

When unethical bright adults misunderstand and are the real failures: Ethics involves every aspect while working with children. The need for Compulsory Parental formal consent, no objection letter, prior to engaging into Online teaching with Students to protect our children from being the prey to predators, exposure to online dangers, deviances and mediocrity

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ABSTRACT: *The paper elaborates the problem whereby it has been noticed that some adult professionals of education have not understood the principle of no objection letter and they engaged into online teaching, but they never got the formal consent of the parents of those students. The misconception made by adults is that they believe ethics is only when there is ongoing research. Ethics involves every aspect while working with children. It is a breach of ethical practices and these bright adults have failed our children in the sense that those children without proper guidance are the prey to predators, exposed to online dangers and deviances and mediocrity from those educators. The rules of ethics need to be reminded to these adults who have ventured into the wrong paths. The parents of those students who engage in online teaching need to provide a no objection letter whereby they are made aware the purpose of the online session, assurance that their wards will not be exposed to online dangers and protected from predators and there will be a quality and control in the administrating of those sessions. The ambiguity is that online teaching is a relatively new phenomenon whereas ethics have been researched since decades.*

KEYWORDS: *online teaching, parental consent, no objection letter, online dangers*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Bartneck et al. (2021) describe the terms “ethics” and “morality” are often taken as synonyms. Sometimes they are distinguished, however, in the sense that morality refers to a complex set of rules, values and norms that determine or are supposed to determine people’s actions, whereas ethics refers to the theory of morality. It could also be said that ethics is concerned more with principles, general judgements and norms than with subjective or personal judgements and values. Etymologically, the word ethics goes back to the ancient Greek “ethos”. This originally referred to a place of dwelling, location, but also habit, custom, convention. It was Cicero who translated the Greek term into Latin with “mores” (ethos, customs), from which the modern concept of morality is derived.

Ethics implies that the child whether being a participant or subject of the research is not exposed to any form of harm, their identity is kept confidential and not identifiable, they are informed of the purpose and outcome of the research and online teaching and most importantly, their parents, responsible parties provide a no objection letter that they allow their wards to participate to online classes.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Sieber (1993) and Morrow & Richards (1996), in relating ethics to research conducted with children, most definitions either explicitly or implicitly emphasize the importance of values, moral principles and obligations, and the protection of children from all harm and danger throughout the research process). In an intensive international study, Schenk and Williamson (2005) identified five cross-cutting themes that highlight principles and safeguards that should be considered to ensure that the entire research process is ethically sound. One would argue that these themes are highly relevant within the context of educational research. The first theme emphasizes adherence to basic ethical principles. They argue that there is a “difference in power between the participant and investigator” in the research context, which could result in the exploitation of children. In order to prevent this from happening, researchers must uphold three core principles, namely respect for persons, beneficence, and justice. Investigators show appropriate respect for persons when they seek

their informed consent to participate in research without placing any pressure on them to do so. If child participants are under the legal age of consent, then the permission of parents or legal guardians is required. The principle of beneficence compels researchers to protect child participants from any harm and at the same ensure the possibility of maximizing benefits to them, and the justice principle dictates that the benefits and burdens of the research activity should be equally distributed. Children can be involved as participants and respondents. Schenk and Williamson (2005) argue that participation should be maximised, but that research on sensitive topics should be reduced. The third theme endorses national and international legal and professional regulations that promote ethically acceptable research – for example, in South Africa there are professional bodies with set rules which call for ethical supervision of work and research involving children (NHREC 2011). There is emphasis made importance of taking cultural and gender considerations into account throughout the research process (Schenk & Williamson 2005). Researchers must take cognisance of cultural norms, age and gender, which are critical aspects of child development. Vulnerable children, such as orphans, refugees and children without guardians are the participants to be most careful about. It is often difficult to provide follow-up support for these children or to monitor and evaluate services provided to them. It is clear from the above that strict ethical principles should apply in research involving children. The argument of the paper is that this is a misconception to only look at the research part. In other instances such as online teaching also, ethical consideration must be taken into consideration. The ambiguity is that online teaching is a relatively new phenomenon whereas ethics have been researched since decades.

III. DISCUSSION

Dangers of the internet

Adults need to understand that when a student sits in front of her/his screen for an online class, there is internet being accessed. The child is exposed to all the harm online. The student needs to be guided, monitored, under strict surveillance otherwise they are exposed to dangers. If parents do not even give no objection to the school and teacher, then how can there be a controlled monitoring of the presence of the child on internet. With the rise of social media such as Tik Tok, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, children are exposed to more explicit contents such as nudity, vulgarity and violence. This can have an effect on them that makes them want to repeat what they see. The students also want to do like others and fall into nudity, violence to the detriment of their education. The internet also is a playground for predators and these children are prey for those predators. It starts with, they get friend request, they chat and then one day they want to meet and fall into traps.

Misunderstanding of Compulsory Parental consent, no objection letter from parents

There is a common belief that some adult professionals have not really understood the concept of no objection letter. The no objection letter is in fact the parents who need to provide the letter to the school and teacher, to give them the permission to communicate with their child online. The teacher must then make sure his online classes represent no danger for the child such as the powerpoint slides, the language, the videos played and the on and off time so that parents know from what time till when the child will need to sit in front of a computer.

IV. CONCLUSION

The paper concludes as a warning for those adults engaging in online classes without the no objection letter from the parents and responsible parties. They have their part of responsibilities in the exposure of these students to online dangers and prey to predators. If the parents did not provide any no objection letter, then teachers cannot engage in online teaching.

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