

The Importance of ethics, values and morals in higher education

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Abstract

Higher education is a complex subject in itself that requires commitment, dedication, love for teaching, professionalism and responsibility in teaching. Education is an exclusive quality of human beings and is an ideal tool to accelerate the well-being and prosperity of the world as a whole; education is a lifelong promoter of the integral development of being. Then what would be the role of the teachers, students, academic programs and institutions to promote the development of education in accordance with the ethical principles and moral values in this technified, globalized, society and with communication available to everyone and immediately and which the principles and values seem to have changed. The work is arduous when adding another task to the teacher exercise which implies developing in the students various values such as loyalty, honesty, social conscience, empathy, responsibility, tolerance and respect among others and at the same time instructing them in the development of the profession and teaching. This is imperative in today's world where values seem to have been lost.

Keywords: education, ethics, professional development, values

1. Introduction

Higher education is the starting point where the individual must lean towards a specific area in order to reach the university and complete a bachelor's degree that may well extend to the graduate levels, specialties, masters, doctorates and post-doctorates. The choice that students make is very important as it will be the professional work they will perform throughout their productive working lives.

That is why most of the educational institutions have a vocational department since higher education is an investment that will allow the student to have access to the labor market under preferential conditions and according to the degrees of education acquired. However, academic education has been evolving over time and technological and communication advances.

What characterizes higher education is its intellectual rigor, academic freedom and the moral values that are developed as part of learning. Critical thinking, creativity and innovation should be preponderant in such a way that knowledge is built and thus learning is truly meaningful.

Other outstanding aspects of higher education today are students exchange, online education, mastering a foreign language and continuing studies in other countries. Higher education provides the individual with the tools not only to carry out a professional or trade job but also to help him/her to socialize, develop the intellect and behave ethically, which is humanistically ideal.

This article reviews these aspects of higher education in universities and describes the importance of the integration of ethical principles and moral values in the development of academic activities in both teachers and students.

2. Ethics relevance in education

Ethics and profession are terms that mutually imply and invoke each other in an ideal life plan. They represent the generating source of a vocation and are the guiding axis of our actions in the personal sphere and in the professional

practice. In all his actions, the human being displays knowledge practical skill and values, for which a professional activity cannot remain alien to this condition or nature.

Ethics also called moral philosophy is the systematic study of moral principles and values and deals with the standards of human life, whether personal, social or universal. It is a philosophical theory on how we should live and act deals with the basic principles for the organization of our life (*Frances Kam, Professor of philosophy, Harvard University, Great of ideas of philosophy, Ethics*).

Education is an exclusive process of autonomy of human beings and a relevant instrument to raise and accelerate the well-being and prosperity of individuals in society. Education is one of the best investments in life and for life itself.

However, the integral development of the human being through the educational process is not possible without the impartation of ethical knowledge and moral values. With this ethical and moral formative approach, universities unquestionably influence the mentality and attitude of future professionals, which could lead to leadership and social progress.

Ethics education is an opportunity for a new value orientation. This model (education) promotes continuous improvement in the training of both, the teacher and the student, develops the new technologies and allows a new vision, a new policy, a new market, new resources and a new system ⁽¹⁾.

Reflecting on the ethics and morals of professional work implies as a starting point questioning what we understand by this as what we define it personally and professionally, to later assume a clear definition that places it as the study of values inherent to the exercise of any profession that arise first from the relationships between teachers and students and extensively between future professionals and society. Then if we are clear about the values and principles that the

ethical discipline give us, we will be able to establish a worthy frame of reference that places with certainty an inescapable perspective of the teaching profession and of the guidelines of educational institutions. At present we must reflect about this vocation, its reason for being and duty. Values and ethics make up a suitable content and container as an analogist of the human ideal made up of a form and a background that are built with truth and beauty to function harmoniously.

In conclusion, ethics is the structured set of the guiding principles of human acts around the general good, the recipient par excellence of which is the social fabric. Ethics is one of the fundamental branches of the study of philosophy also called axiology.

Now, what is the value? This term comes from the Greek *agathon* and the Latin *bonum* which means good or goodness. In this regard, Gurvich, Sorokin, Merton, Myrdal, Schaff agree that "value" means that which guides and motivates the behavior of a social sector. On the other hand, values are always collective entities of a cultural nature. In the first instance, value is conceptually ethical. Its normativity is consequently moral. In this way, each act is assigned the value corresponding to its estimation, making it possible to identify the socially acceptable and general rules of conduct on whose execution depends the harmonic and evolutionary social coexistence.

So what would be the role of teacher, students, academic programs and institutions in the development and promotion of an education attached to ethical principles and moral values in the context of a technologically communicated globalization of immediate and generalized scope and where the principles and values seem to have changed?

Professional higher education must assume a new approach to learning and practice, where the implementation of ethics in universities encourages teaching that is committed to the ethical and deontological guidelines corresponding to the various professional fields. The ethical training of professionals must go beyond the learning of concepts to contribute to the formation of positively critical thinking individuals, which requires as a prerequisite an impeccable behavior in teaching and institutional practice because the best teaching is shown in their own actions personally and institutionally.

The practice of ethics and moral values must therefore be implemented not only in the students but also in all the teaching staff and form part of the institutional philosophy especially in public universities where students, teachers and directive and general personal must take awareness of their ethical professional and social responsibility towards society that contributes to their professional education and employment in each case.

The National Autonomous University of Mexico is a public institution that fulfills the mission of training professionals and conducting humanistic and scientific research for the benefit, service and development of Mexican society. Its plans and projects with the participation of members of the university community are aimed at contributing to the construction of a more just participatory society committed to the economic, social and cultural development of all Mexican men and women (Dr. Enrique Graue Wiechers, Rector)

The substantive tasks of this institution are teaching, research and dissemination of culture. It is an educational universe where individuals from different cultures converge

and whose thoughts and beliefs strengthen it and make up its main wealth. The National University is an autonomous and secular public university that inspires, for this reason, sufficient elements to commit ourselves to our teaching work, understanding free teaching and university autonomy as a condition and professional practice attached to the absolute respect of human dignity that has in thoughts, beliefs and culture its main expressions. As regards our students we must reinforce not only the ethical and moral values in their academic development but also the responsibility of being individuals of integrity and grateful for the opportunity of their professional training. We must show them that the best way to thank them is by already providing efficient service and attention as professional within a framework of respect, humanism and love for the profession and keeping the common good as the guiding principle.

Finally, as far as we teachers are concerned, conduct guidelines must be established that imply respect for the dignity of the students with expressions such as the individual communication of the results of their evaluations a clear statement of objectives and goals at the beginning, of the course as well as the learning strategies, evaluation methods and pedagogical alternatives that guarantee the active participation of students. The teacher must understand the diversity in relation to customs, beliefs, and life experiences of each of his/her students and act accordingly in the development of their academic practice to generate harmonious and collaborative environment in the teaching learning process. We must comply with and enforce the goals and policies of the institution in order to maintain educational standards and the ideal that gave it its origin and meaning [2]

3. Discussion

Higher education in the world has undergone major transformation since the mid-twentieth century and the beginning of the 21st century due to the accelerated increase in school enrollment and the increasingly numerous participation of women, cultural changes, the diversification of the educational offer, the formalization of academic training participatory, implementation of pedagogical approaches, incorporation of new technologies advances in information technology and communication, new curricular proposals such as the educational approach by competencies, social responsibility, bioethics and ethics with their principles and values [3].

All these changes demand modifications in the way of thinking and proceeding of teachers that allow them to go at the pace that the development of society demands, making the corresponding changes in the curricular plans of teaching, on the importance of instilling and cultivating ethical values and moral principles among others.

In this context, it is necessary to implement complementary subjects in the study programs of all degrees in public universities. Subjects such as leadership, sustainable development environment, ethics and bioethics, among others.

As regards teachers, it is necessary to establish a profile that, in addition to pedagogical training, requires a master's or doctorate specialty as well as professional practical experience outside the university campus that guarantees knowledge of social reality in the performance of their work field.

4. Conclusions

When exercising a profession as noble as teaching, it is necessary not only to have specialized knowledge in the professional field and vocation, but also the formal preparation to exercise it.

In current times the teacher must be aware that he/she is part of the knowledge society in which he/she is responsible for creating fields of action where the student builds knowledge, participates in the teaching-learning process and creates and acquires meaningful learning that prepares him/her for the labor market.

In this context, it is imperative that ethical and moral values are integrated and weighed in this process, the objective of which is to seek higher levels of growth and development of the common good.

These values and ethical principles should be formally imparted in the development of teaching practice and above all exemplified in the conduct of directive, teachers, and university staff in general because, although it is true that great ideas are values that illustrate; great examples are principles that drive and inspire action.

This purpose requires intelligence and the will of students and the institution to sow, cultivate and reap future professional who assume a greater responsibility than that of the common citizen since the knowledge that he/she has received in his/her training process makes him / her a depository of the trust of society that hopes from them a service of avant-garde, academic, moral and culturally.

By achieving this objective, professionals also acquire a moral capacity that gives seriousness, nobility and dignity to their work which allow them to be a factor of change and transcend.

Training this kind of professional's means contributing human beings capable of covering and transcending their professional sphere, outlining a more evolved horizon where personal and professional integrity is exemplified as a social proposal.

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6. References

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