

Lesson Plan 2: Ethical References and Foundations

Human civilizations, from ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia to India, China, Greece, Rome, and Islamic culture, have emphasized ethical principles as a foundation for societal and individual progress. These principles include:

- Doing good and avoiding harm.
- Maintaining professional confidentiality.
- Respecting duties while advancing rights.
- Acting according to social norms, religious beliefs, and laws.

Ethics refers to a set of concepts and principles that guide behavior to benefit living beings. It involves determining right from wrong based on moral standards influenced by philosophy, religion, and societal evolution.

1-Philosophical Foundations

Socrates' Ethical Philosophy

Socrates emphasized the importance of self-awareness, considering it the foundation of virtue. He believed that understanding oneself leads to virtuous actions and personal happiness, as knowledge of the self enables individuals to act to their fullest potential.

Aristotle's Virtue Ethics

Aristotle developed an ethical system based on "virtue," arguing that actions guided by virtue lead to satisfaction and fulfillment. He emphasized intellectual development and self-awareness as essential aspects of ethical behavior, which distinguish humans from other beings.

Relevance: These philosophical foundations highlight the role of ethics in achieving individual excellence and societal harmony.

2- Religious Foundations

Religious teachings provide a significant source of ethical guidance across cultures:

Monotheistic Religions

Monotheistic faiths (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) offer ethical frameworks that regulate professions and human relationships.

In Islam, for example, the Qur'an and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad emphasize the importance of work, integrity, and coexistence with others.

Integration with Law

Religious ethics often form the basis of legal systems, promoting obligations such as justice, fairness, and societal development; for example, Islamic ethics encourage building civilization through productive work and avoiding harm.

3. Evolution of Civilizations and Ethics

As civilizations advanced, so did the philosophical and practical applications of ethics:

– The Role of Universities

In the 19th and 20th centuries, universities evolved from promoting knowledge for its own sake to preparing students for industrial and societal needs. Ethical education expanded to include the moral and intellectual development of students.

– Globalization and Ethical Challenges

In the modern era, globalization has introduced new challenges and opportunities for ethical frameworks, requiring universities to adapt their curricula and regulations.

Governments and private institutions emphasize the integration of ethics in professional training to meet societal and developmental needs.

4. Institutional Foundations

Every profession relies on institutional ethics to maintain respect and honor. Institutions have established laws and regulations to:

- Preserve professional values and roles in society.
- Build intellectual and scientific integrity; for example, university policies often enforce ethical codes to ensure fairness, academic honesty, and professional responsibility among students and faculty.

Institutional Ethics in Practice

Establishing clear guidelines for professional conduct ensures the credibility of institutions and their contribution to societal development.