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Syllabus Reflection 11

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Ethics and the Law

All teachers have some sort of ethical code and all teachers have to abide by the law. Sometimes a teacher's ethics do not line up with what the law states. This can go one of two ways; either the situation turns out to benefit the students or the teacher will have some sort of punishment. If the teacher's ethics go against the law, they can devise an argument that can put the law at fault. This might work especially if the student cannot be successful in a certain area.

The Scopes Trial is a prime example of this concept. John Scopes truly believed that students needed to be taught evolution but the law said that schools had to teach creationism. John fought to have his view taught in schools because he felt it was wrong that he could not. He strongly believed that students would benefit if they were taught evolution. Today, this scenario would most likely be reversed to where teachers would be morally conflicted to teach evolutionism. Teachers are required to teach evolutionism today but if they felt strongly enough about it, they could create a case. This case might include completely cutting out evolutionism or implementing creationism with evolutionism.

There are many scenarios that go directly against the law. One example would be when teachers are told to alter their students test scores to make the school look better or to receive more money. This goes against the MN Code of Ethics and is illegal. If a school is making a teacher go against the law then the teacher is required to not follow suit.

As long as the teacher has the students best interests in mind, then the teacher should not have any issues. There will most likely be a time in every teacher's life where they will be morally conflicted about being a mandated reporter for instance. With that said, teachers need to know the law and be ready to defend what the law says but also stand up for what they believe in.