

# Reflections on Teachers' Professional Ethics in Colleges and Universities

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**Abstract:** Teachers in colleges and universities are the nurturers of the core talents of the country. Teachers' comprehensive quality levels in colleges and universities fundamentally determine the quality of talent cultivation in colleges and universities, the level of scientific research, and the contribution to society. Based on moral cultivation and teachers' professional moral cultivation, this paper discusses the problems in the professional moral cultivation of college teachers and the measures to improve the professional moral cultivation of college teachers.

**Keywords:** College teachers; Professional moral cultivation; Measures

**Online publication:** October 22, 2024

## 1. Introduction

China's higher education system aims to cultivate talent, preserve cultural heritage, conduct scientific research, and provide social services. The overall quality and comprehensive capabilities of university faculty fundamentally determine the quality of talent cultivation, the level of scientific research, and the contribution to society in higher education <sup>[1]</sup>. The General Secretary once proposed that the establishment of moral integrity is an important indicator for testing the quality of school work, and colleges and universities should take the establishment of moral integrity as their primary goal. Therefore, whether teachers have a certain degree of professional moral cultivation is an essential prerequisite for colleges and universities to be able to cultivate comprehensive talents that meet the requirements of national construction <sup>[2,3]</sup>.

## 2. Teachers' moral integrity and professional ethics

### 2.1. Moral cultivation

Moral cultivation is an integral part of every individual's life; it is not only a moral code but also a manifestation of qualities and abilities. It entails a constant review of one's actions and words to check whether one's motives and behavior are in line with ethical standards. Moral cultivation, as a human form of self-transformation and honing of moral activity, is essentially an internal process of transformation

into personal moral qualities, aimed at developing a person's ability to consciously fulfill the moral responsibilities and obligations incumbent upon society on the basis of conformity with the requirements of socialist morality<sup>[4]</sup>. Moral cultivation is an important manifestation of a person's quality and ability and is an essential part of life. It is necessary to improve one's moral cultivation through self-reflection, self-education, self-supervision, self-cultivation, respect for others, observance of social morality, cultivation of good behavior, concern for social problems, and cultivation of a sense of social responsibility, so as to become a person of high quality and value.

## **2.2. Teachers' professional moral cultivation**

Teachers' professional moral cultivation is a kind of professional quality necessary for teachers, which is the sum of moral concepts, emotions, and behavioral habits formed in the process of teachers engaging in educational work. Teachers' professional moral cultivation mainly includes the following aspects.

### **2.2.1. Love and respect for work**

Teachers should love the cause of education and perform their duty, with a high sense of responsibility and a sense of mission in the work of education. Teachers should have lofty professional ideals and firm professional beliefs, and strive to cultivate socialist builders and successors with all-round development of morality, intelligence, physical fitness, and aesthetics.

### **2.2.2. Care for students**

Teachers should care about students' growth and physical and mental health, respect students' individuality and differences, and pay attention to students' needs and wishes. Teachers should combine strict requirements with care and concern, and pay attention to cultivating students' self-management and self-education skills.

### **2.2.3. Rigor in the study of science**

Teachers should have a rigorous attitude towards learning, consciously uphold academic dignity and standards, and abide by teaching discipline and academic ethics. Teachers should constantly update their knowledge, improve their own quality and ability, and be rigorous, diligent, realistic, and innovative.

### **2.2.4. Solidarity and collaboration**

Teachers should possess the spirit of teamwork and establish good cooperative relationships with colleagues, parents, students, and other parties to jointly promote the development of education. Teachers should respect and support each other, and cooperate to complete the educational tasks.

### **2.2.5. Teaching by example**

Teachers should set a good example by influencing students with their behaviors, so as to be consistent with their words and actions. Teachers should pay attention to their own image and behavior, be civilized, polite, and standard, and set a good example of behavior for students.

### **2.2.6. Teaching with integrity**

Teachers should adhere to the principle of teaching with integrity, not accepting any form of bribes and red packets, not being tempted by benefits, and keeping education fair and just. Teachers shall be impartial, clean, law-abiding, and set a good moral example for students.

### **2.2.7. Being a role model**

Teachers should have noble morals and sentiments, be role models, and influence and motivate students to form good moral and behavioral habits. Teachers should pay attention to their own cultivation, be law-abiding, honest and trustworthy, diligent and thrifty, respectful to the elderly and loving to children, and set a good moral example for students.

### **2.2.8. Diligent reflection**

Teachers should have the ability to examine and reflect on their own educational behavior, identify problems, and make timely improvements. Teachers should focus on summarizing the lessons learned, constantly optimizing educational methods and means, and improving the level and effect of education.

In short, teachers' professional ethics is an indispensable professional quality for teachers engaged in education and a kind of moral standard and code of conduct necessary for teachers. Teachers should pay attention to improving their own professional moral cultivation, set a good example for students, and strive to cultivate socialist builders and successors with all-round development of morality, intelligence, physicality, and aesthetics.

## **3. Problems in teachers' professional moral cultivation in colleges and universities**

As the core of education work, college teachers should have a high degree of professional moral cultivation and social responsibility. However, in practice, some college teachers face the following professional moral cultivation problems.

### **3.1. Academic misconduct**

With the rapid development of scientific research, the competition among colleges and universities in the world is increasing day by day. The quantity and quality of scientific research results directly affect the ranking of scientific research strength of colleges and universities and the results of the disciplinary assessment, and scientific research results have gradually become one of the most important indexes for evaluating teachers' work abilities and values <sup>[5]</sup>. Under this premise, academic misconduct refers to the existence of plagiarism, forgery, tampering, and other behaviors in academic research or practice. This phenomenon occurs from time to time among teachers in colleges and universities, which seriously affects the fairness and scientificity of academic research, and also damages the image of teachers' professional ethics <sup>[6]</sup>.

### **3.2. Inappropriate teacher-student relationship**

A relationship of equality, respect, and mutual concern should be established between teachers and students in colleges and universities. However, there are some teachers who take advantage of their positions to exert mental or material pressure on students, and even engage in sexual harassment and assault. Such behavior seriously disrupts the teaching order and the relationship between teachers and students and has an adverse impact on students' physical and mental health as well as on social morality.

### **3.3. Discrimination or favoritism towards students**

Teachers in colleges and universities should treat every student equally and respect their individuality and differences. However, some teachers discriminate against or favor students, for example, giving special care to some students and being indifferent or discriminating against others. Such behavior seriously undermines

the rights and interests of students and the fairness of education.

### **3.4. Incorrect working attitude**

Teachers in colleges and universities should fulfill their duties and work assignments conscientiously with a high sense of responsibility and dedication. However, some teachers have improper working attitudes, such as working perfunctorily, delaying work, and not seriously preparing for classes and giving lessons. Such behavior seriously affects the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of education.

### **3.5. Lack of professional ethics**

Teachers in colleges and universities should have a high degree of professional conduct and abide by the code of professional ethics and standards. However, some teachers lack professional conduct, such as falsifying, bribing, and accepting bribes in scientific research declarations and evaluations. Such behaviors seriously damage the image of teachers' professional ethics and social credibility.

### **3.6. Disrespect for others' intellectual property rights**

College teachers should respect the intellectual property rights of others and avoid violating the legitimate rights and interests of others. However, some teachers have behaviors such as plagiarism and misappropriation of others' research results. This kind of behavior not only violates the intellectual property rights of others but also damages teachers' professional and ethical image and social credibility.

### **3.7. Violation of professional norms**

Teachers in colleges and universities should abide by professional norms and professional ethical standards. However, some teachers violate professional norms, such as irregular operation and abuse of power in enrolment and examination. This kind of behavior not only violates professional norms but also damages the teachers' professional moral image and social credibility.

To sum up, there are various problems of professional moral cultivation among college teachers, including academic misconduct, inappropriate teacher-student relationships, discrimination or favoritism to students, improper working attitude, lack of professional ethics, disrespect for others' intellectual property rights, violation of professional norms, and so on. In order to improve teachers' professional moral cultivation and social responsibility, colleges and universities should strengthen the education and training of teachers, establish a perfect supervision mechanism and management system, and at the same time, strengthen social supervision and public opinion guidance, so as to jointly promote the development and progress of education.

## **4. Measures to improve college teachers' professional moral cultivation**

As the guides of education, the professional moral cultivation of college teachers is not only related to the quality of teaching but also affects students' values and behaviors. In order to improve the professional moral cultivation of college teachers, it is necessary to take a series of measures, including improving teachers' moral awareness, cultivating teachers' moral emotion, promoting teachers' firm moral will, honing teachers' moral behavior, optimizing teachers' moral qualities, strengthening the theoretical study of teachers' morality, and strengthening the practical training of teachers' morality<sup>[7]</sup>.

### **4.1. Enhancing teachers' moral awareness**

Improving teachers' moral awareness is the foundation of improving professional moral cultivation. Teachers

should study education theory carefully, understand the nature, tasks, and requirements of education work, and clarify the duties and missions of teachers. At the same time, teachers should also have a deep understanding of the social requirements of education and recognize the trend of educational development, so as to better adapt to the changes of the times <sup>[8]</sup>.

#### **4.2. Cultivating teachers' moral emotions**

Teachers' moral emotion is an important driving force for them to fulfill their duties. Teachers should cultivate noble emotions and set up correct values through a variety of ways, such as reading classic works, watching educational films, and attending educational lectures. In addition, teachers should also pay attention to communication with students, understand their needs and confusions, and guide them with a sincere and enthusiastic attitude <sup>[9]</sup>.

#### **4.3. Promoting teachers' firm moral will**

Teachers' moral will is the strength to overcome difficulties and persist in their duties in education. Teachers should recognize their own strengths and weaknesses through self-reflection, so as to improve their professional moral cultivation in a targeted manner <sup>[10]</sup>. At the same time, teachers should also set up ambitious goals, constantly pursue self-improvement, and face the challenges of educational work with a firm will.

#### **4.4. Sharpening teachers' moral behavior**

Teachers' moral behavior is an important way to show their professional moral cultivation. Teachers should ensure their behavior conforms to the requirements of professional ethics through practical exercises. For example, they should strictly abide by the teaching plan, carefully prepare and teach lessons, and care about students' lives and learning situations. In addition, teachers should actively participate in educational research, explore new educational methods and concepts, and constantly improve their teaching level.

#### **4.5. Optimizing teachers' moral quality**

Teachers' moral quality is the core of improving their professional moral cultivation. Teachers should possess excellent qualities such as a high sense of responsibility, impartiality, respect for students, tolerance, and understanding. In order to optimize these qualities, teachers should focus on self-reflection and evaluation, recognize their own responsibility and mission, and at the same time continue to learn and explore to improve their overall quality.

#### **4.6. Enhancing the theoretical study of teacher ethics**

Teacher ethics theory learning is a critical way to improve teachers' professional ethics. Teachers should learn the relevant theories of pedagogy, educational psychology, educational ethics, and other related theories to understand the nature of educational work and ethical requirements. At the same time, teachers should also study relevant laws and regulations and educational policies to clarify their rights and obligations. Through theoretical learning, teachers can better understand the value and significance of educational work and improve their professional ethics.

#### **4.7. Strengthening the practical training of teacher ethics**

Practice is the only criterion to test the truth. In order to improve teachers' professional moral cultivation,

practical training should be strengthened. For example, carry out teaching and research activities on the theme of teacher ethics, encourage teachers to participate in social practice, and conduct teacher ethics evaluations. Through practical training, teachers can better understand the theoretical knowledge of professional ethics, integrate it into their daily work, and improve their professional ethics.

In conclusion, improving the professional ethics of college teachers is a long-term and arduous task. Teachers should focus on self-reflection and evaluation to continuously enhance their moral awareness, moral emotion, moral will, moral behavior, moral quality, and so on. At the same time, teachers should also strengthen theoretical learning and practical training in order to better fulfill their duties and provide students with quality educational services.

## Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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