
Teachers' Misconduct: How Teachers Become Learners' Nightmare

In the year 2016, teacher misconducts I have seen on the news were like a pandemic that had hit out country. Teachers are the people who children spend approximately 40 to 50 hours per week with, most of the time not even their parents spend that much time with them. Basically teachers are also parenting at schools. In this essay we are going to discuss how there are teachers who become learners' nightmare by making themselves sexual predators, how this matter affects education as a whole in South Africa. Also how we can use the philosophical ideas of existentialism and others to address such issues.

First of all let us look at what the legislation say about teacher misconduct. According to the Employment of Educators Act, 76 of 1998, section 17(1) an educator must be dismissed if he or she is found guilty of: (a) committing an act of sexual assault on a learner or other employee, (b) having a sexual relationship with a learner. Which shows that the Department of Educator does not tolerate any teacher misconduct at schools. The Employment of Educators Act, 76 of 1998, section 17 clearly stipulates the actions or behaviour that are prohibited and therefore include these stipulations in the employment contracts when appointing but teachers who do commit this misconduct cannot only be regarded as ignorant but also disrespectful of such an crucial profession in the society. It is far more disgusting when it is done by the head of the school, who is the one who should be upholding good behaviour amongst the teachers. Being a good example as stipulated by the SACE code of professional ethics. It is because of this reason that I believe the punishment of the principals should be more severe than that of teachers.

Even after all the stipulations from the legislations, the cases of sexual misconduct to be specific are still happening, the SADTU Secretary General Magwena Maluleke says so himself that they are angered by not seeing any decline in such matters. The important question to be asked here is what has SADTU been doing to stop this from happening? What measures have been put by SADTU to make sure teachers refrain from having any sexual relations with learners? What did SADTU do to make sure that teachers understand that teaching is "about caring for our children" as he says? I am not pleased with that the principal resigned before the proper procedures of his punishment can be followed and that the SADTU secretary seems to not comment on that. Is it because he might actually get away with this transgression and that they are protecting their colleague's reputation? That's a topic for another day.

According to the Employment of Educators Act, 76 of 1998, the principal should have been suspended pending a thorough investigation and the a disciplinary hearing within three months

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of his suspension. Further decisions can be taken after the hearing has been concluded. The matter can also be taken by law officials to court and/if the parents of the learners decide to press charges against the principal for his actions excused from any connections with the school.

Speaking about making decisions. That is what the philosophy of existentialism is all about, one asking themselves about the existence. The decision they make also contributing to finding their purpose for living. Higgs and Smith (2015) states “we should repeatedly ask ourselves one question, is this how I wanna spend my life? Relating this question to the principal, he should ask himself, if this is how he wants to live his life, molesting poor little souls, because they are naïve. That he wants to live his life knowing he might have changed the poor girls’ perspective on life forever. The same way he is able to ask himself about his purpose for his living, it is the same way that the victimized learners might ask themselves too, traumatized, feeling worthless and think that it is acceptable for men in power to do whatever they with their bodies. This is what the critics are against, people of power oppressing those who are not in power.

In a nutshell, more needs to be done to prevent such misconducts from happening. I do believe that education is the key to success and as a country we can achieve a whole lot with educated youth but how are we supposed to do that when the very same people to help achieve that are doing monstrous actions on our children?

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