

On Evaluating University Teachers' Morality and Ethics in the New Era

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University teachers play an important role in promoting moral and political education among university students. Regular and long-term construction of teachers' morality and ethics will contribute to the success of the fundamental task of cultivating talents. The present study proposes that due to the multiple identities of university teachers, it is necessary to evaluate the construction of teachers' morality and ethics in terms of what to evaluate and how to evaluate? It is expected that the attempt will provide useful guidance for the construction of university teachers' morality and ethics.

Keywords: university teachers, morality and ethics construction, evaluation

In 2018, the CPC Central Committee and State Council issued *The Opinions on Comprehensively Deepening the Reform of Teacher Team Construction in the New Era*, which stipulates that “efforts be made to improve ideological and political quality as well as comprehensively strengthen the construction of teachers' morality and ethics”.¹ Since then, colleges and universities across the country have actively responded to the requirements by theoretically exploring the path of teacher ethics construction and practically carrying out regular and long-term teacher morality and ethics construction activities. Luo Weidong proposed that we should attach great importance to the evaluation of such construction activities so as to guarantee their efficacy (Luo, 2020, p. 5). Following this line of thought, the present paper delves into more concrete questions such as what should be evaluated in the teacher morality and ethics construction activities and how to evaluate such activities. It is expected that the present study may facilitate the construction and implementation of teachers' morality and ethics in colleges and universities.

Teachers' Morality and Ethics Construction in Colleges and Universities

Nationwide teachers' morality and ethics construction activities have been carried out since 2018, and models of the times represented by Huang Danian and Zhong Yang have set examples for teachers in colleges and universities. Yet, there still are some teachers who showed no respect for the teacher morality and ethics “red line” by violating laws, exercising plagiarism or even sexually harassing students (Wei, 2021, p. 40), such deeds not only seriously damage the victim students' physical and mental health, but also rouse intense public ire.

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¹ State Council. *The Opinions on Comprehensively Deepening the Reform of Teacher Team Construction in the New Era*[EB/OL].[2018-01-31] [2022-07-15] http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2018-01/31/content_5262659.htm

Therefore, it is of urgent necessity to carry out more comprehensive teachers' morality and ethics construction activities. In the meanwhile, in order to guarantee the efficacy of such activities, it is of great importance to regulate such activities with effective evaluation.

Evaluation of University Teachers' Morality and Ethics Construction

As the object of the evaluation, university teachers possess a multiplicity of identities: firstly, they are members of the smallest social structure-family; secondly, they are teachers who engage in classroom teaching and scientific research, and sometimes even administrative affairs. Starting from these multiple identities of university teachers, the present paper tries to mark "law" as the bottom line and "virtue" as the yardstick, and discuss two core issues in the evaluation of teachers' morality and ethics construction, namely: (1) what should be evaluated in the teacher morality and ethics construction?; (2) how to evaluate it?

What Should be Evaluated?

The evaluation of the construction of teachers' morality and ethics should be firmly grounded on a deep understanding of the key notion: teachers' morality and ethics. As the sum of teachers' moral and ethical consciousness, moral and ethical relation, as well as moral and ethical activities, teachers' morality and ethics is composed of explicit relations and activities and implicit consciousness. Since moral and ethical consciousness is implicit and cannot be observed directly, the evaluation should be focused on the explicit relations and activities.

Specifically speaking, moral and ethical activities are the social activities carried out both individually and collaboratively in human lives. Though an independent individual in the society, teachers participate in the activities of family, university, society and the country, and all of these activities fall under the scope of his moral and ethical activities. As for teachers' moral and ethical relation, it is a special social relation formed in the teachers' social activities. and they can be classified into four types: (1) moral and ethical relation between teachers and their friends or relatives; (2) moral and ethical relation between teachers and their students; (3) moral and ethical relation between teachers and their colleagues; (4) moral and ethical relation between teachers and the CPC and the country.

The above ethical relation and ethical activities constitute the observable kernel of the evaluation of the teachers' moral and ethical construction. These explicit activities and relations enable us to infer the ethical consciousness of teachers, and then help us comprehensively judge the effectiveness of the construction of teachers' morality and ethics.

How to Evaluate the Construction of Teachers' Morality and Ethics?

Developmental teacher evaluation is an evaluation concept proposed by British scholars Clift and Latoner in the 1980s. Unlike the reward and punishment evaluation system, the developmental teacher evaluation system promotes teachers' development by stimulating teachers' conscious and voluntary sense of self-management (Wang, 2000). By pushing them to make judgments and reflections on their teaching activities, teachers are considered as evaluators of their own teaching activities, and the differences among teachers are also acknowledged, while the longitudinal progress is attached more importance. Though developmental teacher evaluation was initially devised to monitor and evaluate teachers' teaching activities, its practical utility is by no means limited to that, it can also be used to evaluate the effectiveness of teachers' morality and ethics

construction. By adopting the developmental teacher evaluation method, the changes of teachers in morality and ethics can be measured and tracked from the beginning to the end, thus providing a dynamic description of effectiveness of the construction activities. With more emphasis on the progress, and less emphasis on the basis, the teachers can be better motivated in participating in morality and ethics construction activities.

Conclusion

A scientific and effective evaluation method helps to strengthen and improve the construction of university teachers' morality and ethics, and it also helps to guarantee the realization of fundamental goal of establishing moral education in universities. As the leading force in ideological and political education for university students, teachers serve as the guide in the students' transition to independence. The evaluation of teachers' morality and ethics construction points out the direction of common development and progress for both teachers and students. The present paper starts out with the existing problems with the construction of university teachers' morality and ethics, and proposes to assess the teachers' explicit moral and ethic relations and activities from a developmental perspective. It is hoped that it can provide some useful reference for the construction of university teachers' morality and ethics and help to improve its effectiveness.

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