that he could not have gotten only 2 marks in the CA. A panel of Investigation set up by the College to look into the matter discovered that the lecturer could not provide good records of CA for all students in the course. He was written a warning letter by the Management of the institution to take his job more seriously and be more careful in the handling of his primary assignment.

Case 4: Careless interaction with the students

In the course of interaction with the students, a member did not

know that his comments were being recorded by the students. The recorded comments became an exhibit at a panel constituted to investigate a problem that emanated from the lecturer's comments. The lecturer looked foolish when his comments were re-played to his hearing which he could not deny.

Case 5: Case of poor supervision of Teaching Practice

A member decided to embark on what could be termed 'Mass Supervision' of the student teachers during a teaching practice exercise at a center. He invited all student teachers in the town and neighboring towns to a school instead of visiting them individually at their schools. The information either did not get to one of the student teachers or he deliberately refused to comply with the method. The lecturer went ahead to record that the student was not found at the school of posting for teaching practice and should therefore repeat the exercise. The student teacher protested against the result claiming that he was in school all through the period of the exercise. This fact was established on investigation into the matter. The lecturer was written a warning letter.

Case 6: Case of drunkenness to the lecture room

A teacher got drunk and went to the class for lecture, He was unable to control the situation and messed himself up in the class. A part from the fact that he was ridiculed by the students; he was reprimanded by the Institution's Authority.

Case 7: Cases of double employment

Two lecturers were caught to have been engaged in double employment. That is, in addition to being a permanent staff of the Institution, they were also on the permanent appointment with other institutions. They were caught and dismissed from the institution. They were also dismissed from the other institutions. Please do not take the risk for you will be caught.

Conclusion

Professional code of ethics is important because it tells the teacher how to act towards his colleagues, students, parents, the public, the employer, educational administrators and the profession. School administrators, teachers and prospective teachers therefore, should become acquainted with the code of ethics of the teaching group. As Burrup once observed, education cannot reach its potential as a great profession until teachers everywhere and at every level are familiar to practice the sound ethical principles it espouses. In this paper we have gone a step further to cite sample cases of unethical practices and attendant results. This is meant to help us avoid them. Without any doubt, the status of an ideal teacher can be attained if these codes of ethics are strictly adhered to.

Recommendations

For better performance in the teaching profession, the following recommendations are hereby made:

1. Emphasis should not only be on teachers' competence but also on moral rectitude and this can be achieved by making sure that teachers imbibe the code of ethics of their profession.
2. Machinery must be put in place to enforce implementation of codes of ethics for teachers.
3. As a follow-up to the second recommendation, every erring staff must be sanctioned to act as deterrent to others and adequate reward must be given to conscientious staff to encourage others.
4. A code of ethics committee is to be set up in every institution to act as the conscience of the staff. Amongst other responsibilities that the code of ethics must be saddled with include organization of an orientation programme for newly recruited staff to acquaint them of the codes of ethics in the teaching profession and regular workshops for those on the job for a constant reminder of what is expected of

- them as competent and morally sound individuals.
5. There is the need to constantly remind ourselves that teaching is a noble profession and everything must be done to let it remain so, so that we can gain the necessary respect and confidence of the general public.

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