



Integrating values and ethics into post secondary teaching for leadership development

Principles, concepts, and strategies

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to explore the nature of moral literacy as it applies to leadership development and the processes for promoting moral literacy through teaching in colleges and universities.

Design/methodology/approach – The ethics of authenticity and moral agency in education settings are proposed as a means for promoting and achieving moral literacy among teachers and students.

Findings – Instructional principles for the integration of values and ethics into post secondary teaching are outlined and several successful techniques are illustrated.

Research limitations/implications – The use of values and ethics frameworks as content is contrasted with their application as process.

Practical implications – Examples of applications are included in the form of teaching activities such as the “value audit”, “personal inventories”, “problem interpretation protocols” and the “use of case studies”.

Originality/value – A theoretically grounded justification for incorporating moral literacy frameworks in university level teaching combined with practical instructional strategies.

Keywords Leadership, Ethics, Integration, Teaching, Leadership development

Paper type Conceptual paper

Values, ethics, and valuation processes relate to leadership and leadership development processes in several important ways. These relationships have important implications for teaching about values and incorporating moral literacy frameworks into university level teaching.

Perhaps the most fundamental way in which values relate to leadership is as an influence on the cognitive processes of individuals and groups of individuals. It is important, perhaps essential, for persons in leadership roles to understand how values



Willower Center Affiliated Project Personnel – a group of faculty and graduate students from several universities have collaborated on this project to date. These individuals include: Paul T. Begley, Penn State University; Marilyn Begley, Penn State University; Yi Ching Chaing, Penn State University; Ted Gourley, Rowan University; Pauline Leonard, Louisiana Tech.; Anthony Normore, Florida International University; Dipali Puri, Penn State University; Dan Schochor, Penn State University; Katherine Sernak, Rowan University; Joan Shapiro, Temple University; Sarah Stager, Penn State University; Jerry Starratt, Boston College; Jacqueline Stefkovich, Penn State University; Suzanne Ritter, Penn State University; Catherine Taylor, Penn State University; Nancy Tuana, Penn State University; Georjanne Williams, Penn State University; and Bradley Zdenek, Penn State University.

reflect underlying human motivations and shape the subsequent attitudes, speech, and actions of personnel (Kohlberg and Turiel, 1971; Hodgkinson, 1978; Begley, 2006). Begley's (2006) conception of authentic forms of leadership, discussed in further detail below, emphasizes this capacity as something that begins with self-knowledge and then becomes extended to a sensitivity to the perspectives of others. In that context it is argued that leaders should know their own values and ethical predispositions, as well as become more sensitive to the value orientations of others. Branson, author of an article included in this special issue of the *Journal of Educational Administration*, has developed a very effective instructional strategy called the deeply structured reflection process that can be used as a support for developing this kind of knowledge and self-awareness.

Begley (2006) proposes that genuine forms of leadership begin with the understanding and thoughtful interpretation of observed or experienced valuation processes by individuals. This implies the appropriateness of a focus on the perceptions of individuals in the context of school leadership situations. Although organizational theories, the policy arena, and other macro perspectives are relevant as elements of the context in which a school leader works, they are not a primary locus of concern. This is an important consideration for university teaching in the educational leadership area because such courses have traditionally adopted a strong organizational focus and relied on texts that reflect these largely organizational postures and orientations (e.g. Hoy and Miskel, 2005).

A second way in which valuation processes relate to leadership practices is as a guide to action, particularly as supports to resolving ethical dilemmas. Ethics and valuation models are highly relevant to school leadership as rubrics, benchmarks, socially justified standards of practice, and templates for moral action. These may be used by the individual leader or in more collective ways by groups of people. Langlois (2004), to name one scholar, has conducted much research on the ethical dilemma analysis processes of principals and superintendents. A typical application for ethics in this administrative context is as a personal guide to action, particularly as supports to resolving ethical dilemmas. A number of other scholars have also conducted research and published in this area. These include Begley and Johansson (1998), Stefkovich (2006), and Branson (2006). These scholars have each developed well documented processes for the analysis of dilemma situations and development of ethical responses. Two of these processes are discussed in some detail as part of this article and presented as resources in support of college and university level teaching. Branson's work is reported as part of his article included in this special issue.

However, there is a third and more strategic and collective application for ethics. It is common in a school or school district setting for ethical postures to be adopted with a strategic organizational intent – for example, as a focus for building consensus around a shared social or organizational objective. To illustrate, a school district superintendent might choose “ethic of community” (Furman 2004) as a rallying meta-value to focus the energies of personnel on collective action. Or, ethical notions such as “due process” (Strike *et al.*, 1998) or “social justice” (Shapiro and Stefkovich, 2005) might be used as the objective for focusing the reform of school district processes in support of students with special needs. These more collective and strategic applications of ethics may very well be the more common manifestation of this value type in the administration of schools and school districts, at the government level, as

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well as in the corporate sector. In this sense leaders literally use ethics as leadership tools to support actions taken, model ideal practice, and/or promote particular kinds of organizational or societal activity. However, as will be argued, these strategic adoptions of ethical postures may or may not be ethical.

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Ethics and values

Whether or not values and ethics are consciously employed as guides to decision making by individuals, they remain in general an important influence on the cognitive processes of individuals and groups of individuals. Values can be formally defined as conceptions of the desirable with motivating force characteristic of individuals, groups, organizations, and societies that influence choices made from available resources and means (Hodgkinson, 1978). Begley (2006) describes the influence of values within individuals as the internal psychological reflections of more distilled levels of motivation (e.g. a concern for personal interests, consequences, or consensus) that become tangible to an observer in the form of attitudes, speech, and actions. Thus, values in their various forms, including ethics, can be thought of as conscious or unconscious influences on attitudes, actions, and speech. However, it is important to note that valuation processes can involve more than ethics. Values can take different forms and can be best categorized according to their motivational grounding. Ethics, as a particular form of values, as opposed to the scholarly discipline, are normative social ideals or codes of conduct usually grounded in the cultural experience of particular societies. In that sense they are a sort of *uber* form of social consensus. Most societies have core ethics equivalent to the American notions of democracy, freedom of speech, and the priority of individual rights. Those of us steeped in the traditions of such classic Western philosophical thought can easily make the mistake of assuming that our most cherished ethical postures are universal. However, they seldom are, especially as interpreted from culture to culture. Ethics in their purest forms tend to be expressed in a relatively context-stripped form that conveys the essence of the normative behavior. Indeed, in some forms and social applications they are treated as absolute values. This inclination to view ethics as some sort of absolute value is sometimes exacerbated by evidence of consensus across cultures on certain ethics like respect for human rights, honesty, and democracy. And, indeed there are probably some ethics of the human condition that approach a condition of universal relevance. However, the devil is literally in the details when it comes to ethical postures. The interpretation of meaning associated with an ethic can vary greatly from society to society. Simply pondering the contrasting notions of what constitutes democracy in countries like Sweden, the United States, and China illustrates this point. Using ethical postures as a basis for making social choices requires the inclusion of a dialogic component, except perhaps in the most culturally homogeneous of contexts. This is because of our increasingly culturally diverse societies and a more globalized world. This is not to argue against the relevance and importance of ethics to leadership actions. It is more a caveat to their proper use.

There is another issue when it comes to ethics and their relevance to leadership development processes. Human behavior involves a range of motivational bases, only a few of which can be associated with ethical postures. These other motivational bases can range from self-interest to a concern for rationalized positions grounded in consensus or consequences, in addition to the transrational groundings of ethical

postures (Hodgkinson, 1978, Begley, 2006). The point is that because ethical postures are usually associated with ideal states, they do not necessarily accommodate the full range of motivations of human behavior. This circumstance is critical to individuals in leadership positions seeking to understand their own motivational bases as well as those of others. It hardly needs to be said that not all individuals encountered in organizational settings act in ethical ways. Ethics based postures are highly relevant for guiding appropriate responses to complex organizational situations, but they may not be sufficient in themselves for a comprehensive analysis and understanding of human motivations. There is some evidence for this assertion.

As argued earlier, in order to lead effectively, individuals in any leadership role need to understand human nature and the motivations of individuals in particular. Leadership is essentially focused on people and relationships. In the practical professional context of educational administration, school leaders need more than just normative ideology, as relevant as that may be to educational situations. They require frameworks and ways of thinking that will encompass the full range of human motivations and valuation processes encountered in school settings. As indicated above, these can range from the more primitive forms of self-interest all the way to the most altruistic and inspiring transrational values inspired motivations of saints and heroes. To understand and accommodate the full range of human motivations, which are understood to be an important influence on the adoption of particular values (Begley, 2006), one must think in terms of values and valuation processes where ethics (as opposed to the field of inquiry called Ethics) are one category or component within a broader spectrum of value types. Furthermore, as will be argued, a full appreciation of ethics should include more than just a concern for the high ground of ethics-motivated action. The study of ethics should be as much about the life-long personal struggle to be ethical, about failures to be ethical, the inconsistencies of ethical postures, the masquerading of self-interest and personal preference as ethical action, and the dilemmas which occur in everyday and professional life when one ethic trumps another.

To summarize the points made in this section, most current leadership development programs in the United States, Canada, and Australia, university-based and otherwise, emphasize the importance of ethics based decision making. This is admirable and well advised. However, it is not sufficient. Research on principal valuation processes (Begley and Johansson, 1998) and earlier research on administrative problem solving processes (Leithwood and Steinbach, 1995) demonstrate that administrators tend to consciously employ ethics as a guide to action relatively infrequently and under particular conditions – in situations of high stakes urgency, when consensus is impossible, when responding to unprecedented situations, and for certain hot-button social issues which tend to quickly escalate debate to a point where people seek refuge within an ethical posture. This is so for a number of reasons. Ethics are culturally derived norms and if the context for leadership action is multi-cultural there can be issues associated with shared interpretations of ethical postures grounded in the experience of one culture and not another. Moreover, and as will be argued in more detail in subsequent sections of this article, ethics based postures tend to be relevant to certain types of administrative decision processes and not always considered by school leaders an appropriate basis for decision making in some administrative situations,

particularly those occurring in culturally diverse contexts or where accountability is a major consideration (Begley and Johansson, 1998).

The implication for teaching at the college and university level is that instructors need to understand the ways in which values and ethical frameworks are relevant to their course content. To create understanding and properly extend the learning of students, instructors need to make clear their perspectives on moral literacy. As discussed in the preceding section, valuation processes can be relevant to leadership as conscious and unconscious influences on the cognitive processes of individuals, as rubrics or codes for responding to problematic situations, and as meta-values around which to establish consensus on shared objectives and purposes.

Foundational approaches to the study of ethics

Our experience with the many international associates of the Willower Center teaches us that scholars come to a conversation about values with perspectives reflecting the quite distinct social contexts of their societies. These scholars can also approach the study of valuation processes and ethics from a variety of foundational perspectives. For example, Starratt's (1994) work is grounded in philosophy, whereas Stefkovich (2006); Stefkovich and Shapiro, 2003; Shapiro and Stefkovich, 2005) is influenced by a legal perspective. Gross and Shapiro (2004) reflect a social justice orientation in their work. Langlois' (2004) orientations are applied ethics and moral theory. Begley's (2006) orientations are on the cognitive processes of administrators engaged in problem solving. Other seminal sources on the subject, from which many of these more recent perspectives derive, include: Hodgkinson's (1978, 1991, 1996) extensive writings on the philosophy of administration; Evers' (1999), Evers and Lakomski, 1991) Australian pragmatist discourse on brain theory, coherence, and the formation of ethical knowledge; and Willower's (1994, 1999) Deweyian naturalistic notions of valuation processes and reflective practice. Recognizing the foundational roots of a values perspective or ethical framework is a first step to establishing a shared vocabulary that will facilitate dialogue across disciplines and establish consensus on key concepts. This in turn can increase capacity among scholars for critical reflection on the theory and frameworks they rely upon, and perhaps even generate new insights of benefit to the whole field. Conversely, in the more practical context of teaching about values, ethics and moral literacy, it is essential that instructors as well as learners know and understand the epistemological and foundational roots of the frameworks and literature used to structure their courses. Those interested in a more detailed discussion of the epistemological roots of the values and ethic literature are invited to look at the Langlois and Begley's mapping out of existing literature and research on moral leadership in Begley, 2006.

Authentic leadership: the moral context of school leadership situations

The application of any ethic occurs within a normative and cultural context. Ethical postures and frameworks are often presented as abstract concepts stripped of the contextual details that would give them relevance and specificity in particular settings and in support of particular roles. This can result in a number of problems for those that are interested in promoting moral literacy and teaching about values and ethics. The most obvious problem is that an ethic stripped of context requires interpretation as it is applied to a particular social or cultural context. This can be a serious challenge

in culturally diverse societies where, for example, headgear (e.g. Muslim turban) is sometimes more than just a hat, or daggers are religious symbols and not so much a weapon. Or consider how a “focus on mission” as a professional ethical posture would mean radically different things to a school principal as compared to an infantry officer. Moreover, human nature being what it is, individuals, groups and societies are more often than not inclined to interpret ethics in ways that are appropriate to their preferences and traditions rather than any commitment to the social inclusion of minorities. In extreme forms, these interpretations can extend to preserving self-interests at the expense of the freedom of others. If the moral deliberation is being carried out by a person in a professional role, the process becomes even more complicated because professionals are also expected to be agents of society or of their profession. So, their pursuit of moral literacy involves more than addressing their own belief systems.

The sheer austerity and abstractness of many ethical frameworks pose a second challenge for those interested in promoting moral literacy among educators and school leaders through the use of ethical frameworks. Practitioners tend to be attracted to practicality and relevance. Philosophically based discussions about ethics and valuation processes by their nature often are not very appealing in terms of relevance because of the context-stripped manner in which they are often portrayed. For example, the ethics of administration, as proposed by Strike *et al.* (1998), identify maximizing benefits and respecting individual rights through protocols of due process as key notions associated with an ethic of justice perspective. However, the task of clarifying the inherent benefits associated with a situation, and their fair distribution among an a priori identified set of potential recipients, sorted according to degree of entitlement and need, is something that requires contextual knowledge as well as skill. This is one of the reasons why the use of context-rich case problems, critical incidents and dilemmas of practice is probably the most successful way to teach and study ethical analysis and valuation processes with practitioners.

For these reasons there is a lot of merit in speaking of ethical actions within a specific professional context or through the use of heuristic applications of ethical postures appropriate to a professional or personal context. There are several examples of this that can be used as illustrations. Furman (2004) uses the “ethic of community” as a focus point for ethical educational practice in North American schools. Stefkovich (2006); Stefkovich and Shapiro, (2003) adopts the notion of “best interests of students” as a focus for her professional ethics in education. Begley (2006) speaks of “authentic leadership” as an approach to presenting ethical leadership practices and moral literacy in a manner that has relevance for people working in school leadership situations. However, even these context grounded heuristic applications require definition and the establishment of consensus on meaning. Fortunately, there is literature that can be helpful in this regard. Stefkovich and Begley (2007) and Stefkovich and O’Brien (2004) have identified and explored the various meanings associated with the concept of “best interests”. When it comes to “authentic leadership”, Begley (2006) points out that this perspective that has been explored in recent years by several other scholars beyond himself, including Taylor (1991), Duignan and Bhindi (1997), and Starratt (2004). Authentic leadership, as Begley defines it, is the outcome of self-knowledge, sensitivity to the orientations of others, and a technical sophistication that leads to a synergy of leadership action (Begley, 2001, 2003,

2006). The innovative dimension being proposed here for college and university teaching is the advisability of careful selection and adoption of professionally and contextually relevant metaphors to make the objectives of moral literacy and ethical leadership more understandable, compelling, and achievable. It is in this context that Begley proposes authentic leadership as a relevant way of conceptualizing educational leadership development processes. It is way of thinking about ethical and effective leadership that is grounded in professional practices and orientations that have meaning for school administrators.

Using ethics versus being ethical

Research findings (e.g. Begley and Johansson, 1998) confirm that the relevance of principles or ethics to administrative situations seem to be prompted in the minds of school administrators by particular circumstances. These circumstances include: situations where an ethical posture is socially appropriate (e.g. the role of the arts); situations where consensus is perceived as difficult or impossible to achieve (e.g. an issue involving ethnic bias); or situations when high stakes and urgency require decisive action (e.g. student safety). There is also some evidence to suggest that school leaders use ethics in strategic applications as ways to develop group consensus, and a basis for promoting compliance with minimum need for evidence (Langlois, 2004). These are all examples of ethically sound – meaning socially justifiable applications of ethics to situations. However, one has only to survey the newspaper or work in an organization or live in a community for a few years to readily detect situations where ethics based postures can be unethical and socially unjust. For example, ethical postures may be unethical when a cultural ethic is imposed on others, an ethic is used to justify otherwise reprehensible action, an ethical posture veils a less defensible value, or when an ethic is used to trump a basic human right. The implication is that using ethical postures is not always ethical action. Such is the nature of ethics when they are adopted as guides to action. Trans-rational values (Hodgkinson, 1978, 1991, 1996) of any sort, and ethics and principles in particular, are rather vulnerable to multiple interpretations in application from one social context to another. For example, when unexamined values are applied in arbitrary ways, they can be anything but ethical. The essential, and often absent, component that makes adherence to a value genuinely ethical is dialogue. For these reasons unexamined ethics or values accepted at face value without prior deliberation of meaning represent a particular category of social or collective values of a trans-rational nature that may not be consistent with moral leadership processes. It should be apparent that in order to cultivate the ability to distinguish the difference between using ethics and being ethical, we need the capacity to discriminate actual intentions within ourselves and among others. This is not moral relativism, nor is it value absolutism, it is critical thinking and moral literacy.

Moral literacy and teaching

There is an existing body of literature addressing the nature of moral literacy and its implications for teaching. Some of it should be quite familiar to educators. For example, Piaget (1965) asserts that individuals construct and reconstruct their knowledge of the world as a result of interactions with the environment. The importance of context to moral development is strongly implied. Kohlberg's six stages of moral reasoning

(Kohlberg and Turiel, 1971) are also relevant to conceptualizing the stages in developing moral reasoning, moving from egocentrism at stage one to the maturity of post conventional levels of reasoning grounded in principles at stage five. These developmental stages are very similar to the motivational bases of valuation (Hodgkinson, 1978; Begley, 2006) discussed earlier in this article. Being conscious of developmental stages is as relevant to the sensitive design of curriculum for students as it is to the analysis of motivations and valuation processes. More recently, Nucci (1997) offers advice regarding educational practices that enable teachers to engage in moral education in ways that are neither indoctrinating in intent nor relativistic. Although aimed at the context of teaching in the K-12 system, the advice seems equally relevant to the college and university sector as well as consistent with the conceptual frameworks and issues discussed thus far. The first principle Nucci proposes is that moral education should focus on issues of justice, fairness, and human welfare. This is consistent with the earlier discussion in this article advocating a focus on the perceptions of individuals and relationships rather than policy or organizational structures. The second principle is that moral education programs should be integrated within the curriculum, rather than add-ons where the material is treated separately. A third principle addresses the merit of including a dialogic component for learning whereby the meanings associated with ethical postures may be negotiated. Nucci advocates that students use transactional discussion patterns and that best outcomes in terms of the range and quality of dialogue are achieved when students are at somewhat different moral levels, and feel free to disagree about the best solution to a moral dilemma. This is also consistent with Stefkovich's (2006) experiences with graduate level students taking courses on ethical leadership.

Instructional strategies and related issues

The balance of this article discusses specific strategies and resources relevant to the integration of values and valuation processes into college and university level teaching.

Focusing on intents, purposes, and goals

One of the simplest and most intuitive approaches to the integration of moral literacy perspectives into teaching is to keep in mind that values – whether personal, professional, organizational, or social, have to do with the intentions behind actions taken, the purposes or the objectives of activity, and the goals of individuals, groups, or organizations. Applied to college and university level teaching, this implies that often the simplest way to integrate a consideration of moral literacy themes is by linking specific values or ethical postures to the statement of purpose in the course outline. Indeed, one of the observations noted during the recent 2nd Moral Literacy Colloquium (October, 2006 at Pennsylvania State University) by Willower Center associates as they examined core course syllabi was the unacknowledged presence of moral themes like “social justice” and “inclusion” in several of the existing course outlines they examined. In several cases, the “value-added” dimension could be readily integrated and achieved in two relatively simple steps. One was the explicit declaration in the course outline that a particular foundational perspective was embedded in the course. The other was adjusting the sequencing of course activities so that discussions about educational purpose, organizing metaphors of an ethical nature, were introduced early in the course as a way of setting the foundation for all further discussions and activities. For

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example, a course explicitly focused on the school principal's role might introduce authentic leadership as the organizing conceptual metaphor for the course at the outset of the course outline. Or, a course focused on the reform of special education practices might expressly identify social justice as the moral foundation of the course material.

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Good questions to ask about ethical frameworks and valuation processes

Recognizing the potential for the incorrect usage of ethical postures and moral frameworks once adopted, it is reasonable to consider what questions should be asked to assess the merits of theories, particular practices, or organizational models common to the field. Below are five critical questions that Begley often uses with graduate students in the analysis and assessment of theories, frameworks, models, and/or meta-organizers. These questions become the basis and stimulus for critical thinking and dialogue. The five critical questions are:

- (1) Which perspectives are represented in a given theory, model or practice? Are they those of the individual, the group, the profession, the organization, and/or the community?
- (2) Is there a gap or inconsistency between the values implied or articulated by the theory, model, structure, or practice and the actual values to which there is commitment? Is there a hidden or veiled agenda (e.g. an economic agenda masquerading as a pedagogical agenda)?
- (3) Do these perspectives perpetuate the myth of value consistency within individuals, and across groups and organizations? What variations and conflicts among values are apparent? Are these values portrayed as static, slowly evolving or highly dynamic in nature?
- (4) How are ethics employed within the theory, model, or practice? Are they utilized as unassailable castles to justify or protect self-interest and prevent rational argument? Are they used as veils that obscure baser motivations? Are they employed as a compass for navigating the swamp of administrative problem solving? Are the ethics appropriate to the particular social or cultural context to which they are applied?
- (5) If the matter at hand involves research on values or ethics, are the special problems associated with the description of internal psychological processes, attribution of meaning to the actions of others, and the context-stripped environment of third party research perspectives accommodated?

Multi ethics analyses as guides to problem solving:

As appealing and practical as theories, models, frameworks, and procedural guides may be to people working in professional settings, they must be employed as initial organizers, and not as prescriptions or recipes. Worded another way, the complexity of social and administrative situations makes it attractive for school leaders to employ processes to aid their interpretation and structuring of situations, but this must be done in socially and culturally sensitive ways. For example, Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) espouse the application of a multi-ethical analytical approach to the interpretation of ethical dilemmas as a way to improve or ensure the quality of decision making. The key ethical orientations suggested by these scholars include the ethic of justice, the ethic of critique, the ethic of care, and a hybrid multi-dimensional model, the ethic of

profession. Strike (Strike *et al.*, 1998; Strike, 2003) is well known for his work grounded in the ethic of justice with its familiar dualistic tension between maximizing benefits and respecting individual rights. Bates (1980) and Giroux and Purpel (1983) are good arch-types for an ethic of critique orientation. Noddings' (1984) writing is a good representation of the ethic of care orientation, as are the work of Beck (1994) and Gilligan (1982). And finally, Starratt (2003), and Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) are proponents of a multi-dimensional model that subsumes the ethics care, critique, and justice into one ethic of profession.

Although Shapiro and Stefkovich propose the use of multiple ethical lenses as a basis for responding to the dilemmas of school leadership, they stop short of proposing any particular sequence for applying those ethics. Their research suggests that individuals vary in their preferred ethical postures and are thus satisfied with espousing that administrators adopt a multi-ethical analysis of problems and situations. For example, a school principal responding to an ethical dilemma might prefer, in the sense of a personal inclination that is the outcome of their social formation, to gravitate towards the application of an ethic of care. In contrast, Begley (2006), with his foundational roots grounded in administrative problem solving research, argues that in the professional context of school leadership, where the individual is essentially an agent of society and accountable to the community for actions taken in the execution of his or her duties, there is probably an implied sequence for the appropriate application of these classic Western ethical lenses. A professionally appropriate sequence for the application of ethical lenses in a school leadership situation might be: ethic of critique, followed by the ethic of care, and then ethic of justice. Beginning with the ethic of critique is necessary in order to name and understand as much as possible the alternate perspectives applicable to a situation, especially those of minorities and individuals otherwise without voice or representation. To do otherwise is to risk gravitation to the preferred cultural orientations of the leader or the mainstream orientations of a given cultural group. The ethic of care naturally follows next in the sequence as a way to keep the focus of the process on people and their best interests rather than on organizations or policies. Using the ethic of care, one can also assess the capacity and responsibility of stakeholders to a situation in a humane way. Finally, once the ethics of critique and care have been used to carefully interpret a situation, the ethic of justice can be applied as a basis for deciding on actions that will maximize benefits for all while respecting the rights of individual.

This is not to suggest a dogmatic adherence to a prescriptive sequence of application for these classic ethics of Western philosophy. In all cases, the sequencing and application of ethical perspectives needs to be very fluid and dynamic as an initial organizer, not a recipe, and as a stimulus for reflection or dialogue, not a prescription. However, the application of any lens to a situation, including ethics, begins the process of highlighting some information as relevant and diminishing or veiling the relevance of other information. School leaders accountable to their communities must take care to interpret situations in a sensitive way.

The value audit process: a resource

In an effort to help school leaders develop their capacity to make ethically sound and professionally effective decisions, Begley has developed several versions of a value

audit guide to be used as a resource in support of their ethical decision-making processes (see Appendix). Originally based on a series of value audit questions proposed by Hodgkinson (1991), this resource document has gone through several evolutions and refinements as a result of being used with a succession of groups of school leaders in several countries over several years. An examination of the version included here as the Appendix will reveal that it incorporates many of the key concepts discussed in this article, including: a sequenced application of the ethics of critique, care, and justice; a bias towards careful interpretation before moving to action; and the four motivational bases of valuation by individuals. Begley has used this activity with some success as a component of graduate level courses and also as a workshop activity in support of the professional development of principals in several countries.

The case study approach: a resource and a strategy

As mentioned previously, case study approaches, if used properly, can provide an important strategy for analyzing ethical issues and identifying ethical (and unethical) behavior. In this respect, Stefkovich offers some guidance.

First, she believes that inquiry and self-reflection are critical to understanding ethics and that case study analysis is an integral part of a cluster of activities that build upon each other. In her view course requirements should include small and large group discussions and personal reflections. Relevant course activities can include:

- keeping journals which reflect on the course readings, group discussions, and reactions to lectures and assignments;
- writing and reflecting upon a critical incident (either in personal life or work life) that profoundly influenced the formation of one's ethics;
- developing personal codes of ethics, which incorporate but are not limited to what was learned from the critical incident, and comparing this code to that of others in the class;
- developing individual professional codes of ethics, comparing them to personal codes of ethics to determine if there is a clash, then comparing and contrasting them to the professional codes of classmates and to codes set forth by professional associations;
- reading, analyzing, and discussing ethical dilemmas;
- writing, analyzing, and presenting one's own ethical dilemma; and finally
- providing an oral and written critique of at least two other classmates' analyses of ethical dilemmas.

Second, to be effective as teaching resources, ethical dilemmas must have verisimilitude. In other words, they must be based in reality. Concurrently, they must respect confidentiality. All three of Stefkovich's books on this topic follow this principle and were, in essence, one of the major reasons why Shapiro and Stefkovich (2001) developed their first ethics book. At the time, it was unprecedented for an academic book to contain case studies written by students. Yet, these were not merely cases chosen at random. They were carefully selected from scores of cases written over the years by students who were also experienced professionals – mostly administrators and teachers – who lived these dilemmas. As in all research involving real people, names, places, and other identifiers were changed and even

though dilemmas reflected real life, most dilemmas mirrored a series of incidents that were all real but did not all happen in the same place at the same time. In addition, no one student was associated directly with the dilemmas that he or she had written. This same concern for realism holds true for the Hartman and Stefkovich (2006) book, designed for school business officials. Finally, the latest Stefkovich (2006) book is aimed at addressing ethical questions emanating from legal decisions. This information is already in the public domain and thus readily available. Therefore, names, places, and actual events were not altered.

Third, Stefkovich insists on the multi-paradigm approach to analysis discussed earlier. This strategy enables the reader/participant to both understand theory and apply major theoretical constructs to practice. This multi-paradigm approach builds on Starratt's work emphasizing the ethics of justice, care, and critique. It then adds a fourth ethic, that of the profession. One may use the classic Shapiro and Stefkovich (2001, 2005) book alone. However, while this book gives a general overview of theory, the authors themselves, suggest (and use) accompanying resources such as additional readings on justice, care, and critique.

Fourth, Stefkovich does not see this approach as restricted to any particular course or academic subject. It may be used in various classroom settings, the most common being a graduate course in educational leadership or ethical decision making for educational leaders. This orientation, however, lends itself to other educational areas including, as mentioned above, the law and ethics (Stefkovich, 2006) and ethics and school finance (Hartman and Stefkovich, 2006). It may also be appropriate at the undergraduate level, particularly in foundations courses such as philosophy or sociology of education or in methods courses.

Other resources

There are a number of other resources that would be helpful for university instructors interested in incorporating moral literacy materials into their teaching. The first resource is a conceptual one, the articles that make up this issue of the *Journal of Educational Administration (JEA)*. Alternately, another recently published *JEA* article on authentic leadership can be used as a conceptual framework for courses addressing school leadership themes (Begley, 2006).

More recently, Begley has edited a special issue of *Educational Management Administration & Leadership (EMAL)*, published in June 2007, which includes nine articles focused on various aspects of authentic leadership written by authors who are all working on the cutting edge of the moral literacy in educational leadership field. The authors whose articles are published in this special issue of *EMAL* include: Jerry Starratt (Boston College), Allan Walker (Chinese University of Hong Kong), Philip Woods (University of Aberdeen), Christopher Branson (Brisbane, Queensland), Lyse Langlois (Laval University), Steinun Helga Larusdottir (University of Iceland), Katarina Norberg and Olof Johansson (University of Umea), and Jacqueline Stefkovich and Paul Begley (Pennsylvania State University).

A final and relatively rich source of resource support is the web site of the Willower Center for the Study of Leadership and Ethics located at the following url: www.ed.psu.edu/uceacsle. This web site includes: archived and downloadable issues of the center journal, *Values and Ethics in Educational Administration*; extensive annotated resources lists on school leadership organized under key dimensions of practice; moral

literacy literature for K-12 students keyed to particular values and ethics; and a resource list for teachers interested in moral literacy. Seven or eight downloadable course syllabi that are illustrations of “value-added” graduate level core courses in educational leadership will also be added.

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Appendix. Value Audit Guideline (Paul Begley, 2005)

These questions may be helpful as guides, to be used by individuals or groups, interested in analyzing and responding ethically to critical incidents or dilemmas of practice encountered in school leadership situations.

Step 1: Interpretation of the problem (ethic of critique)

- Who are the “stakeholders”? Are any unrecognized or without voice?
- What “arenas of practice” (self, profession, organization, community, culture) are relevant?
- Does the conflict exist “within an arena or between two or more”? (e.g. personal v. organizational)
- Can the “values in conflict” be named?
- How much “turbulence” are the values in conflict creating? (Degree of risk for structural damage to people, organizations, or community)

Step 2: Towards a humane response (ethic of care)

- What “motivations and degrees of commitment” are apparent among the stake holders? Four levels of motivation:
concerned with self, personal preference, habitual, comfort (sub-rational values grounded in preference);
concerned with desired outcomes, avoidance of undesirable (rational values grounded in consequences);
concerned with perceptions of others, consultation, expert opinion (rational values grounded in consensus); and
concerned with ethical postures, first principles, will or faith (trans-rational, no need for rational justification)
- Is the conflict “interpersonal” (among individuals) or “intrapersonal” (within an individual)?
- What are the “human needs”, as opposed to organizational or philosophical standards?

Step 3: Ethical action (ethic of justice)

- What actions or response would “maximize benefits” for all stakeholders?
- What actions or response would “respect individual rights”?
- Are desired “ends” or purposes interfering with the selection of a “means” or solution?
- If an “ethical dilemma” exists (a choice between equally unsatisfactory alternatives), how will you resolve it? (Avoidance, Suspended Morality, Creative Insubordination, Taking a Moral Stand)

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