Understanding Educator Ethics

Competency

Educators will use research and resources to distinguish between codes of conduct and codes of ethics in order to determine best ethical practices when confronting a variety of dilemmas.

Key Method

Explain codes of ethics, codes of conduct, and the basic flow of decision-making models. Differentiate *Code of Ethics* (NEA, 1975), Model Code of Ethics for Educators (NASDTEC, 2015), and state and/or local codes of conduct.

Elevate the profession by sharing new understanding with colleagues.

Navigate the complex relationships and interactions that unfold in educational settings by analyzing an ethical dilemma followed by providing a recommended solution.

Method Components

Professional Codes of Ethics

A movement is growing within the greater P–12 and educator preparation educational communities to ensure educators and prospective educators understand how professional decision-making can impact the safety and well-being of children, as well as the culture and mission of the school. Most professions have a strong set of principles to guide decision-making around these principles; in fact, all other professions have clear guidelines for professional ethics. The education profession, however, has not adopted a model code of conduct to assist educators with making ethical decisions and to assist educator preparation

program providers (EPPs) in preparing their candidates to make ethical decisions. In the absence of a commonly accepted set of ethical standards, the education profession has often defaulted to judicial decisions and legislative action to govern the conduct of its members.

Code of Ethics vs. Code of Conduct

A professional code of ethics sets a higher threshold than regulatory codes of conduct. A code of conduct provides absolutes for employment, licensure, and/or criminal sanctions. The Model Code of Ethics for Educators (MCEE), however, helps mitigate the risks inherent within the profession and is designed as a guide for current and future educators to construct the best course of action when faced with ethical dilemmas, providing a basis for educator learning, self-reflection, and self-accountability.

The Model Code of Ethics for Educators (MCEE)

The Model Code of Ethics for Educators (MCEE) serves as a guide for future and current educators faced with the complexities of P–12 education. The establishment of this professional code of ethics by educators for educators honors the public's trust and upholds the dignity of the profession.

The MCEE:
- Connects the aspirations of professional ethics with the day-to-day realities of the practicing educator
- Facilitates a broad understanding of what constitutes best ethical practice
- Helps ensure that educators are equipped with a framework for ethical decision-making
- Provides a basis for conversations across the profession about the importance of having a common language rooted in professional ethics.

The Model Code of Ethics for Educators consists of five major principles which broadly define critical dimensions of ethical practice expected of the professional educator.

1. Responsibility to the Profession
2. Responsibility for Professional Competence
3. Responsibility to Students
4. Responsibility to the School Community
5. Responsible and Ethical Use of Technology

For additional information about the Model Code of Ethics for Educators, the principles and performance indicators, please visit www.nasdtec.net.

Distinguishing Codes of Conduct vs. Codes of Ethics

Identifying and explaining educators' codes of ethics provides educators with guidance on ethical decision-making. Educators often rely on opinions that lead to situational, subjective, arbitrary, and inconsistent resolutions in isolation without transparency.

To prepare for completing this micro-credential, it is highly recommended that you do the following:
- <u>Watch</u> *It's Time and It's Here: Why We Have MCEE* by NASDTEC (see Resources).
- <u>Read and analyze</u> the National Education Association's *Code of Ethics*, National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education's *Model Code of Ethics for Educators*, and your state and/or local codes of conduct and ethics (see Resources).
- <u>Consider</u> while reading: How do you balance them all and choose when they contradict? (Did you find any contradictions? What one would you follow and why?)

Ethics in Education and Ethical Decision-Making Models: What are they and why are they needed?

Effectively understanding ethics and utilizing decision-making models equips educators to not violate the boundaries of professional practice. Because there is a culture of silence that exists among educators regarding ethical decision-making due to a fear of consequences, **Artifacts 1 and 2** are connected to this component to elevate the profession by sharing a valuable and helpful resource for your colleagues, guiding them in the process of making ethical decisions.
- Imagine a profession in which, historically, there has NOT been a code of ethics to guide professional decision-making and which the policies, statutes, and regulations that govern practitioners' conduct are not even known by the practitioners.
- Furthermore, the practitioners have never received training in supervisory liability while continuing to make hundreds of decisions each day that directly impact a highly vulnerable population.
- In 1915, Ontario, Canada's Minister of Education stated, "No profession can really exist without having a code of ethics to guide the conduct of its members. Doctors, lawyers, and clergymen have their codes, but teachers can scarcely be said to have such a code. Until they have developed a professional spirit which is characterized by loyalty to the recognized standards, they cannot rank with the learned professions" (as cited by Campbell, 2000). **It is our role to be part of elevating our profession**.
- <u>Read</u> *A Framework for Ethical Decision Making*, by Santa Clara University's Markkula Center for Applied Ethics (see Resources). Clarify what ethics is *not* and five approaches to guide decision-making. Carefully note the five sources of ethical standards.

- Familiarize yourself with ethical decision-making models by reading the following three informational resources:
  1. *Making an Ethical Decision*, by Santa Clara University's Markkula Center for Applied Ethics (see Resources)
  2. *Five Steps to Better Ethical Decision Making*, by Arthur Dorbrin in *Psychology Today*, 2012 (see Resources)
  3. *Ethics Checklist: Ten tests of ethicality*, by Dr. Doverspike (see Resources)

Supporting Rationale and Research

Ashraf, H., Hosseinnia, M., & Domsky, J. G. H. (2017). EFL teachers' commitment to professional ethics and their emotional intelligence: A relationship study. Cogent Education, 4(1) DOI:http://dx.doi.org.library.capella.edu/10.1080/2331186X.2017.1298188

Bullough, R. (2011). Ethical and moral matters in teaching and teacher education. Science Direct. Retrieved from https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0742051X10001587?via%3Dihub

Darden, E. (2014). Ethics at school: Let your conscience be your guide. EdLaw-Phi Delta Kappan. February 2014. DOI: 10.1177/003172171409500516 Educational testing service: new program informs teachers' ethical decision making. (2016, May 04). Education letter retrieved from https://news.ets.org/press-releases/new-program-informs-teachers-ethical-decision-making/

Harrison, L. K. (2019). Educator misconduct in Idaho: A quantitative analysis (Order No. 13426867). Available from ProQuest Central; ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (2175705732). Retrieved from: https://www.proquest.com/openview/c1bee69a25f9d5a904182583c3f54f74/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&diss=y

Hellawell, B. (2015). Ethical accountability and routine moral stress in Special Educational Needs professionals. *Management in Education, 29*(3), 119–124. https://doi.org/10.1177/0892020615584106

Educator Ethics Stack
Last Revised on Mar 17, 2022

Kafi, Z., Motallebzadeh, K., & Ashraf, H. (2018). Developing, localizing & validating code of professional ethics through PLS-SEM: EFL university instructors' perspectives. *Cogent Education, 5*(1). DOI:https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/2331186X.2018.1492340?scroll=top&needAccess=true

Kemman, H. R. (2019). Ethical school leadership: The conceptions and practices secondary principals use to maintain ethical context and relationships in their schools (Order No. 13810380). Available from ProQuest Central; ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (2201789195). Retrieved from https://scholarspace.library.gwu.edu/etd/mg74qm740

Lynch, P., Heath, M., Morehead, S., & Wallace, L. A. (2015). An analysis of Missouri school districts' ethics policies as related to educator decision making at the district level (Order No. 3715755). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (1701983712). Retrieved from https://www.proquest.com/openview/97910f05f6200ecec95791d25bde97d8/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750

Maxwell, Bruce & Tremblay-Laprise, Audrée-Anne & Filion, Marianne & Boon, Helen & Daly, Caroline & Hoven, Mariette & Heilbronn, Ruth & Lenselink, Myrthe & Walters, Sue. (2016). A Five-Country Survey on Ethics Education in Preservice Teaching Programs. Journal of Teacher Education. 67. 135-151. 10.1177/0022487115624490. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/294105993_A_Five-Country_Survey_on_Ethics_Education_in_Preservice_Teaching_Programs

News Service. (April 24, 2014 Thursday). NATIONAL TASK FORCE TO DEVELOP MODEL CODE OF EDUCATOR ETHICS. States News Service. Retrieved from https://www.nasdtec.net/page/MCEE_Doc

Umpstead, R., Brady, K., Lugg, E., Klinker, J., & Thompson, D. (2013). Educator ethics: A comparison of teacher professional responsibility laws in four states. *Journal of Law and Education, 42*(2), 183. https://heinonline.org/HOL/LandingPage?handle=hein.journals/jle42&div=12&id=&p

Resources

Ethics and Codes of Ethics in Education – What are they?

[A Framework for Ethical Decision Making - Markkula Center for Applied Ethics](#)

[Model Code of Ethics for Educators (MCEE)](#)

[Model Code of Ethics for Educators (MCEE)](#)

[Code of Ethics for Educators | NEA](#)

Ethics in Education and Ethical Decision-Making Models: What are they and why are they needed?

[Making an Ethical Decision](#)

[Five Steps to Better Ethical Decision Making](#)

[ETHICS CHECKLIST: TEN TESTS OF ETHICALITY](#)

Additional Resources

[Professional ethics in teaching: Toward the development of a code of practice](#).

[Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium. Standard 9: Professional Learning and Ethical Practice. InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards](#)

[Code of Ethics with Troy Hutchings and Phil Rogers (Part 1 of 2)](#)

[Code of Ethics with Troy Hutchings and Phil Rogers (Part 2 of 2)](#)

[Overview of the Model Code of Ethics for Educators (MCEE)](#)

[Beyond the Classroom: The importance of Ethics in Education](#)

Educator Ethics Stack
Last Revised on Mar 17, 2022

Submission Guidelines & Evaluation Criteria

> *To earn the micro-credential, you must receive a passing score in Parts 1 and 3, and be proficient for all components in Part 2.*

Part 1. Overview Questions (Provides Context)

300-500 words
Please use the suggested word count as a guide to answer the following contextual questions. This will help our assessor understand your current context for working on this micro-credential.

Please answer the following contextual questions to help our reviewer understand your current situation. Do not include any information that will make you or others identifiable to our reviewers.

1. List your Career/Membership category, specific position and title, number of years working in education and a basic description of your worksite (grades, student population), community information (urban/rural/suburban), and other relevant information.
2. Describe your current knowledge of ethics in education. Have you had any training in educational ethics? How do you know if something is ethical? Be sure to fully explain your response with examples and details.

Passing: Responses completely answer each question and include specific examples that clearly illustrate understanding. Writing is easy to organize and understand.

Part 2. Work Examples/Artifacts/Evidence

To earn this micro-credential, please submit the following **three artifacts** as evidence of your learning. *Please do not include any information that will make you or your students identifiable to your reviewers.*

Artifact 1: Create a resource for colleagues: Codes of Ethics and Highlights Explained

Design a visually appealing resource to share with your colleagues that explains highlights of NEA's Code of Ethics, Model Code of Ethics for Educators, and your state and/or local codes of conduct and ethics. (Select a resource format most conducive to sharing with as many people as possible. Example formats include—but are not limited to—large poster, video, newsletter, slide-show presentation, etc.) In/on the resource, provide at least 3 specific examples/situations/scenarios to meaningfully connect why codes matter in your area of the profession.

Reminder: *To protect the privacy of others, please use pseudonyms when discussing ethical dilemmas from your personal experiences, and to protect the privacy of minors, please follow your district's policies regarding photographing students.*

Artifact 2: Description of Implementation
(250-500 words)

Describe how you shared your artifact 1 resource with colleagues. Include:
- A discussion of any feedback you received from colleagues.
- How you considered the needs of diverse populations.
- What changes would you make to the resource to use again in the future, and, if no changes, explain why and how it worked well.

Artifact 3: Ethical Dilemma Case Study is a culminating final project.
(500-800 words)

Identify an ethical dilemma you have faced as an educator. Use codes of conduct, codes of ethics, and other resources to guide analysis of the dilemma. Provide recommended solutions supported with solid evidence of reasoning.
- Using pseudonyms, identify all interested stakeholders, a reflection on the viewpoints of each key player, identify two possible alternatives and associated consequences each decision would have, and the recommended alternative. Reasoning is supported by resources including guiding principles, Codes of Ethics, and/or federal/state/district laws and policies.

Reminder: *To protect the privacy of others, please use pseudonyms when discussing ethical dilemmas from your personal experiences and, to protect the privacy of minors, please follow your district's policies regarding photographing students.*

Part 2. Rubric

	Proficient	**Basic**	**Developing**
Artifact 1: Create a Resource	Accurately explains and highlights three codes ***And*** provides 5 specific examples of 5 specific codes **And** explains how each applies to your area of the profession.	Inaccurate explanation of codes **And/or** only 2 codes are discussed **And/or** 1 or more missing example(s) **And/or** Missing one or more explanations of how each applies to your area of the profession.	Inaccurate or incomplete explanation of codes **And/or** only one code is discussed **And/or** All example(s) are missing **And/or** All explanations of how each applies to your area of the profession are missing.
Artifact 2: Describe Implementation of Artifact 1	Description is complete and includes important details about how the resource was shared with peers **And** Includes a summary of the feedback received from peers **And** Includes information about revisions needed with explanation as to why.	Description is incomplete and does not include important details about how the resource was shared with peers **And/or** Does not include a summary of the feedback received from peers **And/or** Does not include information about revisions needed with explanation as to why.	Description missing **And** Does not include a summary of the feedback received from peers **And** Does not include information about revisions needed with explanation as to why.

Educator Ethics Stack
Last Revised on Mar 17, 2022

| Artifact 3: Ethical Case Study | Thoroughly describes **all** components of the dilemma including stakeholders' evaluation of ethical arguments and recommendations supported by cited Codes of Ethics and other resources. | Describes **some** components of the dilemma and may include stakeholders' evaluation of ethical arguments and recommend-dations supported by cited Codes of Ethics, and other resources. | Description is limited and **most** of the following components are missing:
- stakeholders' evaluation of ethical arguments
-recommend-dations supported by cited Codes of Ethics, and other resources. |

Part 3 Reflection

300-500 words

[How Do I Write a Good Personal Reflection?](#)

Please do not include any information that will make you identifiable to your reviewers.

Please answer the following reflective question. *Please do not include any information that will make you identifiable to your reviewers.*

Within the realm of this micro-credential, based on your new understanding of level of risk, what do you plan to do differently when encountering risky situations, especially as you interact with students, parents, community, and/or colleagues?

Passing: Reflection provides evidence that this activity has had a positive impact on both educator practice and student success. Specific examples are cited directly from personal and/or work-related experiences to support claims. Also included are specific actionable steps that demonstrate how new learning will be integrated into future practices.