

***Improving University Teachers' Professional Ethics  
in Teaching Practice in China***

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**Abstract**

Teacher's professional ethics, short for teacher ethics, refers to the relatively stable moral concepts, moral qualities and codes of conduct formed by teachers in the process of educational work. From this definition, we can know that teacher's professional ethics is an excellent quality of internalizing morality through teaching practice. Therefore, this kind of quality is not born and achieved overnight. In order to study how to improve teacher's professional ethics in the practice of education and teaching, this essay uses the methods of questionnaire and statistics to conduct targeted random questionnaire survey on several teachers, students and their parents in two local universities in Hebei Province of China, and makes statistical analysis on the results of the questionnaire. It is found that some teachers have some problems in their professional ethics in teaching practice, especially in classroom teaching. The gap between teachers' teaching ability, attitude, work engagement and expectations for them is obvious. Therefore, in view of the existing problems, colleges and universities should establish a construction system of teachers' ethics that is in line with the school situation, teachers themselves should learn the theoretical knowledge of teachers' professional ethics, and gradually improve their professional ethics in combination with teaching practice.

Keywords: teachers, professional ethics, teaching practice

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## **1.Introduction**

### **1.1. Definition**

Marxism believes that morality is a special ideology, and professional ethics is accompanied by the emergence of occupation, which is the extension and embodiment of morality in professional activities. Therefore, teachers' professional ethics is that teachers should follow the code of conduct in their professional activities (*Wei Yingming,2003*). It is the embodiment of teachers' world outlook, life outlook and values, as well as the stable and lasting norms of conduct reflected in professional activities. It also embodies teachers' professional concept, attitude, skills, discipline, and style. Former Soviet educator Sukhomlinski said: "The noble moral character of educators is the most important prerequisite for a successful education." Only by influencing students' soul with teachers' pure soul and noble character can they cultivate a new generation with good quality. Therefore, it is worthy of the title of "engineer of the human soul", which in itself reflects the social value of teachers' professional ethics. The Code of Professional Ethics for Teachers in Universities formulated by the Ministry of Education of China clarifies the professional responsibilities of teachers in universities from six aspects: patriotism, law-abiding, devotion to work, teaching and educating people, rigorous academic management, serving the society and being a model of teachers, and puts forward requirements for teachers' professional behavior.

### **1.2. Background and Motivation**

Teachers' morality affects the level of education, teachers' original concept of teaching, working enthusiasm, and the communication between teachers and students (*Fu Weili,2007*). Moreover, the formation and development of students' good quality, correct outlook on life and values are directly influenced by teachers' moral accomplishment, which in turn affects the quality and level of personnel training in Colleges and universities. However, influenced by various factors in the social environment, there are still some problems in the professional ethics cultivation of some university teachers in their educational and teaching practice.

The lack of professional ethics of university teachers reflects not only a theoretical issue but also a practical one. First, it embodies the one-sided understanding of teaching and education. It is not enough to educate people with professional knowledge alone. Through professional education, students can become a useful machine, but cannot become a person of harmonious development (*Einstein,1936*). Some teachers in the classroom freely express some dissatisfied school, social speech, cannot transmit the positive energy of society, students not only cannot learn knowledge, ideas, and concepts but also are affected negatively. Secondly, it is reflected in the non-performance of post duties, non-dedication to work and lack of rigorous academic management. Some university teachers simply pursue economic interests and are busy with their second occupation all day, so they have no time for education, teaching, and scientific research activities. They do not study textbooks, teaching methods, update professional knowledge and pay no attention to the development of disciplines. In class, it is difficult to ensure the quality of teaching without careful preparation of lessons and propaganda according to texts; lack of communication with students, ignorance of students' learning status and learning

effect; no scientific research projects, no professional papers published, and slow development of teachers' own discipline research. Thirdly, it is reflected in its low moral accomplishment. Some teachers are selfish and lack the spirit of teamwork; some teachers cheat and plagiarize academically; some even seek personal gains taking advantage of their positions.

The above performances not only convey negative energy to students but also cause certain harm to society. Only by recognizing the problems existing in teachers' professional ethics, can we solve the problems better. Professional ethics of university teachers is not only a normative requirement for individual behavior, but also a means of educating students. Students have the characteristics of "teacher orientation" in psychological development and moral behavior. Teachers' moral level affects the formation and development of students' moral consciousness and moral quality. Therefore, university teachers should constantly improve their professional ethics and internalize the external professional ethics requirements into their own inner beliefs and beliefs (*Liu Cuiying, 2011*).

In summary, improving the professional ethics of teachers is an important aspect of the construction of teachers. This essay tries to establish a corresponding mechanism, create a good environment and improve the quality of teachers in the universities, which is an important guarantee for the continuous improvement of the education level and teaching quality in the universities.

## **2. Methodology**

In this study, 50 teachers, 50 parents of college students from different occupations and 100 students from two universities in Hebei Province of China were selected as subjects. Questionnaires (See figures below) and individual interviews were conducted. With the questionnaire of Chinese University teachers' professional ethics accomplishment as the investigation tool, this paper studies the current situation of professional ethics cultivation of university teachers in China. This questionnaire uses SPSS statistical software for reliability analysis, and the final *Cronbach  $\alpha$  Coefficient* (i.e. Internal Consistency Coefficient) is 0.855, so the questionnaire has good reliability. The content of the questionnaire is designed based on the Code of Professional Ethics for Teachers in Universities formulated by the Ministry of Education of China. According to the requirements of professional responsibility and professional behavior of university teachers, the questions center on seven aspects: the evaluation of the profession of university teachers, the situation of university teachers' dedication and love for their posts, the influence of university teachers on students' outlook on life, the quality and ability of university teachers themselves, the ability to be a model for others, and the ability of unity and cooperation.

A total of 200 questionnaires were sent out, 186 were recovered and 179 were valid, with an effective rate of 89.5%.

A Survey on Teachers' Ethics in Colleges and Universities  
(Student Volume)

Dear classmates:

Hello! Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to help fill out this questionnaire. In order to understand the current situation of teachers' morality in colleges and universities, and to improve the construction of teachers' morality, this paper investigates the situation of teachers' morality in colleges and universities. Please fill in the blanks according to your real idea (Please put your options in brackets).

This questionnaire is an anonymous survey, and the data are only used for scientific research and will never be released. Please rest assured. Thank you for your cooperation and support in this survey!

1. Your gender: ( )  
A: Male      B: Female
2. Your grade: ( )  
A. freshman B. sophomore C. junior D. senior
3. Your major: \_\_\_\_\_
4. What do you think of the overall professional ethics of the teachers in your university? ( )  
A. Good   B. Average   C. Bad
5. What do you think about the professionalism of teachers in your university? ( )  
A. Good   B. Average   C. Bad
6. What do you think of the teaching innovation ability of the teachers in your university? ( )  
A. Good   B. Average   C. Bad
7. What is the situation of teachers' professional ethics education infiltrated into teaching activities? ( )  
A. All teachers can do   B. Most teachers can do  
C. Few teachers can do it.
8. Among the following teachers, which type of teacher do you prefer to take? ( )  
A. Young Teachers   B. Middle-aged Teachers  
C. Old Teachers      D. Any one
9. What do you think of the quality and ability of the teachers in your university? ( )  
A. Good   B. Average   C. Bad

### 3.Results

Through the analysis of the data, it can conclude that only 23% of the respondents consider that the situation of university teachers' devotion to their jobs is good, 58% for average, and 19% for bad. For "The influence of university teachers on the formation of students' outlook on life", only 15% think it has a great impact, 72% think it is average, and 13% think it has no impact. 86% of the respondents think that the quality and ability of teachers themselves are very high. 37% think the ability to be a model for others is good while 32% think it's bad (shown in the charts below).

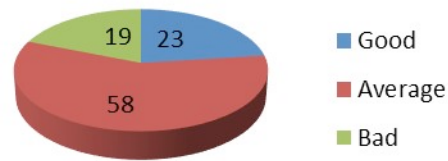


Figure 1: Professional Devotion and Job-loving

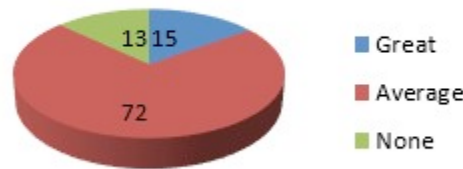


Figure 2: Influence on the formation of students' outlook on life

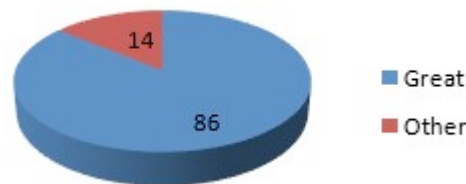


Figure 3: Quality and Ability oneself

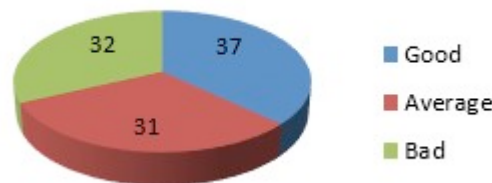


Figure 4: Ability to be a model for others

The results of the questionnaire reflect that people have high expectations for university teachers and full of respect and expectations for teachers' profession, but the moral accomplishment in practice cannot meet people's expectations. These problems reflect that teachers have not fully realized the sacred mission of teachers' identity. Also, they cannot fully comply with the provisions of the Code in their personal behavior. It is particularly important for university teachers to improve their professional ethics in teaching and educating people. In practice, the following ways and means can be adopted to improve teachers' professional ethics.

### 3.1. Improving the Theoretical Study of Professional Ethics

First, university teachers should constantly learn and master the theoretical knowledge of teachers' professional ethics, deeply understand China's "Code of Professional Ethics for College Teachers", take scientific theory as guidance, and clarify the purpose and direction of teachers' ethics cultivation. Second, learn from excellent teachers and moral models. All excellent teachers' moral practice is the concretization of teachers' moral theory, which has distinct, vivid, image and touching characteristics, and embodies teachers' moral style. Third, the continuous consolidation and

improvement of their own knowledge. We should not only pay attention to the knowledge of our specialty, but also to the knowledge of other related disciplines, so as to achieve integration, but also constantly pay attention to the development of frontier knowledge.

In short, study is a necessary way for teachers' moral accomplishment, and also a prerequisite for accomplishment.

### **3.2. Improving the Practice of Professional Ethics**

The cognitive process of human beings is a repeated process from practice to knowledge and then to practice. Only by applying various professional ethics accomplishments learned by teachers to educational practice can they gradually internalize into their own thoughts and behaviors, and only in educational teaching practice can they recognize the right and wrong of their actions and distinguish good from evil.

Therefore, in the practice of education and teaching, to improve teachers' professional ethics is the goal and destination of teachers' professional ethics.

#### **3.2.1. Devoting to Career and Promoting Professionalism**

Loving education is the most basic requirement for teachers. First of all, teachers should love and respect this profession from their hearts. Understand that they bear the responsibility of training new talents with all-round development of morality, intelligence and physique, so as to internalize into the internal motive force of education work. Secondly, teachers' work is painful and ordinary. It is precisely this way that teachers need to treat their work with respect, seriousness and responsibility. A dedicated teacher should never forget the responsibility of preaching, teaching and solving puzzles, and take cultivating and educating people as his lifelong ideal. Teachers on the front line of teaching should start with everything in the teaching process, treat every lesson as a new lesson, prepare lessons carefully, design teaching process carefully, organize teaching content.

Loving education is the most basic requirement for teachers and the motive force of teachers' work. Only in this way can teachers truly love and devote themselves to work and selflessness.

#### **3.2.2. Love students, persist in teaching and educating people**

Teaching and educating people are the work that run through the whole educational process and influence students through their words and deeds (*Qian Huanqi, 2008*).

First of all, teachers should understand students. Understand the psychological characteristics of students at this stage, familiarize themselves with their interests, hobbies and concerns, try to eliminate the generation gap and establish a common language. Encourage them to maintain a good mentality, develop a positive attitude towards life, and enhance their sense of social responsibility. Secondly, to respect students, believe in them, communicate with them more, and be good teachers and friends of students. Teachers should consider problems from the students' point of

view, encourage students to express different views and opinions, discuss learning and academic issues, and establish democratic and equal teacher-student relationship. Thirdly, students should be carefully cared for and strictly required, observe their emotional changes in life and study at any time, and guide them in time. Strict requirements should be reasonable, methodological and persistent.

Therefore, the teaching of scientific and cultural knowledge should combine with ideological and moral education organically in class, so as to truly teach and educate people.

### **3.2.3. Study assiduously and constantly improve and innovate**

In the process of education and teaching, the situation of students faced by teachers is complex and changeable, professional knowledge is constantly changing, and different disciplines are intertwined, which determines that university teachers must study hard and constantly improve and innovate. With the development of science and technology, the changing needs of society and the emergence of new knowledge and new curriculum, teachers must have the spirit of innovation, study their own business diligently. Only by constantly improving the professional skills of education and teaching, so that they have solid professional knowledge and grasp the frontier information of disciplines, can they be trained. Cultivate talents with new ideas, new science and innovative spirit.

At the same time, university teachers should be brave enough to resist unhealthy academic atmosphere, eliminate unhealthy academic ethics and abide by intellectual property law. In academic research, university teachers should resist all moral acts that are contrary to academia, such as plagiarizing other people's academic achievements, asking others to write articles for themselves, or blindly pursue quantity, crudely fabricate, or even tamper with or falsify research data and so on.

Therefore, only by constantly improving their own quality can teachers strictly manage their studies and inherit good academic morality.

## **Conclusion**

In a word, the professional ethics cultivation of university teachers is a process of internalization and outreach, and educational practice is an important activity to achieve educational purposes (*Zhang Shujun, 2003*). Through theoretical study, while constructing their own complete knowledge system, the more important thing is to practice in the teaching process and guide the teaching behavior with the professional ethics of University teachers, so as to cultivate their own good professional ethics.

This research shows that it is the fundamental way for college teachers to cultivate good professional ethics in the new era to hone their own will quality, enhance professional emotions and cultivate professional ethics in their work practice. The teachers should study the theory of professional ethics, learn from the excellent teachers and advanced individuals, so as to find their own shortcomings through comparison. It is supposed to study professional work hard, and constantly improve their own education and teaching level; to actively prepare for scientific research, summarize the successful experience of teaching and student management skills, and

consciously resist academic corruption and scientific research fraud. The most important thing is to care about the students from the heart and give them sincere care and help.

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