

**Professionalism:
Ethical Professional Practice for Teachers of Family and Consumer Sciences**

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The National Standards for Teachers of Family and Consumer Sciences (National Association of Teacher Educators for Family and Consumer Sciences [NATEFACS], 2004) suggest that family and consumer sciences (FCS) teachers are expected to engage in practices that reflect both the technical and ethical standards of the calling to which they are committed. The purpose of this article is to promote understanding and encourage implementation of Standard 8, Professionalism, which calls for FCS teachers to engage in ethical professional practice. The article (a) addresses the unique ethical responsibilities of educators, (b) describes the major theoretical perspectives that support ethical practice, (c) provides an overview of historical and philosophical bases of professional ethics in FCS education, (d) gives examples of formal codes of ethics that guide the professional practice of FCS teachers, (e) examines significant ethical issues in public education and their implications for FCS education, and (f) suggests strategies and resources to help teacher educators prepare beginning FCS teachers to fulfill their ethical responsibilities to those they serve.

It is timely and appropriate that the *National Standards for Teachers of Family and Consumer Sciences* (National Association of Teacher Educators for Family and Consumer Sciences [NATEFACS], 2004) emphasize the importance of ethical professional practice. Standard 8, Professionalism, states that family and consumer sciences (FCS) teachers will “engage in ethical professional practice based on the history and philosophy of family and consumer sciences and career and technical education through civic engagement, advocacy, and ongoing professional development” (NATEFACS). The standard suggests that ethical practice is fundamental to the concept of professionalism; that family and consumer sciences teachers serve not only students, but also the public interest; and that they are required to maintain professional competence in order to fulfill their obligations to those they serve.

As indicated in Standard 8, ethical professional practice has been a concern for family and consumer sciences education throughout our history. This concern is reflected in the writings of Blankenship and Moerchen (1979), Brown and Paolucci (1979), East (1980), and Thomas (1986), among others. More recently, the Education and Technology Division of the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences devoted a yearbook to the topic, *Thinking for Ethical Action in Families and Communities* (Laster & Thomas, 1997), and the *Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences* published a theme issue on ethics (Anderson, 2005). Craig (1996) described ethical practice as the “heart” of the profession, “...if we really are a profession that has as its goal the improvement of quality of living for individuals and families, ethics must be at the heart of our education, training, and performance” (p. 150).

So, what does it mean to say that family and consumer sciences teachers are professionals who engage in ethical professional practice? The term “professional” may be defined broadly to refer to any person who engages in an activity for gain or livelihood, or more narrowly to describe a person who is engaged in a calling that requires specialized knowledge and often long

and intensive academic preparation (Mish, 1988). The latter definition provides a good basis for exploring the professional role of family and consumer sciences teachers. It assumes that teachers will engage in practices that reflect both the technical expertise, based on the specialized content and pedagogical knowledge and skills described in the *Standards* document, and the ethical standards of the calling to which they are committed. Using this definition, the term “ethical professional practice” becomes somewhat redundant, given that ethical behavior is an inherent part of what it means to be professional.

When considering what ethical professional practice *is*, it also is useful to consider what it *is not*. For example, ethical behavior cannot be defined solely in terms of one’s personal value system. Although ethics and values clearly are related, not all value systems are equally ethical. Some values are consistent with moral principles, but others are rooted in self-interest, expediency, or other non-ethical or unethical motives. Further, ethical behavior is not synonymous with that which is legal. Moral principles often are codified into law, but it goes without saying that some laws are based on stronger moral foundations than others.

Like most professionals, family and consumer sciences teachers provide services to clients (i.e., students) and the larger society. Because they serve others, professionals are expected to adhere to certain standards of performance, as reflected in the wording of Standard 8. Ethical professional responsibilities include, but are not necessarily limited to, showing respect for all persons, maintaining confidentiality, avoiding conflicts of interest, separating the public interest from self-interest, being an effective advocate for those who are served, and ensuring continuing competence through professional development.

Greenfield (1991), Lashaway (1996), and Sergiovanni (1992) all have observed that education professionals face unique ethical challenges. For example, because educators facilitate students’ access to knowledge, they have significant influence on the quality of life in local communities and beyond. Therefore, they have a responsibility to serve both their students and the public good. Teachers must be particularly cognizant of ethical obligations to their primary clients -- students who are subject to the authority of the school and have little power of their own.

Laster (1997) has suggested that students often lack the maturity and capability of making moral judgments on their own, and may look to teachers for moral direction. A related challenge for teachers, as noted by Niehoff (2006), is the moral certitude of students who assume that the answers to ethical questions are obvious, even though “they may not even have framed the questions correctly” (p. 1). For example, most people who live in the United States take the convenience of bottled water for granted, and some believe that it is superior in quality to tap water. Family and consumer sciences teachers can lead students to consider questions such as: What are the costs and benefits of drinking bottled water from different sources, e.g., “pure natural spring water” from some far-away place or water from a public water source labeled “PWS”? What are the energy costs associated with bottling water and transporting it to retailers and recycling the plastic bottles? How long does it take for a plastic bottle to biodegrade? What are the environmental costs of clogging public landfills or littering the landscape with plastic bottles that are not recycled?

Theoretical Frameworks

“Ethics” refers to the discipline or field of study that deals with principles of right and wrong behavior, and the term also may be used in reference to the principles themselves. Although it is possible to differentiate between the terms “ethical” and “moral,” in practice, the

two are used interchangeably. Indeed, one term frequently is used to define the other; for example, Frankena (1963) defined ethics as "...philosophical thinking about morality, moral problems, and moral judgments" (p. 3).

The study of ethics emerges from a variety of theoretical perspectives. The two basic schools of ethical thought are the teleological theories and the deontological theories. (For a more thorough discussion of these theories, see Arcus, 1997.) The teleological approach holds that the morality of a certain behavior is based on the consequences of that behavior. People who subscribe to this approach sometimes are described as consequentialists. Utilitarianism, a well-known example of the teleological theories, judges the rightness of a given action depending on competing outcomes or consequences. Ethical behavior is defined as that which generates the greatest possible benefits for the largest number of people and does the least harm. The utilitarian perspective can be applied either in terms of the direct consequences of a specific action or by considering the outcomes if the action became the general standard for behavior.

The deontological ethical theories assume that there are universal principles that determine the morality of an action. These principles are absolute and unconditional, regardless of the outcomes or consequences of the action taken. Therefore, people who advocate this approach to ethical decision-making may be called non-consequentialists. Arcus (1997) cites Immanuel Kant's duty ethics as an example of deontology. Kant argued, for instance, that parents choose to take care of their children because they have a moral obligation to do so, rather than to reap the benefits of raising healthy, well-adjusted offspring or to avoid the negative consequences of neglecting them.

Both sets of theories have obvious limitations. The teleological approach, for example, assumes that the consequences of individual actions can be anticipated, and ignores the problem of unintended consequences. In addition, teleologists assume no moral responsibility for the minority who may be harmed by actions that benefit the majority. On the other hand, deontologists offer little assistance when it is necessary to choose among competing ethical principles, as is true for many, if not most, ethical dilemmas. Perhaps because of these and other limitations, researchers have attempted to integrate the two approaches to describe how people make moral decisions.

A two-dimensional model developed by Forsyth (1980) is an example of an approach that draws on both teleological and deontological traditions. The model is based on the dimensions of relativism, "the extent to which individuals reject universal moral rules," and idealism, "the extent to which individuals believe that, with the right action, desirable consequences can always be obtained" (Forsyth, pp. 175-176). Forsyth articulated four ethical positions or ideologies that explain why people's ethical judgments differ:

1. Absolutists (low relativism/high idealism) assume that the application of universal moral principles always produces the best possible outcomes.
2. Subjectivists (high relativism/low idealism) reject universal rules and base moral judgments on their own personal perspectives.
3. Exceptionists (low idealism/low relativism) believe that morality is determined by the consequences of the behavior.
4. Situationists (high relativism/high idealism) make moral decisions by considering both universal rules and individual circumstances and situations.

Forsyth's model could be used to examine the issue of academic dishonesty: Is it ever okay to cheat on a test or assignment? Students who take the absolutist position would, of course, say that it is never acceptable to cheat, based on the universal principle of honesty. On the other

hand, subjectivists might decide that cheating is okay because of the personal benefits to be gained (e.g., higher grades). Exceptionists would focus on the consequences of cheating, such as Am I likely to get caught? If I do get caught, how severe are the consequences? Do the potential benefits of cheating outweigh the possible negative consequences? Universal moral principles might persuade situationists that cheating is wrong. On the other hand, circumstances (e.g., everybody else cheats) could convince them that they have to cheat in order to compete on a level playing field.

Historical and Philosophical Perspectives

Ethical professional practice is rooted in the history of public education in the United States, including the growth of vocational and career education, and in the history of the family and consumer sciences profession. Blankenship and Moerchen (1979) noted that, from its beginnings in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the profession once known as “home economics” has been closely tied to such ethical concerns as the democratic ideal of public education for all, the idea that education should help people to improve their lives, and the desire to improve the quality of education for women, who were at one time excluded from many educational pursuits.

Thomas Jefferson and other early advocates of education for all clearly envisioned that public education would serve the common good by ensuring an educated citizenry, rather than merely provide a private benefit to individual citizens. (See, for example, Hogg, 1999; Miller & Gregson, 1999; *Thomas Jefferson on Politics and Government: Educating the People*, 2001.) Although the idea of public education for everyone is no longer considered revolutionary, the question, “Who is public education designed to serve?”, remains a fundamental ethical issue underlying current controversies over school reform. For example, Cookson and Shroff (1997), in a discussion of urban school reform, asserted that “educational justice” is an important goal of public education. The concept of educational justice recognizes that every child, regardless of circumstances of birth or family, has the same right to educational opportunity as every other child. Because public education is part of the “social marketplace,” Cookson and Shroff argue that its effectiveness ought to be measured in terms of success in providing education to all citizens. (For a compelling portrait of poor children who have been denied educational justice in America’s schools, see Jonathan Kozol’s 1991 book, *Savage Inequalities*.)

The growth of family and consumer sciences and other career and technical education programs represents a gradual expansion of educational opportunities, and reflects the belief that education should help people improve their lives. For example, John Dewey, an early proponent of education that is useful and practical, maintained that vocational education should play a reconstructionist role in a democracy, serving to correct, rather than perpetuate, unfair privilege and deprivation (cited in Miller & Gregson, 1999). Thomas (1986) spoke to this same point when she proposed an interventionist view of home economics education that emphasizes reducing barriers and increasing opportunities for economically, socially, or culturally disadvantaged groups. Thomas also recalled, “...the roots of intervention are found in the Lake Placid proceedings where discussions focused on the poor, on educating children and females from urban ghettos, and on assisting immigrants in cultural assimilation” (p. 174).

It is important to recognize the role of federal legislation in the democratization of education that expanded educational opportunities for disenfranchised individuals and groups. Examples include the Morrill Land Grant Act in 1862 (*Land-grant act: History and institutions*, 2007), establishing land-grant universities to serve “ordinary citizens;” the Smith-Hughes Act in

1917 (Hillison & Burge, 1988), that provided the first federal funding for vocational education; Title IX of the Education Amendments in 1972 (*Title IX: Education amendments of 1972*, 2007) and the Education for all Handicapped Children Act in 1975 (U.S. Congress, 1975), which addressed issues of gender equity and disability, respectively; and a variety of other legislative mandates that supported greater educational opportunities for those previously excluded or underserved. Teachers, administrators, parents, civic leaders, and others have contributed to the nation's progress toward educational justice, but federal policy-makers clearly have pointed the way.

In their seminal work, *Home economics: A definition*, Brown and Paolucci (1979) reminded us that professionals do intervene in the lives of those served, and “cannot legitimately maintain the myth of moral neutrality” (p. 23). Brown and Paolucci noted that the family itself is an ethical/moral enterprise with responsibilities to those beyond its boundaries, as well as to its own members. Brown and Paolucci stated, “It would be morally irresponsible to encourage egocentric attitudes and orientations among individual families merely to meet their own needs, and to be selfishly indifferent to the needs of others” (p. 21).

Codes of Ethics

Like other professions, the family and consumer sciences (FCS) profession and the field of public education have established formal codes or standards of behavior to guide the professional practice of their members. A thorough examination of formal codes of ethics for FCS and education professionals is beyond the scope of this article. However, three such codes provide examples of principles that guide the professional behavior of FCS educators:

1. National Education Association (NEA) Code of Ethics of the Education Profession (NEA, 1975).
2. American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (AAFCS) Code of Ethics (AAFCS, 2003).
3. Association for Career and Technology (ACTE) Code of Ethics (ACTE, 2006).

Each of the documents consists of a preamble and statements of specific ethical principles. The NEA code is the shortest of the three, with 16 statements of guidelines for ethical conduct. The ACTE code identifies 22 specific guidelines and the AAFCS code includes 33. Even a cursory review of these documents reinforces the idea that family and consumer sciences teachers are engaged in an ethical endeavor. The preamble to the NEA code, for example, states:

The educator, believing in the worth and dignity of each human being, recognizes the supreme importance of the pursuit of truth, devotion to excellence, and the nurture of democratic principles. Essential to these goals is the protection of freedom to learn and to teach and the guarantee of equal educational opportunity for all...The educator recognizes the magnitude of the responsibility inherent in the teaching process. (NEA, 1975, p. 1)

Not surprisingly, a comparison of the NEA, AAFCS, and ACTE documents reveals a number of similarities. It also is clear that each of the codes reinforces certain aspects of professional practice identified in Standard 8. The Standard's call for civic engagement and advocacy is reflected in ethical principles related to professional responsibilities to clients/students and accountability to the community. The importance of continuing professional development is reflected in the theme that professionals must maintain individual professional competence and work to ensure the collective competence of the profession as a whole. Other

unifying themes found in the three codes include guidelines regarding confidentiality, avoiding conflicts of interest, and respect for diversity.

There also are some interesting differences. The AAFCS code, for example, is the only one that includes a section on ethics in research and scholarship, although the other documents do imply the need to utilize current research to ensure professional competence. Although each code emphasizes respect for diversity, only the NEA code prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation – a noteworthy difference, given that the NEA code was developed in 1975.

Another major difference in the three documents is that all of the 33 specific statements of ethical principles in the AAFCS code and the 22 comparable statements in the ACTE code emphasize what professionals *should do*. The NEA document, on the other hand, emphasizes what educators *should not do*. Fifteen of the 16 statements in the NEA code are of the “shall not” variety, and some are quite specific, for example, “The educator shall not knowingly make false or malicious statements about a colleague” (NEA, 1975, p. 2).

Couch (2005) noted that formal statements of ethical principles, sometimes focused primarily on compliance, offer limited guidance for “doing the right thing” in the broader sense. The examples discussed here demonstrate that professional codes of ethics are useful and necessary, but that legalistic adherence to such codes does not satisfy one’s ethical obligations, that is, it does not guarantee that the educator is engaging in ethical professional practice. As with the law, ethical behavior may involve doing more than what a code of ethics requires and/or less than what it allows. For example, ethical principles prohibit a romantic relationship between a teacher and a student, even if a specific code of ethics does not. Perhaps this is why Craig (1996) warned that, while professional codes and other formal statements of ethical principles provide good starting points for guiding professional practice, “the greatest possible danger may come from unquestioning acceptance of any code, standard or set of practices” (p. 150).

Ethical Issues in Public Education

Many current educational issues are intertwined with the ethical professional practice of teachers. As stated earlier, educators facilitate students’ access to knowledge and the decisions teachers make can have long-term and even life-changing impacts on students and their families. Unethical decisions and actions may result in some students being marginalized; therefore, educational professionalism demands a capacity that we will call ethical objectivity. Objectivity, as defined by *Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* (Mish, 1988), is treating or dealing with facts without distortion by personal feelings or prejudices. Ethical objectivity requires decisions and actions in ethical situations be made on facts without distortion from personal feelings or prejudices and may require education professionals to confront their own opposing personal values or biases.

A current educational issue confronting teachers and schools which requires ethical objectivity is society’s changing family structures. Family and consumer sciences teachers, especially, need to exercise ethical objectivity when teaching content related to families and family structures. Further, they have an ethical charge to be an advocate for all families.

The American family has changed significantly in the last 20 years and includes diverse structures different from the traditional family, such as dual income families, stepfamilies, hands-on fathers, families headed by gay and lesbian parents, and adoptive families. In fact, the 2000 Census recorded 24,722 different household combinations of the more than 105 million existing United States households (Hobbs, 2005). Same-sex headed families (Dingfelder, 2005) illustrate the need for ethical objectivity from family and consumer sciences educators. The

national media and legislative attention given to gay marriage has polarized some communities resulting in very strong opinions toward gay marriage and gay and lesbian families. However, educators must realize that even though individuals may have conflict with gay and lesbian family systems because of personal values and/or religious beliefs, educators are ethically and legally responsible for ensuring the educational needs and personal safety of all children.

The family and consumer sciences profession reinforced this ethical charge at the 2006 Annual Meeting of the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (AAFCS) by passing a non-discrimination resolution:

Whereas AAFCS supports diversity and has consistently advocated to end discrimination, and

Whereas AAFCS is a professional society rooted in scientific principles and knowledge generated by research,

Therefore be it resolved that the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences does not tolerate discrimination with respect to an individual's or group's race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, age or disability, and

Therefore be it resolved that the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences endorses the concept that all persons, regardless of individual's or group's race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, age or disability are entitled to equal protection and privilege under the law. (AAFCS, 2006, n.p.)

As school safety remains in the forefront of educational issues, teachers must recognize their ethical responsibility includes creating a safe learning environment for all students. While there is some evidence that school safety has improved (*Indicators of school crime and safety*, 2007), the issue remains a great concern because a single act of school violence can disrupt the educative process for many students. In the 2005-2006 school year, the *Indicators of school crime and safety* reported that 78% of schools experienced one or more violent incidents of crime and 17% experienced one or more serious violent incidents. Additionally, 24% of public schools reported that student bullying was a daily or weekly problem. With regard to other discipline problems occurring at least once a week, 18% of public school principals reported student acts of disrespect for teachers, 9% reported student verbal abuse of teachers, 3% reported daily or weekly occurrences of racial/ethnic tensions among students, and 2% reported widespread disorder in classrooms.

Bullying and other forms of harassment are of particular concern for many students. Olweus (1993) identified three essential elements of bullying behavior: (a) the behavior is aggressive and negative, (b) the behavior is carried out repeatedly, and (c) the behavior occurs in a relationship where there is an imbalance of power between the parties involved. Bullying is further defined with the identification of a variety of behaviors. The first subtype is direct, physical aggression, and the second subtype is indirect behavior such as name calling, social exclusion, or rejection. Direct bullying often takes the form of overt, physical contact in which the victim is openly attacked. Indirect bullying often takes the form of social isolation and intentional exclusion from activities (Olweus).

Educators have an ethical responsibility to confront direct and indirect bullying situations in the classroom and school hallways because often the victims do not possess the power to resolve the situation. Further, it is critical for educators to help students recognize bullying and harassing behaviors, such as derogatory or offensive language, as students may not even be aware of the meanings of their words and actions. For example, currently, a popular phrase used by adolescents is "that's so gay" or "you're so gay". According to the 2005 National School

Climate Survey (Kosciw & Diaz, 2006), phrases such as "that's so gay" or "you're so gay" really mean stupid or worthless. Unless confronted, these phrases become the accepted language and can eventually lead to the use of more derogatory or offensive language such "faggot" or "dyke".

Enhancing Ethical Behaviors

With the aforementioned issues, ethical objectivity can be enhanced through the awareness of the impact that discrimination and derogatory language can have on individuals and families. Discussing problem-solving scenarios and case studies in teacher preparation courses can help future teachers formulate solutions to potential classroom and school situations. An example is the following case study used by Alexander in a teaching methods course:

You have a very outgoing student in class who likes to tell jokes and make the other students laugh. While the student is often very funny, the joke today contains an offensive racial slur. How do you handle this classroom situation?

Once there is ample opportunity to discuss this situation and how it should be appropriately addressed, the scenario should be changed to indicate that the joke used sexist language and then changed again to discuss a joke that referred to sexuality with derogatory language. When this case study was applied in previous class situations with teacher candidates, it was interesting to observe the level of acceptance for the various scenarios. The teacher candidates unanimously agreed that a racial slur is unacceptable and should never be tolerated by students; however, there were varying degrees of acceptance with sexist language and the language referring to sexuality. This led to further discussion on questions such as: (a) Do we tolerate derogatory language more for some groups than others? (b) Is derogatory language ever appropriate? (c) What are the affects of language and jokes using these slurs? (d) What happens when we are silent or laugh? and (e) What classroom rules and guidelines should we have in place to promote a safe environment for all students? Discussion of similar types of scenarios and case studies can help teacher candidates develop more objectivity and stronger advocacy for all types of individuals and families.

Advocacy necessitates reading and understanding of the research related to current issues confronting individuals and families. Education professionals should routinely familiarize themselves with current literature by reading high-quality, unbiased research. Litman (2007) explains that quality research seeks the truth based upon all available information; whereas, poor research predetermines a conclusion and identifies facts, often taken out of context, to support the conclusion. Quality research should empower the reader to reach their own conclusions by including:

1. A well-defined research question.
2. Description of the context and existing information about an issue.
3. Consideration of various perspectives.
4. Presentation of evidence, with data and analysis in a format that can be replicated by others.
5. Discussion of critical assumptions, contrary findings, and alternative interpretations.
6. Cautious conclusions and discussion of their implications.
7. Adequate references, including original sources, alternative perspectives, and criticism (Litman, p. 2).

Teacher educators can prepare teacher candidates to be good consumers of research in teacher preparation courses by introducing and critiquing research studies. Questions that determine quality of the studies can be derived from the above list of characteristics and applied

to current educational research. In-depth analysis of existing research will help teacher candidates develop conclusions on the value of research outcomes and applications to support their classroom practice and work with individuals and families. Exposure to a variety of research methods and outcomes may even encourage the classroom teacher to more actively engage in action research, a beneficial professional development behavior.

In discussing the development of ethical professional practice, it is imperative to include the issue of academic integrity. The Center for Academic Integrity (CAI) (1999) defines academic integrity “as a commitment, even in the face of adversity, to five fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. From these values, flow principles of behavior that enable academic communities to translate ideals to action” (p. 4).

Research conducted by CAI (1999) and McCabe (2005) provides a shocking picture of what is happening on the nation’s university campuses in regard to academic integrity. McCabe surveyed nearly 50,000 undergraduates on more than 60 campuses and found that 70% of students admitted to some cheating and nearly 25% admitted to serious cheating in the last year. On written assignments, nearly 50% admitted to one or more instances of serious cheating. Teacher candidates, as college students, are faced with issues surrounding academic integrity on a regular basis, which provides a very relevant context for studying ethics as a part of family and consumer sciences teacher education. For example, academic integrity could be used as a basis for discussing (a) the overall topic of ethical professional practice, (b) the teacher candidates’ individual beliefs about particular ethical issues (in this case academic integrity), (c) the responsibilities of future teachers to practice ethical behavior and to serve as role models for their future students, and (d) how teacher candidates will promote academic integrity in their future classrooms.

High school students appear to be cheating nearly as often as undergraduates. In an annual survey on the Ethics of American Youth, conducted in 2004 by the Josephson Institute on Ethics, 62% of the high school students surveyed admitted they cheated on exams and two-thirds agreed that “in the real world, successful people do what they have to do to win, even if others consider it cheating” (*Ethics of American youth*, 2004, p. 5). Still, a large majority of the students stated that ethics and good character are very important and reported high self-appraisals of their own character. Michael Josephson, President of the Josephson Institute said:

Though the Report Card on the Integrity of American Youth continues to contain failing grades, there is reason for hope. For the first time in 12 years, the cheating and theft rates have actually dipped downward and the stated devotion to ethics is the strongest we’ve seen.... Still, it can’t be comforting to know that the majority of the next generation of police officers, politicians, accountants, lawyers, doctors, nuclear inspectors, and journalists are entering the workforce as unrepentant cheaters. (*Ethics of American youth*, p. 2)

Although these statistics seem unbelievable, there are strategies available to increase academic integrity at the secondary and postsecondary levels. First, CAI (1999) reports that academic honor codes can effectively reduce cheating. Results of surveys conducted in 1990, 1995, and 1999, with over 12,000 students on 48 different university campuses, indicated the impact of honor codes and student involvement in the control of academic dishonesty. Serious test cheating on campuses with honor codes was typically one third to one half lower than the level on campuses that did not have honor codes. Further, the level of serious cheating on written assignments was one fourth to one third lower (McCabe, 2005).

A second solution can be to report students for academic misconduct when cheating is suspected. Cheating behaviors with students will continue if in their minds the consequences are minimal. In fact, faculties resist taking action against suspected cheaters. Of the almost 10,000 faculty surveyed, 44% indicated that they were aware of students cheating in their courses but took no action to report the incidences to the appropriate campus authority. Additionally, student respondents indicated that cheating was higher in courses taught by faculty who consistently ignored the problem (McCabe, 2005).

Besides having a zero tolerance for cheating policy for each course, which is clearly shared with students, a third strategy is to spend time teaching students about academic integrity. Mini lessons at the beginning of each course could clarify many of the gray areas that students misunderstand. If students are not taught the correct behavior and the faculty assumes that students should know better, then faculty, too, have erred and should be held accountable for the missed opportunities to correct inappropriate behaviors.

Increased development and use of technology contributes to academic misconduct, especially with questions about the acceptable use of the Internet. McCabe (2005) indicated that cut and paste plagiarism is acceptable in the minds of students. The majority of students surveyed (77%) believed that it was not a very serious issue to take several sentences or bits of information without citing from various Web sites and reconstruct them into a paper submitted as their work (McCabe). Current technology provides information that is readily available at students' fingertips making plagiarism too easy and too inviting in comparison to taking the time to locate resources, conduct adequate research, and write or create the well crafted assignment.

Additional Classroom Strategies

The following strategies promote the discussion and development of ethical professional practice and are appropriate for family and consumer sciences teacher education programs, as well as for secondary family and consumer sciences classrooms. As more secondary programs adopt the Career Cluster framework, career preparation, which includes knowledge and skill development in professionalism and ethical behaviors, will be emphasized.

Technology has created many related sub-issues of which family and consumer sciences teachers need to be aware, for example the ethical use of technology to produce, purchase, and deliver consumer goods and services and the impact of technology on individuals and families. The PBS Teachers Web site (<http://www.pbs.org/teachers/>) is a good source of information on hundreds of ideas for classroom activities. The following are some examples of interdisciplinary learning activities focused on technology that could be used with family and consumer sciences teacher education students. The first, *Genetically modified foods: From the lab to the dinner table* (Fetters, n.d.), focuses on the production and consumption of genetically modified foods. Lesson directions and online resources are provided. The second, *A penny for your thoughts, movies, or music?* (Greeves, n.d.), is presented in similar format (directions and online resources) and focuses on fair use of the Internet, especially for downloading music and entertainment. The third, *The introduction and diffusion of household technology* (The First Measured Century, n.d.), has students research and describe the development of common household items such as electricity, refrigeration, and cell phones, during the 20th Century. The last, *18 ways to make a baby* (NOVA, n.d.), is an examination of ethical, legal, and social implications of in vitro fertilization. The lesson also promotes discussion of issues related to post-menopausal births.

An effective instructional strategy for introducing ethical professional practice is the movie, *The emperor's club* (Hoffman, 2002), available on video and DVD (PG-13). The film is

the story of a high school student and son of a powerful United States Senator, who cheats, and of the dedicated teacher who overlooks it and in the process, allows the student to gain an unfair advantage over his classmates. Years later, when the former student is campaigning for his father's Senate seat, the teacher, played by Kevin Kline, is forced to examine the consequences of his actions. The film is based on a short story, "The Palace Thief," by Ethan Canin (1994) that could be used as a companion reading assignment. An examination of the characters in the movie and/or short story would also enhance perspective-taking skills. Discussions could be led from the students' perspectives as well as from the teacher's, and then the roles could be switched.

A more in-depth reading assignment is John C. Maxwell's *There's no such thing as "business" ethics* (2003). Maxwell proposes that there is only one rule for making decisions—The Golden Rule. Although the book is written for the business world, the principle can be applied to education. Maxwell believes that ethical decision making has been ruined with situational ethics, which has allowed different ethical standards to be applied in different situations. These changing standards have resulted in many people making unethical decisions which could have been circumvented by regularly applying the Golden Rule. Maxwell states, "the Golden Rule can become your North Star when it comes to ethical navigation" because asking yourself how you would like to be treated in a situation "is an integrity guideline for *any* situation" (p. 21). Additionally, there is only one rule for everyone and most religions have a variation of the Golden Rule. This book is an easy, quick read, and each chapter is followed with thought-provoking discussion questions. The reading level is appropriate for secondary and postsecondary students.

Another learning strategy is *Where do you draw the line? An ethics game*, by R. Garry Shirts (1977). The game is designed for up to five groups of participants to make ethical judgments about the behavior of people described in a variety of situations. In addition to indicating its own opinion, each group also indicates how it believes most businesspersons and most members of society would respond to the same situations. The discussion of situations is directed toward discovering the assumptions and the implications of the assumptions which were used by the groups to make their judgments. The game can be played in 50 minutes and can be a springboard for more in-depth discussions and learning activities.

Summary

In summary, the *National Standards for Teachers of Family and Consumer Sciences* remind us that we are engaged in an ethical enterprise, and that we have significant moral obligations to our students and their families, our profession, the communities in which we practice, and the larger society. Laster (1997) observed that, even with a history of concern for ethical practice, the family and consumer sciences education community has been ambivalent, inconsistent, and sometimes superficial in addressing ethical concerns. To be engaged in ethical professional practice, as required by Standard 8, we cannot opt for moral neutrality. Instead, we must recognize the moral nature of our work and accept the responsibility to help individuals develop the capacity to address the moral issues they encounter in their own lives. Ultimately, ethical professional practice is about how we fulfill our responsibilities to those we serve.

Brief Annotated List of Suggested Resources

- Canin, E. (1994). *The palace thief*. New York: Picador USA.
This short story is the basis for the movie, *The Emperor's Club* (2002). The story is about a high school student and son of a powerful United States Senator, who cheats, and of the dedicated teacher who overlooks it and in the process, allows the student to gain unfair advantage over his classmates. Years later, when the former student is campaigning for his father's Senate seat, the teacher is forced to examine the consequences of his actions. The story could be used as a companion reading assignment to the movie.
- Fetters, C. (n.d.). *Genetically modified foods: From the lab to the dinner table*. NOW. PBS Teachers. Retrieved June 13, 2009, from <http://www.pbs.org/teachers/search/results.html?q=genetically+modified+foods>
This lesson focuses on the pros and cons of producing and eating genetically modified foods. Directions for the lesson and online resources are provided. This resource is appropriate for secondary and postsecondary students.
- Greeves, L. (n.d.). *A penny for your thoughts, movies, or music?* NewsHourExtra. PBS Teachers. Retrieved June 13, 2009, from <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/teachers/lessonplans/socialstudies/downloading.html>
This lesson focuses on fair use of resources and information from the Internet. Copyright laws are addressed. Directions for the lesson and online resources are provided. This resource is appropriate for secondary and postsecondary students.
- Hoffman, M. (Director). (2002). *The emperor's club* [Motion picture]. Los Angeles: Universal Pictures.
The film is the story of a high school student and son of a powerful United States Senator, who cheats, and of the dedicated teacher who overlooks it and in the process, allows the student to gain unfair advantage over his classmates. Years later, when the former student is campaigning for his father's Senate seat, the teacher, played by Kevin Kline, is forced to examine the consequences of his actions. The movie is rated PG 13 and would be appropriate for secondary and postsecondary students.
- Litman, T. (2007). *Evaluating research quality: Guidelines for scholarship*. Victoria Transport Policy Institute. Retrieved July 26, 2008, from <http://www.vtpi.org/resqual.pdf>
This paper discusses the importance of good research and provides a list of characteristics of good research. It also discusses the probable causes of research bias and provides guidelines for evaluating research including the quality of data. Finally, the paper describes examples of poor quality research. This resource is appropriate for the postsecondary level student.

Maxwell, J. C. (2003). *There's no such thing as "business" ethics*. United States: Warner Books. Although the book is written for the business world, the principle of "The Golden Rule" can be applied to education. Maxwell believes that ethical decision making has been ruined with situational ethics, which has allowed different ethical standards to be applied in different situations. These changing standards have resulted in many people making unethical decisions which could have been circumvented by regularly applying the Golden Rule. This book is an easy, quick read, and each chapter is followed with thought provoking discussion questions. The reading level is appropriate for secondary and postsecondary students.

NOVA. (n.d.). *18 ways to make a baby*. PBS Teachers. Retrieved June 13, 2009, from http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/teachers/activities/2811_baby.html
This lesson examines the ethical, legal, and social implications of in vitro fertilization. It also discussed the issues surrounding post-menopausal women giving birth. Directions for the lesson and online resources are provided. This resource is appropriate for the secondary and postsecondary students.

Shirts, R. G. (1977). *Where do you draw the line? An ethics game*. Del Mar, CA: Simulation Training Systems. Retrieved July 26, 2008, from <http://www.stsintl.com>
This learning game is designed for up to five groups of participants to make ethical judgments about the behavior of people described in a variety of situations. The game can be played in 50 minutes and can be a springboard for more in-depth discussions and learning activities. It is appropriate for secondary and postsecondary students.

The First Measured Century (n.d.). *The introduction and diffusion of household technology*. PBS Teachers. Retrieved June 13, 2009, from <http://www.pbs.org/fmc/lessons/lesson5.htm>.
In this lesson, students research and develop a matrix describing the introduction and spread of common household items such as electricity, refrigeration, and cell phones, from 1900 to 2000 in the United States. Directions for the lesson and online resources are provided. This resource is appropriate for secondary and postsecondary students.

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