



International Council of Academics for Progressive Education

Ethical Considerations in Modern Education

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November 2023

I.C.A.P.E.

Ethical Considerations in Modern Education

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Ethical Considerations in Modern Education

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Newsletter "Ethical Considerations in Modern Education"

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Before embarking upon the crux of our exploration, let us meticulously scrutinize the paradigms encompassing ethics in education and the contours of modern educational paradigms.

Ethics in education constitutes a intricate framework of moral precepts and values governing comportment, actions, and decisions within the educational domain. It demands a judicious application of principled standards to navigate the multifaceted challenges encountered by educators, administrators, and stakeholders. Ethical considerations in education require a nuanced grasp of concepts such as fairness, integrity, and social responsibility, transcending mere adherence to regulations. Instead, it necessitates a steadfast commitment to cultivating an environment that is not only equitable, inclusive, and morally cognizant but also dedicated to surpassing normative compliance. This intricate interplay of ethical

dimensions serves as a guiding beacon in sculpting the character of educational institutions and individuals, ensuring that the pursuit of knowledge is not solely characterized by academic rigor but is profoundly entrenched in ethical tenets.

Within this edition, John Dewey, an esteemed educational philosopher, underscored the ethical facets inherent in education. His perspective contended that education functions not solely as a conduit for knowledge and skills but concurrently molds individuals on a moral plane. Dewey posited that the purpose of education extends beyond the mere transmission of information, advocating for its role in cultivating responsible and ethical members of society. In a similar vein, Nel Noddings, an American philosopher specializing in education, posits that ethics in education revolves around the compassionate care of students and the cultivation of positive relationships. Noddings advocates for educators to prioritize the well-being and personal development of students, emphasizing the creation of an educational environment characterized by care and ethical considerations.

Modern education encapsulates the contemporary methodologies employed to deliver educational experiences. It stands out through innovative teaching approaches, the integration of cutting-edge technologies, exemplified by Chat-GPT, and a keen recognition of the

evolving needs of learners in our dynamic society. Deviating from traditional instructional models, modern education incorporates digital tools, fosters collaborative learning environments, and emphasizes the cultivation of critical thinking and problem-solving skills. The primary goal is to prepare students for the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century, placing significant emphasis on nurturing creativity, adaptability, and a global perspective. This educational paradigm encompasses a wide array of practices, including online learning, project-based learning, and the assimilation of emerging technologies, all aimed at enhancing the overall educational experience. Given these advancements, it becomes imperative to delve into the challenges faced by every participant in the learning-teaching process in connection with this issue. What ethical and optimal strategies can we employ to navigate and address the challenges presented by this ever-changing landscape?

The infusion of ethical considerations into the fabric of modern education initiates a range of challenges that reverberate across all participants engaged in the intricate dance of the learning-teaching process. These challenges, spanning a spectrum of complexities, influence the experiences and responsibilities of each individual involved. Below delineates some pivotal challenges

that arise within this ethical integration:

Ethical Integration in Technological Advancements: Digital Literacy and Access

In the dynamic context of contemporary education, the integration of technology introduces a diverse set of ethical challenges. Ethical assimilation into technological advancements entails fostering digital literacy among participants, tactfully discerning and navigating ethical considerations associated with technology use, and taking proactive measures to address the digital divide, ensuring impartial access for all learners.

Navigating Ethical Implications: Understanding the Ethical Landscape of AI in Education

In the adoption of AI-powered educational tools, educators and administrators encounter a complex web of ethical considerations. Key among these considerations are the implications related to data privacy, where sensitive information may be at risk, algorithmic bias, which can result in unequal treatment or opportunities for students, and the potential impact on student autonomy, questioning the degree of control students retain over their learning experiences. Effectively navigating these ethical intricacies demands a nuanced and deliberate approach in the selection and implementation of such

technologies, ensuring that ethical standards are upheld while harnessing the benefits of artificial intelligence in education.

Ensuring Digital Literacy: Fostering Critical Understanding in a Digital Age

As digital tools seamlessly integrate into the learning process, educators bear the ethical responsibility of cultivating digital literacy among students. Beyond technical proficiency, this involves instilling a critical understanding of how digital platforms operate. Students must grasp the potential consequences of online activities, developing the ability to discern credible information from misinformation. This ethical imperative recognizes the evolving landscape of information dissemination and the necessity of empowering students with the skills to navigate and critically evaluate digital content in an ethical and responsible manner.

Addressing the Digital Divide: Bridging Socio-Economic Disparities in Access

The digital divide, symbolizing the gap in technology and internet access among students, poses a significant ethical challenge. To address this, ethical considerations compel efforts to bridge the divide, ensuring that learners, irrespective of socio-economic backgrounds, have equal access to educational resources. This may involve

providing devices, ensuring internet connectivity, or exploring alternative methods of content delivery for students facing barriers. The ethical duty here is rooted in the commitment to creating an inclusive learning environment that eliminates disparities in access and opportunity.

Equitable Access: Promoting Fairness in the Digital Learning Landscape

Implementing e-learning platforms without due consideration for equitable access can exacerbate existing inequalities. Ethical decision-making in this realm necessitates proactive identification and rectification of disparities in technology access. This might involve collaborative initiatives with communities to provide necessary resources, advocating for policy changes that promote fairness, or exploring innovative solutions to ensure that every student can participate fully and equally in the digital learning environment. The ethical mandate here lies in.

Championing Ethical Learning Environments: Safeguarding Privacy, Nurturing Inclusivity, and Embracing Innovative Pedagogy

Establishing ethical learning environments necessitates a comprehensive and principled strategy centered on fundamental

principles such as privacy, inclusivity, and the dynamic evolution of pedagogy. This multifaceted undertaking involves a meticulous orchestration of measures to guarantee robust data privacy and security, actively advocate for inclusivity and diversity, adjust teaching methodologies to align with current educational objectives, and maintain a conscientious awareness of cultural sensitivity. Each component plays a pivotal role in cultivating an ethical educational landscape that is not only secure and inclusive but also adaptive to the evolving needs of learners in the contemporary era.

1. Safeguarding Privacy: Implementing Stringent Data Protection

Ensuring the execution of rigorous data privacy and security measures to protect sensitive information. This encompasses the establishment of secure systems, the formulation of clear protocols for data handling, and the adherence to ethical practices in collecting, storing, and sharing data.

2. Nurturing Inclusivity: Championing Diversity

Actively championing inclusivity and diversity within the educational realm by acknowledging and embracing the richness derived from diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences. This involves fostering an environment

where every student, irrespective of differences, feels esteemed and incorporated.

3. Embracing Innovative Pedagogy: Aligning with Present Educational Goals

Adapting teaching methodologies to synchronize with contemporary educational goals, recognizing that the educational landscape is in a perpetual state of evolution. This adaptation involves the infusion of innovative approaches, the leveraging of technology, and the embrace of pedagogical shifts that cater to diverse learning styles and preferences.

Personalization and Differentiation

Acknowledging the distinct needs and learning styles of students and tailoring teaching approaches accordingly. This necessitates a departure from a standardized approach to education, welcoming personalized and differentiated instruction that addresses the individual strengths and challenges of each learner.

Lifelong Learning Perspective

Instilling a culture of lifelong learning among educators and students, acknowledging that education is an ongoing journey. This involves cultivating an environment that values curiosity, adaptability, and a commitment to continuous improvement.

Student-Centered Approaches

Transitioning towards student-centered approaches that empower learners to actively participate in their education. This entails fostering critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving skills that are indispensable for success in our dynamically changing world.

By incorporating these ethical considerations into the educational structure, institutions can aim to establish environments that not only emphasize security and inclusivity but also stay adaptable and responsive to the varied and evolving requirements of learners in the current educational scenario.

Advancing Ethical Professionalism and Placing Student Well-being

At the forefront it involves a thorough dedication to maintaining principles that contribute to a nurturing and positive educational setting. This commitment encompasses addressing diverse aspects, such as academic integrity, teacher professionalism, and global perspectives. Each facet significantly contributes to cultivating an environment that not only assures the ethical behavior of educators but also protects the mental and emotional welfare of students.

Maintaining Academic Integrity

Nurturing Genuine Scholarship: Cultivating an environment of academic honesty and integrity among students, advocating for original thinking, proper citation, and rigorous scholarly practices. This goes beyond discouraging plagiarism to instilling a deep appreciation for the intellectual contributions of peers.

Evaluation Procedures: Guaranteeing fair and transparent evaluation methods that precisely gauge students' knowledge and skills, all while adhering to the core principles of fairness, consistency, and impartiality. This entails addressing concerns related to cheating, dishonesty, and plagiarism through educational interventions rather than punitive actions.

Navigating Ethical Challenges in Teaching: Juggling Multiple Roles

Managing Dual Responsibilities

Teachers often find themselves occupying the dual roles of educators and mentors, responsible not just for academic guidance but also for the personal development of students. Recognizing the ethical nuances inherent in these dual responsibilities is of utmost importance.

Establishing Clear Boundaries

Successfully addressing these dilemmas requires the establishment

and maintenance of unequivocal professional boundaries. Teachers must be vigilant about the limitations of mentorship, ensuring that personal connections do not compromise fairness or lead to unequal treatment among students.

Ensuring Impartial Treatment

Upholding impartial treatment is a cornerstone. Teachers must actively strive to treat all students fairly, steering clear of situations where personal relationships or biases might exert undue influence on grading, feedback, or other facets of the educational experience.

Dealing with Delicate Subjects

Exercising Ethical Sensitivity

Approaching sensitive or contentious topics demands a heightened sense of ethical awareness. Teachers must be mindful of the potential impact these subjects may have on students and be attuned to the diverse perspectives and experiences within the classroom.

Fostering a Respectful Environment

Nurturing a classroom atmosphere that fosters open dialogue and respectful discussion is foundational. This involves setting ground rules for discussions, encouraging active listening, and creating an environment where students feel secure expressing

diverse opinions without the fear of judgment.

Promoting Cultural Competence

Grasping the cultural context of delicate subjects is paramount. Teachers should actively pursue cultural competence, acknowledging and appreciating the diversity of backgrounds and experiences within the classroom. This ensures that discussions are inclusive and considerate of various cultural perspectives. Successfully addressing these ethical challenges requires an ongoing practice of introspection, continuous professional growth, and a resolute dedication to establishing an educational atmosphere firmly grounded in ethical principles. Teachers play a crucial role in molding the ethical ambiance of the classroom, actively contributing to an environment that esteems fairness, inclusivity, and the holistic advancement of every student.

Optimal Approaches and Resolutions for Ethical Fusion in Technological Progression

1. Digital Literacy and Access

Holistic Digital Literacy Initiatives

Instigate well-structured digital literacy programs embedded in the academic curriculum. These initiatives should encompass facets like online safety, critical thinking,

and responsible utilization of technology.

Amid the growing significance of digital literacy, educational institutions must embark on the implementation of a comprehensive digital literacy program seamlessly woven into their academic curriculum. This initiative aims to furnish students with essential skills for navigating the digital landscape responsibly, addressing crucial aspects such as online safety, critical thinking, and responsible use of technology. Within this program, students actively participate in interactive modules that offer practical insights into identifying and mitigating online threats. Engaging in discussions and activities, they cultivate enhanced critical thinking skills, fostering the ability to evaluate information critically and discern credible sources in the digital realm. Moreover, the program instills a profound sense of responsibility in utilizing technology, emphasizing ethical considerations and elucidating the impact of digital actions on individuals and society. By ingraining these initiatives into the curriculum, educational institutions ensure that digital literacy seamlessly integrates into students' educational journeys, equipping them for the challenges and opportunities in an increasingly digital world.

Equity-Driven Access Campaigns

Pioneer campaigns to mitigate the digital divide, ensuring uniform access to devices, internet connectivity, and educational resources for all students. Recognizing the digital disparities among students, educational institutions must undertake a pioneering campaign to alleviate the digital divide. This comprehensive initiative is strategically crafted to guarantee uniform access to devices, internet connectivity, and educational resources for all students, irrespective of their socio-economic backgrounds. As part of this campaign, schools are required to forge collaborations with local businesses and community organizations to secure donations of laptops and tablets. Moreover, the establishment of partnerships with internet service providers is imperative, aiming to provide discounted or subsidized internet connectivity to families facing financial constraints. In addition, schools should establish a technology resource center within their premises, creating a dedicated space equipped with computers and internet access for students who may lack these resources at home. This center should also offer support services, including tutorials on digital literacy and troubleshooting assistance. By championing these efforts, educational institutions are not only narrowing the digital gap but also nurturing an inclusive learning

environment where all students have fair and consistent access to the tools and resources essential for their educational success.

Cultivating Ethical Learning Milieus

Privacy, Inclusivity, and Pedagogical Transformations: Stringent Data Privacy Protocols

Institute unequivocal data privacy policies within educational institutions, delineating the collection, storage, and sharing of student information, all while adhering to pertinent regulations.

In educational settings, it is imperative to establish a robust framework of clear and unequivocal data privacy policies aimed at safeguarding the confidentiality and security of student information. These policies meticulously delineate the collection, storage, and sharing of student data, adhering to stringent regulations to ensure compliance with privacy laws. As part of these policies, educational institutions have implemented secure data storage systems with restricted access limited to authorized personnel only. Regular audits are systematically conducted to monitor and assess the effectiveness of these security measures, guaranteeing that student information remains confidential and protected from unauthorized access. Furthermore, the institution conducts comprehensive training sessions for faculty and staff, enlightening them on the

significance of data privacy and the specific protocols in place. This ensures that all members of the educational community are well-informed and adhere to the established guidelines. By implementing these clear and stringent data privacy policies, educational institutions not only fulfill legal obligations but also cultivate a trustworthy environment where students, faculty, and staff can have confidence that their sensitive information is handled with the utmost care and responsibility.

Diversity-Encouraging Teaching Approaches

Deliver training sessions for educators on teaching methods that foster inclusivity, encouraging diverse perspectives, and crafting a learning environment that respects the unique backgrounds and experiences of each student. In the realm of educational institutions, a proactive commitment to fostering inclusivity is evident through specialized training sessions tailored for educators. These sessions aim to provide teachers with innovative teaching methods that not only cultivate inclusivity but also foster an environment encouraging diverse perspectives. The goal is to contribute to the creation of a learning atmosphere that respects the unique backgrounds and experiences of each student. During these training sessions, educators actively participate in engaging

workshops that delve into the principles of inclusive teaching. They are introduced to various strategies, including differentiated instruction, collaborative learning

approaches, and the integration of diverse learning materials. Practical scenarios and case studies are explored, offering real-world applications of these inclusive teaching methods. Furthermore, the training underscores the significance of establishing a classroom culture that values and celebrates diversity. Educators are urged to identify and address unconscious biases, ensuring that their teaching practices are not only culturally sensitive but also responsive to the individual needs of students from various backgrounds. Through the implementation of these targeted training sessions, educational institutions guarantee that their educators are well-prepared to integrate inclusivity into their teaching practices. This, in turn, contributes to the development of a dynamic and respectful learning environment where every student feels valued and supported.

Cultural Competence Seminars

Conduct workshops focused on cultural competence, augmenting educators' comprehension of cultural diversity and sensitizing them to potential cultural biases in their teaching approaches. It is imperative, for In the realm of

educational institutions, to manifest a commitment to nurturing cultural competence among educators through specialized workshops. These workshops are meticulously designed to amplify educators' comprehension of cultural diversity and sensitize them to potential biases in their teaching approaches. Within these workshops, educators actively engage in participatory sessions, delving into the intricacies of cultural competence. Through dynamic discussions and interactive activities, they broaden their perspectives on diverse cultures, underscoring the significance of recognizing and respecting cultural differences within the learning environment. These workshops are structured to equip educators with practical strategies for seamlessly integrating cultural competence into their teaching methodologies. Educators glean insights on infusing diverse perspectives into lesson plans, incorporating multicultural literature, and fostering an inclusive classroom atmosphere that reveres and celebrates the richness of cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, the workshops foster self-reflection among educators, prompting them to identify and address potential cultural biases in their teaching practices. Utilizing case studies and real-life scenarios, educators gain valuable insights into the profound impact of cultural sensitivity on student engagement and success. Through the implementation of these targeted

workshops, educational institutions ensure that their educators are armed with the requisite knowledge and skills to cultivate cultural competence in their teaching, thereby constructing an inclusive educational environment that readies students for a diverse and interconnected world.

2. Promoting Ethical Professionalism and Student Well-being: Academic Integrity Proposals

Enlightening Campaigns

Initiate campaigns that underscore the significance of academic integrity, accentuating originality, proper citation practices, and ethical conduct in academic endeavors. In acknowledgment of the escalating importance of academic integrity, educational institutions must proactively engage in fostering a culture rooted in honesty and ethical conduct. Through the initiation of comprehensive campaigns, these institutions endeavor to underscore the paramount significance of preserving academic integrity. These campaigns center on instilling values such as originality, adherence to proper citation practices, and ethical behavior in all academic pursuits. Utilizing targeted awareness programs, students are imparted with the principles of academic honesty, discouraging any form of plagiarism and instilling a dedication to ethical conduct in research, writing, and

coursework. Concurrently, institutions are enacting Integrity Codes of Honor, solidifying a shared commitment to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity within the educational community. These codes function as guiding principles, nurturing a culture that esteems honesty, promotes original thought, and dissuades any manifestation of academic dishonesty. Through the amalgamation of educational campaigns with tangible codes of honor, institutions are poised to cultivate an environment wherein academic integrity is not merely maintained but heralded as a cornerstone of scholarly excellence.

Integrity Codes of Honor

Implement codes of honor related to integrity within educational institutions, cultivating a culture that values honesty and discourages plagiarism.

Establishing codes of honour concerning integrity within educational institutions is a crucial endeavour in cultivating a culture that values honesty and vehemently discourages plagiarism. These codes function as ethical frameworks, precisely delineating the expectations and benchmarks for academic behaviour within the institution. For instance, a university might craft a code of honour explicitly articulating the principles of originality, proper citation practices, and the ethical utilization of information. Both

students and faculty are required to conform to these principles, fostering a collective dedication to upholding the utmost standards of integrity in all academic endeavors. The code of honour serves as a guiding document, not only expressing the institution's values but also serving as a shared pact among members of the academic community, reinforcing a culture where honesty is highly regarded, and plagiarism is resolutely discouraged. Through these measures, educational institutions actively foster an atmosphere of academic integrity and ethical conduct.

Guidelines for Teacher Professionalism

Continuous Professional Growth

Provide continual opportunities for professional development to empower teachers with enhanced ethical decision-making skills, addressing challenges linked to dual roles and conflicts of interest. To strengthen teachers' ethical decision-making skills and effectively tackle challenges linked to dual roles and conflicts of interest, educational institutions can institute an ongoing professional development initiative. This program may encompass regular workshops, seminars, and online courses tailored to delve into the complexities of ethical considerations in teaching. For instance, teachers could actively

participate in interactive sessions, delving into case studies that highlight dilemmas associated with dual roles and conflicts of interest. Furthermore, the professional development program could furnish resources like ethical guidelines and best practices, providing teachers with practical tools for navigating ethical decisions. Through a consistent provision of opportunities for professional growth in these areas, educators can augment their ethical competencies, fostering a learning environment that places a premium on integrity and professionalism.

Mentorship Training Programs

Formulate mentorship training programs to assist teachers in upholding professional boundaries and navigating ethical predicaments. To support teachers in upholding professional boundaries and navigating ethical challenges, educational institutions can establish mentorship training programs. These programs aim to offer guidance on maintaining clear boundaries in mentor-student relationships and addressing potential ethical dilemmas. For example, mentorship training sessions may incorporate scenarios and case studies that depict various ethical challenges, providing teachers with opportunities to practice decision-making in a supportive learning environment. Moreover, the training can include modules on communication

strategies, highlighting the significance of transparent and professional interactions. Through the implementation of mentorship training programs, institutions equip teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate intricate ethical situations, contributing to the cultivation of a culture of ethical awareness within the educational community.

Support for Student Well-being

Integrated Mental Health Services

Integrate mental health services seamlessly into educational institutions, offering counseling and support for students contending with challenges tied to academic stress or other mental health issues. To holistically address the mental health needs of students facing challenges associated with academic stress or other mental health issues, educational institutions can seamlessly incorporate mental health services. This undertaking involves establishing counseling and support services on-site, creating a designated space where students have easy access to professional assistance and guidance. For example, the institution might collaborate with mental health professionals to provide individual counseling sessions, group therapy, or workshops focused on stress management and overall well-being. This integrated strategy ensures that mental health support is both

accessible and destigmatized, cultivating an environment where students are motivated to seek assistance when necessary. By integrating mental health services into the educational framework, institutions actively contribute to the comprehensive well-being of their students, fostering a culture that values both academic achievement and mental health.

Inclusion of Well-being Education

Weave well-being education into the curriculum, championing a holistic approach to student development. To foster a comprehensive approach to student development, educational institutions can seamlessly integrate well-being education into their curriculum. This entails infusing modules and courses that delve into various aspects of well-being, encompassing physical health, mental health, and personal growth. For example, the curriculum might feature subjects covering topics like stress management, mindfulness, nutrition, and the promotion of healthy lifestyle choices. Furthermore, educators can arrange workshops or seminars to provide hands-on insights and skills relevant to well-being. By embedding well-being education into the curriculum, institutions actively advocate for a holistic approach to student development, arming learners with the knowledge and tools required to excel not only academically but also in their overall well-being.

3. Global Perspectives with Cultural Competence

Initiating International Collaborative Endeavors

Facilitate programs promoting international collaboration, exposing students to diverse global perspectives and nurturing cultural competence.

To nurture cultural competence and expose students to a variety of global perspectives, educational institutions can establish initiatives that facilitate international collaboration. These programs may entail forming partnerships with schools or organizations from different countries, creating avenues for students to partake in collaborative projects, virtual exchanges, or cultural immersion experiences. For example, students could engage in joint research endeavors with peers from diverse backgrounds, participate in virtual exchange programs to interact with students globally, or take part in cultural exchange events. These endeavors not only expand students' horizons by instilling a global perspective but also cultivate cultural competence, enabling them to navigate and appreciate the intricacies of an interconnected world. Through the implementation of such international collaboration programs, educational institutions actively contribute to the cultivation of well-rounded and globally aware individuals.

Infusing Global Education Modules

Integrate modules focused on global education into the curriculum, addressing cultural sensitivity, fostering understanding of global issues, and instilling a sense of global citizenship. To cultivate a global perspective, enhance awareness of global issues, and instill cultural sensitivity, educational institutions can seamlessly incorporate modules focused on global education into their curriculum. These modules facilitate a comprehensive exploration of topics such as cultural diversity, international affairs, and the interconnected nature of global challenges. For example, students may immerse themselves in case studies that delve into the impact of cultural differences on international relations or participate in projects addressing global issues like climate change, poverty, or human rights. Additionally, these modules encourage discussions highlighting the significance of empathy, cooperation, and cross-cultural communication. By integrating these global education modules, institutions equip students with the knowledge and skills essential for navigating an increasingly interconnected world and contributing to positive global change.

Implementing these pinnacle practices necessitates a unified effort from educators,

administrators, policymakers, and the wider educational community. A continuous process of evaluation and adaptation is indispensable to ensure the ethical assimilation of technology and the establishment of inclusive, culturally sensitive, and ethically rooted learning environments.

Fundamentally, the integration of ethical considerations within the structure of the learning environment and the broader educational panorama is crucial for nurturing a positive and supportive academic milieu. This focus on ethical principles serves not only to safeguard the integrity of the educational journey but also assumes a pivotal role in molding the character and values of learners. The relevance of ethical considerations in education surpasses institutional boundaries; it embodies a shared responsibility that each participant within the educational realm must actively embrace. Educators, administrators, students, and all involved stakeholders play integral roles in fostering an ethical learning environment. Through acknowledgment and acceptance of the significance of ethical standards, the educational community not only imparts a sense of integrity and accountability to learners but also contributes to the comprehensive development of individuals who are equipped to navigate the intricacies of the broader world with ethical competence and conscientiousness.

A reckoning.

Prof. Dr. Tobey Gross

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This pamphlet will divide.

This newsletter is a format that allows for the personal and unsolicited utterance of experience and opinion. While the domain that we work in usually requires extensive research endeavors as a means to make informed decisions, the International Council of Academics for Progressive Education seeks to provide more than opportunities to share research-based knowledge, but engage in fruitful discussion and create open-minded spaces where opinions and ideas can grow.

Hence, I am using these lines to share what I have been experiencing in different settings, at different places, and as a professional educator with an academic background in both educational science and -psychology and public policy. I certainly understand the underpinnings of modern education and policymaking and I am also aware of biased perspectives on

certain contexts. Yet, this is the correct setting for having a subjective point of view, that does not require science-backed knowledge, which is why each and every reader is invited to disagree, and furthermore, I explicitly limit my utterance to the scope of my professional experiences, whereof I have made plenty during countless lectures, conferences, debates and discussions, interviews and lessons and so forth. The given scope limits my perception to Germany, unless explicitly stated otherwise. My experiences stem from facilities of different nature and likewise from numerous experiences outside of government-regulated facilities and are thus representative in regard of my assertions.

This contribution has a combative name and tone, that sits just right.

It is a reckoning with a generation of learners and a failed political system likewise. As for a *reckoning* with a generation, the one that is mostly referred to as *GenZ*, I will elaborate on why it is all but premature. And I will give insights into why the *GenZ* is not to blame. Being the unfortunate product of collective failure, they are rather the miserable ones to pick up the shattered pieces of the pathetic job the *Boomers* and *GenX* have done and *GenY* is consistently failing to fix. Furthermore, a reckoning with a political system, that has neither solved, nor is actively trying to solve any of the obvious issues we

are dealing with on a daily basis in modern education, is nothing that stands out in any way. Neither is it new. Nor does it have to be proven any further. Everybody knows it. Everybody sees it. Everyday.

It is a mirror, for you, the greedy, dishonest and incompetent political elite steering our education against the wall. It is a mirror displaying your ridiculous and pathetic failures, your ongoing oblivious ignorance wrapped in shallow words and self-praise. It is a mirror of how your greed, your crooked moral compass, that is only tied to the strings that economy pulls, and your ongoing blatant lies have long begun to destroy the future of an entire generation, and how the backfire of your selfish, shortsighted "leadership" is now beginning to consume all that you are trying to sell us as achievements.

We are currently finding ourselves in the midst of a crisis, and it is not the time for polite discourse or empty promises. This is an unapologetic confrontation with a political system that has failed us all, first and foremost the current generation of learners.

We can lay the blame game to rest. It would be profoundly misguided and also unfair to point fingers at *GenZ* for the mess we are in. They are not the architects of their own misfortune, because they did not create the broken system; they

inherited the shattered pieces and are rather to be perceived as casualties. Having grown up under circumstances that completely deprived them of critical thinking skills, what else could they have done than to perceive what they see and are told as reality. They are bombarded with images of instant fame and success, with smoke and mirrors, instead of being guided toward meaningful pursuits. Higher order thinking is not possible if your attention span is deliberately diminished to a mere seven seconds, so you consume more meaningless digital content of fabricated lives, fake fame and general misinformation.

The relentless nature of advertising algorithms feed off of blunt clickbaiting headlines, manipulative design and constant barrage of notifications, that ongoingly suggest importance and demand attention. Is it a surprise that the networks that deploy such manipulative technology are the wealthiest that have ever existed in the history of mankind? No, it is not at all, because they have found the ultimate loophole to practice highly unethical strategies while disguised as useful everyday-tools. The collateral damage is hidden so deep that Average Joe is not even capable of putting the puzzle together. How even? Instant gratification has already gotten the best of him before a process of critical thinking could even start. It's the perfect storm. And the ultimate trick.

No, *GenZ* can indeed not be blamed. They are the real victims. They are the victims of the exodus of educators from a sinking ship of modern education. Victims of the harmful practice of powerful data-grabbing predators, that they have been growing up with and fell prey to, uninformed, unaware. With educators fighting an uphill battle against ever-decreasing motivation and a general attitude of low effort, it is not surprising, that burnout, frustration and resignation lead to worsening conditions. Action plans? We haven't seen any. While our highly regarded ministers and other elitary blithers involved in policymaking keep tirelessly blathering about their innovative and transformative plans, critical thinking, performance and mental well-being of young generations keep eroding at an alarming rate. With all the additional harm that is inflicted through relentlessly exploitative digital corporations, children and adolescents are unwitting pawns of deep-seated manipulation. With all the promises of change, the only things that are a regular target of combative politics are those, that have the potential to disrupt structures that keep the money flowing into the right pockets. Is anybody surprised, that middleschool student performance is at an all-time low?

Our education system is tragic comedy. It's just that nobody is laughing. Outdated, rigid, utterly

incapable of adaption to changing needs and demographics. The funny thing is, while our showcase politicians love to portray the image of progressive Germany (that is being ridiculed internationally anyway), I can not even tell if they sometimes believe their own fabricated stories of how much innovation and brilliant new ideas they employ to help the issues. The ivory tower has grown so far from reality that it seems to be long out of sight. One ill-conceived policy follows the next, disgrace after disgrace, and the self-proclaimed heroes of this pathetic misery loudmouth their achievements. While they do not even understand the underlying issues, why should they anyway? Maintaining the status quo is key. Their cushy positions are not tied to any measurable success, as long as Average Joe maintains *his* status quo: a lack of alternatives, except for far-right or far-left, and susceptibility to empty rhetoric.

Federalism was certainly not conceptualized to make progress impossible, but that's the real nature of how it is practiced in Germany. The secondary education system is only one of its bitter casualties, health and transport, you name it, all suffer from the same poisoned chalice. While federalism is the idea of shared responsibility, it is *used* for circumvention of responsibility, pushing it back and forth until it eventually remains under the carpet, under the public radar and until the

next public outrage draws attention away. Maybe the general vast reduction of attention spans comes in handy.

This is not a gentle critique, it's harsh. It is time we confront the damage. As long as deception is the name of the game, the crack in the system will keep growing. Sadly, the wrongdoers will not be the ones to suffer the consequences of their reckless ignorance. It will be a sad thing to say one day, that *GenZ* never had a chance.

Curse of Teaching Methods: a Reflective Narrative from the Middle East

Guest Author. Authenticity confirmed. Note the disclaimer below.

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Introduction

Teaching methods of teaching in an EFL (Muslim) context is really dangerous specially for a teacher who has completed his higher degrees in Europe. This is because there are set of fixed beliefs about teacher and learner's roles already rooted in the community for about fifteen hundred years. Added to that the poor quality of education this community has been receiving due to the unstable political situation with the wide-spread corruption through all walks of life. This study

is bold - thus unique. It is the first-to date- to report critically what is going on in Middle Eastern colleges. Most teachers in their writings or in the conferences talk exaggeratedly positive manner. None has seriously dealt with the real educational (and administrative) issues.

Context

My country is the context for this narrative - with all its Islamic political parties and their hypocrite behaviour. Those parties enjoy freedom that only applies to them and their allies - neither to independent teachers, nor to learners. I do not want to talk much here about their corruption and criminality as such issues are not the focus of my narrative. But it is of great importance to this paper to shed light on the strong link between such parties and education. In fact, they are in full control of the universities. It took me a little time to discover that public universities in my country are no more than private universities running the politico- Islamic parties agendas. Most managers behave as though they are relaxing in their own homes - just sitting in the living rooms, walking through their homes' corridors, bringing food to their kitchens or getting to the bathroom. They are with nearly unlimited authorities, looking upon everyone as being servants to them!

Most managers are notorious for their awkward behaviour inside the colleges. One of them, for example, has four (or maybe five) female secretaries sitting in a small room next to his. He also employed a female photographer following him and photographing him all the day. Funny enough, in addition, he is followed by two to three policemen - serving as bodyguards to him inside the college; those policemen are walking behind him as he creeps through the departments and inside the classrooms. Further, this boss has had a very young (and inexperienced) friend of his recruited as the head of the legal department in the college. This lawyer functions as an influential tool to kick out his rivals. Furthermore, the formal college website is only about him and his close friend teachers' achievements: it is full of his photographs. He most of the times gets photographed (and rewarded) for nothing - just maybe for wandering through college, talking to someone, or looking at the door!

Me as an EFL Teacher Teaching *Methods of Teaching*

As an EFL teacher in my country, I was using Gebhard's (2009) *Teaching English as a Foreign or Second Language* and Larsen-Freeman and Anderson's (2011) *Techniques and Principles in Language teaching* textbooks. Even at times when I was not teaching these texts - for example when I

was teaching phonetics and conversation - I was adopting thoughts and practices from them, mostly related to the Communicative Language Teaching Approach. Throughout, I was trying my best to pass my learning experiences from Europe onto my learners and communicate both EFL and ESL classroom cultures. There have been many positive aspects about my teaching and the way it was received by the students. For instance, group work was really enjoyed by my learners. They see it as an opportunity to break the normal classroom routine/ boundaries and behave in a much more relaxed manner. However, I received multiple accusations among which - and perhaps the most dangerous - is blasphemy. I was blasphemous in their eyes mainly because I was professionally using humor in the classroom.

It is true that my teaching experience is not too long - less than twelve academic years, teaching EFL in seven colleges but I can say that I have had some good qualitative teaching experience. In fact, I love teaching and am always trying my best to teach based on my learning experience in Europe. During these five years, I was using humor in my lectures. The students liked that and my classes were always noisy. I was the only teacher who has employed this technique as all the teachers opted for a traditional way of teaching. Traditional teaching, represented

mostly by rote learning, is understandable and expected in a country like mine, torn by wars and political Islamic parties. Sometimes – unintentionally – my humor may have involved a reference to certain religious figure. But it was very clear from the way I presented them that the aim was not to mock this figure or to belittle Islam. Definitely not. My purpose was to allow for fun in the class and create a positive atmosphere where learners can enjoy the class, get interested to participate using English (which is the overarching aim). It happened that one of my learners (interestingly one out of the almost 2,000 students in the college whom I used to teach) reported that to the Head of the dept. This boss filed a formal complaint in the legal department in the college. This student complained, with the endorsement of my line manager, that I always mocked religious sacred figures. Some of the head's relatives were invited to witness against me at the legal dept. The complaint against me was made at the time when I was teaching them about self-development of language teachers and exploration of teaching. I had been very enthusiastic and full of hope that my learners would improve and develop themselves as prospect teachers. In these chapters, I taught my learners that if we observe another teacher and find out some weaknesses in his/her practices we should not mention these weaknesses to the observed teacher. We should

otherwise attribute these weaknesses to ourselves as we talk to them – i.e. we should inform the observed teacher of their weaknesses indirectly. For instance, if we observe one of our colleagues and discover that the students are not interacting with him/her, we need to speak with this teacher in the break and mention that "my learners are not interacting in my class" and ask for his/her help. In fact, I was shocked when I heard that there was a formal complaint against me in the legal office formed by one of my learners. Since then, I found this incident hard to believe and hard to forget!

So, it turned out that my endeavours to allow for fun inside the classroom were derided and devalued by my managers. I was looked at as a blasphemous teacher who was trying to detach the learners from their Islamic values. It is worth noting here that the bosses who helped this student to formulate the complaint are not strict Muslims. They disregarded the fact that I am using textbooks that are not written by Muslim authors. They are fully unaware of the fact that language cannot be removed from its culture. My material was also full of diverse views on religion and culture. My managers also overlooked the fact that the opinion of one student means nothing, since I was teaching almost 2,000 students at the time. So, the percentage of students who objected my attempt at humor is much less

than 1 per thousand. It is actually not significant and really means nothing!

Reflection

Reflecting on this, it seems that my students generally liked the humor, group work and the whole communicative approach I utilized. This was very evident in the noise my classes was characterized by and by the photos which I still keep. In fact, my bosses were intolerant of these practices because they have not received training in recent methods of teaching. Also, they cannot bear the fact that the world is changing and that today's university students are not the same as the students 20 or 25 years ago. Indeed, they are not allowing the change to take place in the colleges lest their kingdoms get shaken. It is very easy for them to brand an innovative teacher as an atheist or blasphemous. Accusations are there in their drawers, ready to be filed against those who are (potential) rivals. It was also clear to me that my bosses have always been trying to drive some of my students against me. It is worth noting here that what has helped them to drive some students against me to the extent that they have managed to formally formulate a legal complaint against me, is the fact that I am not in full time employment in the university. I am only a contracted - thus insecure - teacher who can be very easily

removed from the job with two or three such complaints.

Based on my personal teaching experience, I cannot expect change to happen in the ways teachers teach. I will supply two examples. In my lessons I occasionally ask my learners to form groups. This is to show them how valuable group work is. They really like the experience as they break from the traditional boring classroom atmosphere they sit one or one and a half hour listening to the teacher lecturing. They actually enjoy my class as they do not have to look at me all the time or show that they understand with a nod. I allow them to talk to their peers as I talk. I also give them normally ten to fifteen minutes to discuss some topics. Teachers on campus usually notice that the chairs are arranged in groups and this is for them prohibited. It is something like a crime. They always complain to me about how angry they are when they see chairs have been rearranged in circles. Indeed, they are really unhappy about that. They are very comfortable and secure in their classrooms and consider me and my lectures as a challenge to them. They are controllers in the classrooms. No interaction whatsoever is noticed between them and their students.

The second example is related to grammar. As teachers hear me explaining the Grammar Translation Method, and saying that grammar is

not that important for language learners, they feel so frustrated. I can clearly see the anger and the hatred towards me in their eyes. To them the grammar of the English language is gospel. It is so sacred that no one should ever belittle its value.

Conclusion

This paper reports the story of my years of part-time employment at a Middle East government-regulated university. I taught English as a foreign language and was endeavouring throughout to practice some of the principles which I learnt through my past studies in Europe. My belief in the principles and practices noted in Gebhard's and Larsen-Freeman and Anderson's textbooks and honesty in passing them on to my students has ignited jealousy and grudge on the part of my managers. Thus this paper should serve as a call (and reminder) for those who try to make a positive change in my country to be cautious in promoting their ideas and THINK TWICE OR THREE TIMES before they try the communicative approach in an EFL (Muslim) context. This paper is also a call for the INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY to think deeply on what is going on in such colleges and take action and help ambitious students who welcome change.

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