

Ethical Leadership and Moral Literacy: Incorporating Ethical Dilemmas in a Case-Based Pedagogy

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In this paper the authors examine an ethical dilemma approach to case-based pedagogy for leadership preparation, which was used in a doctoral studies program. Specifically, the authors argue that preparing educational leaders for the ethical dilemmas and moral decision-making that define schools requires assessing current programs and pedagogical practices, identifying curricular and pedagogical conflicts that fail to address adequately preparing ethical leaders. To address the research questions, the researchers used a two-tier design. The first tier provides a review of the extant body of case-based pedagogy and ethical leadership literature. The selected works were analyzed, which resulted in a set of case-based pedagogical perspectives. Tier two incorporated a case study approach to examine the use of an ethical dilemma approach to case-based pedagogy.

Introduction

The preparation of education leaders – school and district level – concerned with ethical dilemmas and moral decisions must tightly connect knowledge, interpretive frameworks, and experiences that promote a complex understanding of ethical and moral dimensions of leadership. Increasingly, the literature on educational leadership has placed a greater focus on the moral aspects of schooling perhaps now, more than ever before (Furman, 2003, 2004).

From a focus on *how* moral leadership might be practiced (Sergiovanni, 1996a, 1996b; Starratt, 1995, 2004), to the *why*—or moral purposes of leadership (Murphy, 1999), the ethical imperative is clear: school leaders have a moral responsibility to all members of their organization to be informed, ethical, and capable moral agents who lead democratic schools (Shapiro, & Stefkovich, 2005). The demands of the role of educational leader have changed so that traditional methods of preparation are no longer adequate to meet today's challenges. The literature points to an expanded interest in ethical leadership practices (Jackson & Kelley, 2002), and a concern with social contexts has provoked greater attention to issues of diversity, race, gender and equity (Rebore, 2001).

Kimbrough's *Ethics: A Course of Study for Educational Leaders* (1985) was perhaps one of the first significant attempts to introduce ethics into the preparation of school administrators.

More recently, several key research studies and scholars cogently support the need for including ethics in the study of educational leadership preparation. In *School Leadership Study: Developing Successful Principals* (2005), Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, and Meyerson point to the need for educational leadership preparation programs to connect candidates with real-world dilemmas through the process of ethical decision-making. Young, Crow, Orr, Ogawa, & Creighton (2005) further this argument, noting the need for leadership curricula to be integrated, comprising topics that reflect extended periods of deliberation around social justice, interpersonal relations, and moral and ethical leadership. As Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) posit, ethics is a necessary inclusion in the preparation of prospective educational leaders.

A central, and perhaps defining element of ethical leadership centers on the nature of ethical dilemmas that leaders are confronted with on a daily basis, ethical dilemmas that draw into specific relief the increasingly complex context in which leaders work (Cooper, 1998; Cranston, 2002) and the view that educational leadership represent a values-based process (Walker, 2003). Hodgkinson (1991) further explains, "values, morals and ethics are the very stuff of leadership and administrative life" (p. 11). Communities expect those holding leadership positions to demonstrate moral and professional accountability (Greenfield, 2004).

Toward the goal of preparing ethical leaders, the use of case-based pedagogy has been defined as an active-learning pedagogy designed for problem analysis and problem-solving, stressing a variety of viewpoints and potential outcomes (Cranston-Gingrass, Raines, Paul, Epanchin, & Roselli, 1996). Case-based pedagogy as a vehicle to advance epistemological understanding of teaching and learning is extensively cited in extant literature (Shapiro & Hassinger, 2007; Shulman &

Colbert, 1988; Shulman, 1986; Whitehouse & McPherson, 2002), especially in reference to its potential to serve as a catalyst for deconstructing meaning (Shulman et al., 2002).

Preparing education leaders to accept the moral responsibility of leading schools ethically requires learning experiences that develop the skills, knowledge, and dispositions needed to enter the educational setting and engage in addressing ethical dilemmas and making moral decisions for the common good of all. The purpose of the study was to examine, through a lens of moral literacy, an ethical dilemma approach to case-based pedagogy for leadership preparation. To this end, five central questions guided this study:

RQ1 What are the dominant case-based pedagogical approaches in the literature and research on preparing ethical leaders for schools?

RQ2 What is the role of moral literacy in educational leadership?

RQ3 What are the difficulties that students of leadership face with respect to understanding ethical dilemmas and moral decision-making?

RQ4 What do students of leadership identify as major ethical dilemmas in their practice and how do students recreate these dilemmas as cases for analysis?

RQ5 What does a case-based approach concerned with preparing ethical leaders look like that serves as a guide for developing moral literacy through ethical dilemma pedagogy in a course, set of courses, or an entire program?

In the following sections the authors present a theoretical framework for the study, followed by an examination of the research methods. A discussion of an activity used in the study is presented, followed by a case study that frames the experiences and findings related to the examining the use of case-based pedagogy to foster moral literacy and ethical leadership.

Conceptual Framework

American society has come to expect that educational leaders will make ethical decisions for the common good (Starratt, 2004) and that their actions will be guided by a moral commitment to students. A survey of the literature finds that the argument for education leadership as a fundamentally moral endeavor has been developed by many scholars in recent years (Begley, 1999, 2005; Branson, 2007; Enomoto, 1997; Ehrich, 2000; Furman, 2003; Greenfield, 1991; Greenfield, 2004; Hodgkinson, 1978, 1991, 1996; Ashbaugh & Kasten, 1991; Sergiovanni, 1996a, 1996b; Tuana, 2007).

Goldring and Greenfield (2002), in their work on the “roles, expectations, and dilemmas of leadership,” state that the “moral dimensions of educational leadership and administration” constitute one of the special conditions that make administering schools “different from such work in other contexts” (pp. 2-3). As professors in leadership programs, how we prepare educational leaders, and those aspiring to such positions, to deal with ethical dilemmas has become increasingly problematic given the value-laden nature of such dilemmas (Starratt, 2003; Willower, 1999).

As the challenges facing education leaders have become more acute, attention to the area of ethics and ethical dilemmas is required (Duignan & Collins, 2003). What is known, when considering the responsibility of preparing education leaders to meet the challenge of ethical dilemmas and make moral decisions, is that theoretical approaches cannot be applied entirely to solving problems or dilemmas due to the abstract nature of theory and the complexity of practice. Yet, there is an advantage that knowledge of theory holds in that it helps students of leadership organize their beliefs and perspectives, in a more coherent and meaningful way. What is also known is that using a case-based approach to leadership preparation, which focuses on ethical dilemmas, has pedagogical value (Davis, et al., 2005; Jackson & Kelley, 2002; Merseth, 1996; Miller & Kantrov, 1998; Orr, 2006; Shapiro & Hassinger, 2007; Sherman, 2008; Shulman, 1992). Connecting the theoretical and the pedagogical together can bridge the learning experience and enable the student of leadership to understand the nature of ethical dilemmas and moral decision-making. Concomitantly, there is a need for leadership preparation programs to reorient their focus on the nature of moral literacy and the ethical dilemmas faced by leaders; a need to understand the complexity of preparing leaders to make moral decisions.

The nature of case-based pedagogy, ethical dilemma, moral literacy, and ethical frames are examined, providing a theoretical examination that addresses research questions RQ1 and RQ2. The analysis reflected in the following paragraphs attempts to fulfill the requirement of tier one of the research design.

Case-based Pedagogy

Educational leadership authorities have called upon Pre-K-12 leadership preparation programs to improve their curricular coherence and application of theory to practice (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005; Hale & Moorman, 2003; Levine, 2005; SREB, 2006; UCEA, 1987). Case methods of instruction have been advocated as a signature pedagogy for the preparation of educational leaders that would effectively provide authentic assessments of future leaders' ability to apply theories in context. Pedagogically, learning to lead that is case-based, situates learners so as to require them to attend to details, to exercise judgement as they identify the nature of complex problems, and to engage in analyzing and arriving at solutions.

An important aim of case-based pedagogy in preparing ethical educational leaders is to challenge students' assumptions about the ethical, moral, political, and pragmatic role and responsibility of educational leaders and to enable them to incorporate new knowledge, skills, and capacities into their working repertoire (Orr, 2006). Cases can provoke students of leadership to self-critically reflect on the multivariate, often complex, demands of real life as an educational leader.

McNergney et al. (1999) make this point: "Submersion in a provocative case enables students [of leadership] to imagine things different from their own perspectives, to consider the implications of various policies or actions, and to learn of their peers' views" (p. 11). Using cases in learning to lead helps students to see real applications of their class work while placing the bulk of the responsibility on

the student to analyze situations presented in a case narrative and to present viable solutions (Grupe & Jay, 2000).

Pedagogically, case method is based on the conception that knowledge is constructed, built on prior knowledge, coupled with experience, transformable, evolving, and consequential and, thereby, provides students with insight into alternative solutions rather than 'correct' answers. Encouraging students to evaluate these alternative solutions from various perspectives (e.g., interpretive, normative, and critical perspectives) will further foster professional reasoning. In addition, cases conveying contextual knowledge to students provide them with opportunities to develop an understanding of the situatedness of evidence, the interrelationship between theoretical and practical knowledge, and the moral nature of teaching (Fenstermacher & Richardson, 1991; Harrington & Garrison, 1992; Shulman, 1986).

A case-based pedagogy draws on case discussion method to create a unique, situated learning experience. In a case-based learning experience, a common understanding can be constructed with participants about the issues and ideas in a particular case: it establishes an equivalent distance from the events for all participants (Miller & Kantrov, 1998).

There are three core steps involved in case methods, including: analysis of ill-defined dilemmas; action planning or decision making that applies knowledge to a unique situation or context; and evaluation of the decision-making actions and reflection on how theoretical frameworks apply within the specific context. Effective case methods draw upon multiple perspectives through interaction and group discussion (Merseeth, 1990; Merseeth & Lacey, 1993; Spiro, et al., 1987; Tally, et al., 2002). It is noted that evaluation and reflection based on analysis and feedback are important aspects of case-based pedagogy (Bransford, Goin, Hasselbring, et al., 1986; McAninch, 1993; Merseeth & Lacey 1993).

Case-based pedagogy or method proponents argue that a case's problematic situation requires analytical skills, and fosters deep understanding of specific concepts by bridging theory and practice (Diamantes & Ovington, 2003; Griffith & Taraban, 2002; McAninch, 1993; Merseeth, 1994; Zuelke & Willerman, 1995). Advocates report that when properly used, cases can help educational leaders experience, and therein formulate social practice of, how to think professionally about school-based problems, solutions, and alternatives (Lacey & Merseeth, 1993; Merseeth & Lacey, 1993; Shapiro & Hassinger, 2007; Snowden & Gordon, 2002).

Ethical Dilemmas

Beck and Murphy (1994) reported in their research on the use of case dilemmas as course content and of case analysis as a central teaching strategy, practices we as authors of this article discovered in a large number of courses. The authors noted a set of factors influencing the importance of ethical dilemmas, including a growing concern for developing moral reasoning skills; a belief that moral reasoning skills should be practiced in simulated situations; an acceptance that many problems facing leaders are complex and therefore do not lend themselves to neat, easily discovered solutions; and an interest in preparing prospective leaders for the

responsibility of discussing moral issues and presenting thoughtful rationales for positions and decisions (Beck & Murphy, 1994, p. 72).

Cranston, Ehrich, and Kimber (2003) state, with respect to the nature of an “ethical dilemma,” a dilemma “. . . can be described as a circumstance that requires a choice between competing sets of principals in a given, usually undesirable or perplexing, situation. Conflicts of interest . . . are possibly the most obvious situations that could place school leaders in an ethical dilemma” (p. 137).

Robins and Trabichet (2009) are instructive in their discussion of an ethical dilemma, noting that a dilemma is a situation where one has to choose between two or options, but the choice is complicated due to the complex nature of the situation, those involved, time intervals, and conflicting values and beliefs as well as the demand placed on individuals by internal and external forces. In many cases, the choices “ seem legitimate” (Robins & Trabichet, 2009, p. 52). This approach to making decision has different possibilities. “[E]ither the contradiction is only apparent because a superior or objective solution exists. I this case the problem is epistemic: the dilemma needs to be overcome to find the best outcome” (p. 52). Alternatively, “the contradiction is real and one needs to make a choice, but according to which norms? In either case the problem revolves around finding criteria for decision-making when faced with ethical dilemmas. (p. 52)

Ethical dilemmas, as Enomoto and Kramer (2007) explain, require that “ leaders engage in careful analysis and discernment to arrive at ethical judgments” (p. 16). This evokes the importance of Tuana’s (2007) components of ethical sensitivity and ethical reasoning. Enomoto and Kramer suggest a set of framing questions to guide the analysis and discernment:

What antecedent factors, both personal and professional, need to be considered? What likely consequences might result from the actions taken? What means have been suggested to arrive at what ends? Have we weighed all the factors related to the decision? Have we sufficiently thought though the positives and negatives that might result from our actions? (p. 16)

Educational leaders confronted by the complex and challenging responsibilities of schools in a changing society often have to examine their ethics in relation to particular circumstances, at times faced with deciding between multiple “right” or “wrong” decision paths. Badaracco (2006) suggests the need for educational leaders to develop moral-ethical codes that are sufficiently “complex, varied, and subtle as the situations in which they often find themselves . . . enables leaders to fully understand the complexities of the situations they face” (p. 33). Often the leader does not see the situation “in the same terms as others do, and to communicate more powerfully and effectively. (pp. 33-34)

Enomoto and Kramer (2007) draw forward the importance of discerning “the sources of ethical tension in a dilemma is helpful in that it exposes the reasoning or logic that may be underlying the decision” (p. 16). The authors further explain the complexity of ethical decisions, noting that “the nature of a dilemma is in the complexity of the choices it offers, the deliberation related to values or right and wrong, and the judgments that one must make as a result of such choices” (p. 91). The dilemma might be perceived as “a small problem to resolve for one person,” which “may be a tough decision for someone else” (p. 91). A leader’s relative

experience, “the perspectives of varied participants, and the cultural context all affect working the dilemma. These factors force us to probe for deeper understanding of the unique context of the situation” (p. 91).

When educational leaders find themselves in perplexing situations that necessitate their choosing among competing sets of principles, values, beliefs or ideals, ethical dilemmas emerge. Kidder (1995) maintains that many of the ethical dilemmas facing professionals and leaders “don’t centre upon right versus wrong [but can] involve right versus right” or wrong versus wrong” (p. 16). Preparing educational leaders as ethical and moral agents equipped to address ethical dilemmas is a complex undertaking (Cranston, Ehrich, and Kimber, 2005). Moral literacy is a key element of preparation; preparing educational leaders with a grasp of what it means to be ethically sensitive, to be able to reason ethically, and to apply moral imagination is a necessary step in meeting the challenge of ethical dilemmas as educational leaders.

Moral Literacy

Barbara Herman (1998), in her examination of the fundamental nature of moral literacy, explains it “is a culture-dependent, intentional process. To be literate in a domain is to have the capacity to recognize and perform at some specified level of competency” (p. 3). Moral literacy, in consideration of what it means to be a moral leader, relates to the conceptual and practical capacity of school leaders to make and encourage morally grounded decisions, decisions that take into consideration values and beliefs within the cultural setting of the school (Begley & Johansson, 2003). Educational leaders face increasingly complex and conflicting demands, and in turn “leadership decisions are unavoidably complex as they are connected to and interconnected with different contexts simultaneously, contexts that are themselves shifting” (Walker, Haiyan, & Shuangye, 2007, p. 380).

Moral literacy, as Herman (1998) points out, does not come naturally. Like other forms of literacy, the educational leader requires practice and experience in decision-making. Developing moral literacy is analogous to ongoing learning Tuana (2003), in her examination of moral literacy, posited three basic components of moral literacy: becoming knowledgeable, cultivating moral virtues, and developing moral reasoning. With these components in mind, Walker, Haiyan, and Shuangye (2007) note that development of moral literacy in leaders is made problematic when a leader’s “traditional socio-cultural orientations diverge from those of their school community,” in particular “in intercultural schools,” which is “due to the interplay of the divergent cultural values, inequality of opportunity, and often, social disadvantage, carried by their students, teachers, and broader communities” (p. 381).

Intercultural schools vary in terms of demographic make-up and in relation to the social and cultural contexts (Blackmore, 2006). Each of the various groups and sub-groups have their own sets of values, beliefs, norms, and behaviors that define who they are and which are part of their identity as they enter the educational setting. Based on these factors, leaders in intercultural schools often face conflict and confusion juxtaposed with opportunity, due to the interplay of the

diverse and divergent cultural values, inequalities of opportunity; often social disadvantage has defined students, teachers, and the larger social geography of the communities; social disadvantages also manifest through policy and external forces from other educational and governmental agencies (Walker, Haiyan, & Shuangye, 2007). Moral literacy requires that leaders learn in context of the school “a complex set of skills, abilities and habits that can be cultivated and enriched” in the day-to-day functions of the school and “in line with the needs, desires and aspirations of their communities” (Walker, et al, 2007, p. 379).

In considering moral literacy and ethical leadership, Tuana (2006) offers the following definition of moral literacy:

- the ability to recognize moral problems and to assess the complex issues that they raise;
- the ability to evaluate moral problems from many perspectives; and
- the ability to assess disagreements on, and proposed responses to these problems. (p. 2)

As Walker et al. (2007) argue, to make a difference in schools, in particular in schools with rapidly shifting demographics, “leaders to need to know, connect to, and be responsive to their communities, even if values, expectations, and traditions diverge” (p. 382). The ability to recognize moral problems requires the leader becoming knowledgeable. As Tuana (2003) states, becoming knowledgeable is integral to personal and institutional development of moral literacy. Self-knowledge, community/social knowledge, leader knowledge, and curriculum/pedagogical knowledge are critical to becoming knowledgeable (Walker et al., 2007).

Tuana (2003) defines “common moral values” as, “virtues that are shared across cultures [and] include honesty, fairness, respect, responsibility and caring” (p. 2). Cultivating moral virtues means living and modeling certain values, leaders authentically practicing them themselves. Moral problems may arise in the educational setting when moral values are rhetorical in nature and not lived or practiced. Conflict ensues when socio-cultural orientations are not honored or treated with respect, and if equity and fairness are not practiced as common values.

The ability to evaluate moral problems requires the leader be self-aware of his or her ethical positioning with respect to theoretical and philosophical frames. As well, the leader must be able to see the factors contributing to the nature of a moral problem, whether it is a socio-cultural conflict in values on an institutional or personal level. Tensions related to common values, or conflict between values come into play as cultural patterns shift, and the leader is not only responsible for recognizing the emerging moral problem but is equally responsible for evaluating the problem from multiple perspectives, theoretical and philosophical as well as cultural and political. The leader is responsible, in terms of him- or herself and other persons, with respect to discerning when conflicting values, beliefs and cultural patterns contribute to moral problems.

The ability to assess disagreements requires the leader to developing moral reasoning skills. As Tuana (2003, p. 2) explains, “Along with critical-reasoning skills of identifying unwarranted assumptions or prejudices, moral reasoning requires identifying the values at play in any moral situation.” As Walker et al. (2007) further elaborate, “Such reasoning operates at multiple levels and is complex in that it

requires attention to ‘rights and duties, codes of action, the intentions of actors, and the consequences of actions’” (p. 387). The leader who is developing moral literacy will embrace the need “for openly engaging with and listening to others, critiquing personal and organizational positions, debating the ethical implications of situations and decisions and . . . accepting responsibility for beliefs and actions and the congruence therein” (p. 387). Moral reasoning is essential to addressing the many complex ethical dilemmas presented in the day-to-day life of the educational leader.

Tuana (2007), in her essay “Conceptualizing Moral Literacy”, advances her framing of moral literacy, refining what she believes are the three basic components. These include ethical sensitivity, ethical reasoning, and moral imagination. Figure 1 presents a conceptual framing of Tuana’s (2003, 2006, 2007) refined perspective of moral literacy, synthesizing the three components and a set of related literacy abilities to serve as a heuristic for examining moral literacy and ethical leadership. While ethical sensitivity and ethical reasoning align with her earlier components of becoming knowledgeable, cultivating moral virtues, and developing moral reasoning, the emergence of moral imagination reflects a blending “of affective and rational components that contribute to the imagination” (Tuana, 2007, p. 374).

Moral Literacy Component	Literacy Abilities
<p>Ethical Sensitivity – necessary for leaders to adjudicate between ethical controversies and understand the reasons why individuals or groups disagree</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ability to determine whether or not a situation involves ethical issues; 2. Awareness of the moral intensity of the ethical situation; and 3. The ability to identify the moral virtues or value underlying an ethical situation.
<p>Ethical Reasoning – necessary for leaders to understand the ethical frameworks which guide decisions (consequentialist, non-consequentialist, virtue ethics, and care ethics)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ability to understanding of the various ethical frameworks; 2. The ability to identify and assess the validity of facts relevant to the ethical situation, as well as assessing any inferences form such facts; and 3. The ability to identify and assess the values that an individual or group holds to be relevant to the ethical issue under consideration.
<p>Moral Imagination – necessary for leaders to appreciate responsibilities as moral agents and to blend reason and emotion through attending to what is taken for granted, what is left out of a situation, how possibilities could be otherwise envisioned.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ability for empathy, to imagine oneself in the situation of another; 2. The ability to develop an aesthetic attunement to the complexities of the situation; and 3. The ability to see alternative possible solutions to complex ethical dilemmas.

Figure 1. Components and abilities associated with moral literacy and ethical leadership. (Adapted from Herman, 1998; Tuana, 2003, 2006, 2007; Werhane, 1998)

Tuana takes direction from the work of Johnson (1993) who explained moral imagination as the “ability to imaginatively discern various possibilities for acting in a given situation and to envision the potential help and harm that are likely to result from a given situation” (p. 202). Moral imagination, as Werhane (1998) explains, requires: “(a) Awareness of one’s context, (b) Awareness of the script or schema functioning in that context, and (c) Awareness of possible moral conflicts or dilemmas that might arise in that context, that is, dilemmas created at least in part by the dominating script” (p. 85).

The leader’s responsibility, as moral agent, requires an integration of the three components of moral literacy, developing the leader self as an ethically sensitive, reasoning, and morally imaginative person with the abilities to see the complex nature of ethical dilemmas and moral problems. Moral literacy also requires that the ethical leader model and practice these components, in integrated applications, within the culture and on a day-to-day basis.

Ethical Frames

Various scholars including Begley (1999), Cranston et al. (2005), Furman (2004), Nash (1996), Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005), Starratt (1994, 2004), Strike, Haller, and Soltis (1988, 2005) and others have focused extensively on ethical frames. The derivation of the scholarly examination of different ethical leadership perspectives has resulted in a fairly constant framing of ethics that includes: ethic of justice, ethic of care, ethic of community, ethic of critique, ethic of profession, and ethic of presence to note the more common occurring ethics of educational leadership. When examining case-based pedagogies and case methods (Cranston, et al., 2003; Strike et al., 2005) for leadership preparation, two specific philosophical perspectives emerge, consequentialism and non-consequentialism.

Consequentialist. Consequentialism is often aligned with utilitarianism, or ends-based thinking. Strike, Haller, and Soltis (2005) explain that a consequentialist, in ethical decision making, holds that the rightness of an action can be determined based on consequences and a commitment to the “principle of benefit maximization” (p. 19). The best decision or choice is the one that results in what is intrinsically valuable or of the most good or the greatest benefit to the most people. Therefore, outcomes or consequences decide the morality of our actions.

However, consequentialism is often criticized because it fails to attend to the needs of the individual and its lack of focus on either short term or long-term results (Duignan, 2006, Haynes, 1998, Jarvis, (1997). The consequentialist approach presumes that the greatest good can be discovered independently of any ideological or conceptual schema. Critics have rejected consequentialism because they believe we cannot always predict the outcomes of our actions, therefore the end is often unknown and uncertain. Therefore, the morality of an act cannot rely on its repercussions.

Freakley & Burgh, (2000, p. 120) explain the consequentialist as an individual that takes the perspective that actions can only be justified with reference to the end or outcomes they achieve. A consequentialist would make a decision only

after carefully weighing the foreseeable consequences and choosing the alternative that produces the better result.

Non-consequentialist. Non-consequentialism, often referred to as a duty-bond ethic, requires the application of human rationality and the same principle or moral law, universally. Kant (1993) argued that a duty-bond ethic is a compulsory rule or 'categorical imperative' that, if applied to one person must be applied to everyone. This imperative states: "Act only according to that maxim whereby you can, at the same time, will that it should become a universal law" (Kant, 1993, p. 30).

A non-consequentialist, in ethical decisions making, is concerned with treating others as ends rather than means, following the "principle of equal respect" by considering their welfare rather than our own gain, and considering that all people are free, rational and responsible moral agents, therefore all deserving of equal treatment and opportunity no matter what our interests or ability (Strike, Haller, & Soltis, 2005, p. 17). The non-consequentialist is not oblivious to consequences, however "the crucial point that makes an action a moral action is that the action taken gives first consideration to the value and dignity of persons" (p. 17).

Burke (1997) explains the non-consequentialist as an individual who lives his or her life "by an uncompromising, moral legalism which requires adherence to duty, principle or absolute truth, etc., as more important than consequences . . . in determining what is good, just, right and fair" (p. 15). The non-consequentialism makes ethical judgments based on duty, rights, laws, motive, intuition, or reason (Strike, Haller, & Soltis, 2005).

Research Method

A two-tier research methodology was used in the study. To address RQ1 and RQ2, tier one, the researchers adapted Capper, Theoharris, and Sebsation's (2006) meta-synthesis technique for examining the literature on moral literacy and case-based pedagogical approaches to leadership preparation that incorporate ethical dilemmas and ethical decision-making. In the selected works that were analyzed, common recommendations focused on case study, case method, case discussion method, case-based learning, and case-based pedagogy. No theoretical or pedagogical perspectives or frameworks offered a singular approach to writing narrative cases of ethical dilemmas combined with articulating a theoretical lens for analysis.

To address RQ3, RQ4, RQ5, in the study the researchers followed a case-study approach in tier two of the analysis (Merriam, 1998). Participants included 52 doctoral students across three doctoral cohorts, each cohort participating in an ethics and philosophy of leadership course, specifically in an "Ethical Synthesis Activity" designed around identifying an ethical dilemma, writing a richly detailed case (following a set of guidelines), and then developing a theoretical lens of ethical leadership to use in analyzing the case. Following IRB approval, participants were invited to participate and informed consent was obtained. The time frame for the activity was approximately four weeks during the semester within which each cohort completed the course. Sherman's (2008) work on use of case studies and

visualization were incorporated as a heuristic lens to guide the evolution of the ethical dilemma case.

The ethical dilemma case, the theoretical lens, and the analysis completed by the doctoral student provided three sets of data from each participant. As well, student discussion related to the case and case analysis were analyzed to identify specific issues related to conflict, moral considerations, and decision-making patterns. Subsequent to completion of data collection and organization of the data sets, the researchers analyzed each ethical dilemma case, theoretical lens discussion, and student analysis of case. The first author took primary responsibility for collecting the data sets. The second author worked in concert with the first author to organize and analyze the data sets.

The ethical dilemma case was analyzed for content and evidence of ethical sensitivity (i.e., to the situation identified as an ethical dilemma), ethical reasoning (i.e., in terms of when the participant self-identified the ethical dilemma and the ethical lens used). The ethical lens was analyzed for its theoretical coherence and the case analysis was examined for patterns of alignment to the theoretical lens and for emergent patterns/themes of leadership practices that reflected an understanding of complexity of the dilemma as well as what constituted the dilemma, and what were the alternative decision paths that constituted the dilemma. A coding schema, following Creswell (2007) using open and axial coding (guided by the moral literacy framework in Figure 1), was used to identify themes aligned with the situation or nature of dilemma identified, evidence of ethical sensitivity, ethical lens used for reasoning the nature of the dilemma, and emergent themes within and across participants' analysis and narrative discussion. The participants' narrative analysis of the ethical dilemma case served as the data set for examining the presence of moral imagination, the third dimension of moral literacy.

Ethical Dilemma Case Activity

The ethical dilemma case activity was designed by the first author (Patrick) and evolved over 5 years. The activity was first introduced in a doctoral course titled "AED 602 – Inquiring Into the Foundations of Ethics and Philosophy of School Leaders." The activity has remained as a core learning experience in the course. The course is one of six core courses in the residence requirement of the doctoral sequence, following in the first academic term of two required for residence, which includes three courses each. The course description states:

This course is a survey of major ethical and philosophical influences of importance for educational leadership. The educational leader as scholar-practitioner will serve as a focus for examining the relevant dimensions of leadership. Specific focus will be given to the inner self and understanding the relationship of philosophical foundations, ethical and moral theory, spirituality, and social justice and caring to the development of educational leaders.

The evolution of a case-based pedagogical orientation to the ethics and philosophy course was instructed by the work of McDade (1995), McNergney, Ducharme, and Ducharme (1999), Nash (1996), Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005), and Strike, Haller,

and Soltis (1998, 2005). The ethical dilemma approach to a case-based pedagogy was informed by the work of Begley (1999); Begley and Johansson (1998, 2003); Cranston, Ehrich, and Kimber (2003; 2005), Greenfield (1985, 1995); Grogan and Smith (1999); Langlois (2004); Shapiro and Smith-Rosenberg (1989); and Starratt (1991, 1994, 2003, 2004). An emphasis on developing moral literacy in educational leaders was incorporated to foster an understanding of the complex nature of ethical dilemmas and need for ethical sensitivity, ethical reasoning, and moral imagination (Begley, 1996, 2006; Branson, 2007; Greenfield, 1985, 2004; Tuna, 2007; Shapiro & Hassinger, 2007; Walker, Haiyan, & Shuangye, 2007).

The ethics and philosophy course is taken in the spring academic term, and therein the activity was conducted in 2009, 2010, and 2011. In each cohort, the activity is shared with the cohort members and discussed. The activity is designed in three parts (see Appendix A), with Part I focusing on an autobiographical approach to writing a case about an event that each doctoral student self-selects as an authentic event premised on an ethical issue. Part II focuses on each student self-selecting an ethical leadership perspective from the theoretical and philosophical readings for the course as well as drawing from additional literature appropriate to clearly delineating an ethical leadership perspective or lens. The purpose of Part II and the ethical leadership lens is discussed with the students following the completion of a full draft of the ethical case. Part II of the activity focuses the doctoral students on preparing an ethical leadership perspective/lens they will use to critically, self examine the ethical case to determine the factors and conflicts in the case and begin to delineate and determine the nature of the ethical dilemma in the case. Part III of the activity is the use of the ethical leadership perspective/lens to analyze the case, and then reflectively discuss the salient elements of the case as well as analyze the original leadership decision paths presented in the case.

In effect, as Tuana (2007) and Walker, Haiyan, and Shuangye (2007) state, developing ethical sensitivity (one of three elements of moral literacy) requires individuals to situate in an authentic social text of experience, contextualize the event, and engage in a dialogic examination of the event, questioning the underlying factors contributing to the event as well as identifying the individuals involved and the implications of the event, not only in the present but the future as well. In Part I, the students prepare the case narrative, which is recursively examined and refined based on a series of clarifying questions and peer-feedback. The intent here is to have the students write a narrative from memory, realizing that the student has formulated at this point a theoretical understanding of moral literacy and in particular the dimensions of ethical sensitivity and ethical reasoning as the student enters the process. Rather than being concerned with setting a baseline measure to test a student's knowledge, the intent is to have the student engage authentically with the memories of the event and pursue articulating and clarifying the elements of the event. The clarifying questions are intended to guide the students in providing a thick, rich description and discussion of the situation including humanizing the case to give the reader specific details and insight. The questions are also designed to help the students to contextualize the case, giving the reader an understanding of the social, cultural, and political contexts as well as identifying roles and relationships of actors or participants either directly involved or peripherally.

Writing the case is about working with memory to extract elements of the original event in order to reconstruct the event and all its detail. Ethical sensitivity, as determined by the professor of the course reading the case, emerges as the doctoral students engage in structured self-reflection of the event and their role and/or experience in the event. Ethical sensitivity, in this process, is not measured per se using an instrument. Rather the professor draws from Figure 1 (see Figure 1 in an earlier section), using the literacy awareness indicators as the basis of a rubric to assess the level of sensitivity the student has as he or she develops the case. Each student's ethical dilemma case is revised and assessed with each draft of the case, the professor providing prompts to guide further development of the case and evoke new levels of self-awareness; a formative process of writing from memory and delving deeper into the experience.

Part II further heightens ethical sensitivity as the doctoral students engage in developing an ethical leadership perspective/lens. Heighten ethical sensitivity is a phrase denoting the intent of the process step in the activity, not a "truth claim" in terms of what did or did not occur. The determination of increased ethical sensitivity follows a similar process as previously denoted, the professor reads the case and examines the text for indicators of awareness. An important contributing factor in the process is the immersion in philosophical and theoretical literature related to ethical decision making frames. As the students are immersed in the literature, and the student perspective is constructed, each student focuses on philosophical positions such as consequentialist versus non-consequentialist views of ethical decision making in leadership. As the doctoral students examine and prepare the ethical leadership perspective, there is an evolving level of self-awareness and ethical sensitivity; the professor is constantly providing narrative feedback, analyzing students' discussions. Importantly, Part II also fosters an emerging understanding of ethical reasoning (one of the three elements of moral literacy). Ethical reasoning takes direction from the philosophical positions adopted in the leadership perspective/lens. As Part II takes form, clarifying questions and peer-feedback contribute to the evolution of the ethical leadership perspective/lens, however the emerging perspective is not finalized until the respective doctoral students have actually applied the perspective/lens in the analysis process that occurs in Part III. The importance of the perspective remaining open to refinement is that in the application of the perspective/lens, the doctoral students become increasingly self-aware of their understanding of both the ethical perspective/lens and the complexity of the ethical dilemma case. The process is highly interactive and formative, the ethical perspective/lens further evolving as it is applied in analysis.

Part III requires the doctoral students to analyze the ethical case, using the ethical leadership perspective/lens, and to deconstruct the case to identify the nature of the dilemma in the case. It is this process of analysis that evolves and further heightens ethical sensitivity and ethical reasoning, resulting in a careful analysis of the complex and problematic nature of the ethical dilemma. As well, Part III presents the doctoral students with the question of what the moral consequences are in terms of how the original event was resolved, and to examine alternative possible solutions. Moral imagination is fostered, as the doctoral students conscious

awareness of the moral interplay between decisions made in the “present” and the implication of those decisions for individuals in the “future”.

Case Study—Exemplar of Ethical Dilemma Case

In this section, an exemplar of an ethical dilemma cases is presented. The complex nature of the ethical dilemma becomes apparent as the doctoral student presents her case. It is noted that all doctoral students granted permission per informed consent to present the data collected from the ethical dilemma cases. The exemplar of an ethical dilemma case presented in the following section, authored by Toni (pseudonym), concerns both her and her husband Don (pseudonym). The intersection of personal and professional life events introduces a complexity into the nature of the dilemma that defines and directs actions and decisions. For Toni, the authoring of the case was very emotional, and as she later self-acknowledges, it was also cathartic in nature. She had carried the trauma of the life event with her for some time. The engaged self-reflective, self-reflexive nature of authoring the case draws into specific relief the role relationships and rule-based logic are often turned upside down by a single unexpected event. Whether one adheres to a consequentialist or non-consequentialist logic, emotion is or can be a governing factor in decisions.

Exemplar of ethical dilemma case.

During the summer of 2007, my husband, Don, and I applied for and received jobs as assistant principals within the same rural school district in Oklahoma. The district, Hillside I.S.D., had a little more than 2700 students and contained five campuses. Hillside I.S.D. was the hub of the quaint community named Grapeland. Don and I were drawn to the community because of its small size and sense of small town values. Thus, we bought a home, moved to Grapeland, and began a new chapter in our lives.

Don became the assistant principal at the intermediate campus, which housed 2nd through 4th grades and contained 600 students. I was the assistant principal at the high school, which encompassed roughly 850 students. This was an exciting time for us as we had both received significant pay increases, and this was the first time that our entire family, including our children Shanna and Kent, were in the same school district.

Don and I were amazed at the fact that we were to be able to start our administrative careers in the same district at the same time. We felt blessed, but there was no time for relaxing. Don and I no longer had summers off as we did as former classroom teachers. We began working as soon as we learned the school board hired us in June, and we hit the ground running. Don and I worked hard, and we were exhausted at the end of each day. However, we found the job of an assistant principal to be exciting and never the same two days in a row. Consequently, Don and I would often discuss our daily experiences by comparing notes at the end of each work day.

Even though Don and I were both assistant principals, the two different campus levels, intermediate and high school, made the respective positions unique. I felt I had a pretty fair grasp of discipline at the high school

campus. In fact, discipline, student attendance, and campus safety were the only duties for which I was responsible. This was an easy task and transition position for me, coming straight out of the classroom. However, Don was not as successful in initially acquiring the skills and intuitiveness that eventually comes with being an effective assistant principal. Thus, Don would ask me questions about how to solve problems on his campus such as: (a) figuring out the electronic time sheet requirements, (b) organizing parties for the students, and (c) working for a principal who was highly demanding. I was unable to assist Don with these matters because I did not have the same requirements of my position, and my principal was a collaborative leader, not authoritative. I made suggestions, but all I could really do was to tell Don to ask various people questions who could provide answers.

Toni is self-reflectively engaging in revisiting her memories of the life event that is the basis of the ethical dilemma. What is important to understand here is that as Toni recounts the event, she is also consciously engaging in a level of self-discovery of ethical sensitivity (Tuana, 2007) to the event; she is disclosing what made the event an ethical dilemma (see Cranston, Ehrich, & Kimber, 2003). As Toni recounts the events that set a backdrop for the ethical dilemma, she reveals elements of her professional and personal relations that are instrumental in understanding the nature of a duty-based approach to decision making (Strike et al., 2005). Keeping in mind the elements of moral literacy, when one encounters an ethical dilemma, being sensitive to the nature of the dilemma is important, as is ethical reasoning (Werhane, 1998, Tuana, 2007).

At the end of September 2007, after several weeks of being assistant principals, Don stopped talking about his job. He would simply say that it was great working at the intermediate school, but he failed to articulate details. I asked repeatedly if everything was alright with him, and he always responded with a compliment such as, "Do you know how proud I am of you?" Ignoring my questions by diverting the conversation always seemed to be Don's preferred method of communication. Obviously, I was intuitively receiving a negative vibe that something was different, but I could not put my finger on it.

On October 4, 2007, I attended a workshop pertaining to an update on school discipline at the regional service center. Another assistant principal attended this workshop with me, and as conversation would have it, he asked about Don. I told him everything was great. However, I had a knot in my stomach. I just felt as though things with Don were not right. Therefore, during a workshop break, I called the intermediate school to check on Don. Mysteriously, I was told that Don was not in his office. I asked when he was expected to return. The secretary said, "I don't know. He left at 10:00 and hasn't been back. No one knows where he went."

At that point, I left the workshop. I did not care that the workshop was not over. I could have cared less. Something was wrong with Don. I drove back to the district, and I pulled into the intermediate campus parking lot with the intention of picking up Shanna. Since Don was not at school and no one knew where he was, I could not rely on him to get Shanna and take her

home with him, as was the normal routine. However, before I could get to the awning of the school, the principal happened to see me, and she pulled me aside to ask me some questions: "Where is Don?" "What is wrong with Don?" "He just left campus. Doesn't he know that he can't do that? This is just not good."

I did not know what to tell her. I knew nothing pertaining to my husband and his dereliction of duties. I left the school with the principal telling me to give Don the message that he needed to call her.

At this point in the reconstructing of the life event, Toni is entering a deeply emotional phase of the ethical dilemma (Robins & Trabichet, 2009), retrospectively, self-consciousness gives direction to her ethical reasoning as she unpacks the event and relives the trauma. Here we also see that Toni had drifted, ethically, from her duty-based obligations to the school district (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005), moving more so toward her personal duty-based obligations as a spouse. Ethical dilemmas are often complex as earlier noted, and Toni experienced the complexity as it played out in judgment and decision making. Ethical reasoning is critical to making ethical decisions, both professionally and personally (Tuana, 2006; Walker et al., 2007).

After picking up both Shanna and Kent from school, I drove home hoping to find Don. I failed in this endeavor, but I could tell that Don had been there because the lights were turned on throughout the house. My negative intuition was intensifying, and I was becoming anxious. I drove over to a friend's house and told her about Don. She did not appear bothered by the situation and seemed to think that I was prematurely worrying. She suggested that I look for Don at another friend's house.

I jumped back into my mini-van with children in tow. Don was fond of a particular friend who he liked to visit. Jake (pseudonym), the friend, did not live more than quarter of a mile away, close to our own house. Therefore, I turned toward Jake's house. For some reason I made note of the time. It was 5:30 in the evening, on a Thursday.

As I drove toward Jake's house, I saw the ambulance in the front yard, and then I saw two paramedics take Don on a gurney from the house to the back of the ambulance. I could tell that Don's body was still, unresponsive. I had my children with me, and I did not know what to do with them. I wanted to stop, but I did not want the kids to see Don in this condition. I drove past Jake's house simply because I did not know what else to do. I drove down the road a little further, and then I finally parked the mini-van in the middle of the road and instructed my 13-year-old son to drive the van home and to stay at the house with Shanna. Our house was less than five minutes away.

I ran back to Jake's house, and I could not ask questions fast enough. Time stood still. A police officer was also at Jake's house. She began asking me questions. I said, "Wait. Is he dead? Is he dying? What happened?" Jake and the police officer told me that Don had taken a large quantity of pills. Don had attempted suicide, and I was not allowed to see him in the ambulance. I was only told that Don was in bad shape.

The police officer showed me the prescription bottle. It was Phenobarbital. Don had taken the medicine that was intended for our Great

Dane, but our dog died the previous week. I simply had not thought to throw away the dog's medicine. I knew there were originally several pills in the bottle, over 100. Don had taken the majority of the pills.

In this case, Toni has written a life event, reflexively reentering a deeply emotional experience that crossed personal and professional boundaries, raising ethical issues on a number of levels, which Walker et al. (2007) acknowledge requires attention to "rights and duties" (p. 387). While the intuitive nature of ethical leadership is focused on duty-based action (non-consequentialist as noted by Strike et al., 2005), often times the stress and emotive tensions of life intersect with rational judgment. Toni later reflects and shares the following:

Dilemmas of any sort normally weigh heavily on the mind. Dilemmas often cause pensiveness and mental anguish with one's moral compass. Without such struggle, dilemmas would simply constitute decisions without contemplation of affect or effect. This leads me to ask, what elements determine whether something becomes a situation, problem, or dilemma? In other words, what compels a person to approach a dynamic, or a set of dynamics and label it either as a small issue or situation (involving little or no cogitation), a problem, or a dilemma? My answer lies in the belief that a person's perception determines how one approaches the presented dynamic(s). Furthermore, I contend that one's personal perception is developed from society (people, relationships, customs, etc.), environment (time, space, location, conditions, etc.) and culture (morals, beliefs, values, etc). Consequently, a person's perception of a dilemma and the manner in which one applies a solution is based on his or her lived experiences. Thus, for the scholar-practitioner leader, creating a framework based on a personal understanding of one's self is critical.

For Toni, engaging in structured reflection situated her in the event, drawing her into reliving the experience and at the same time engage in deep ethical reasoning about the event (see Tuana, 2003). Her sensitivity to the complexity of the ethical dilemma heightened her awareness of the many dimensions of the event. Here we also see elements of ethical reasoning presented, importantly albeit retrospectively. She goes on to note another element that influenced her reasoning through the event. It is noted that intermingled in her logical reasoning were levels of self-awareness that enable her to further deconstruct the event. She shares:

Another crucial element influencing one's approach to a dilemma is time. For instance, if a high level dilemma is given a deadline for a solution at the end of six months, then a great deal of deliberation can occur. Usually, within a six month time period, a person can research other potential options in which to solve the dilemma, dialogue with others to receive opinions and gain information, and consider the pros and cons involved. However, having an extended period of time in which to solve a dilemma is not always favorable. For example, a person can suffer emotional distress when having to apply the best of a bad solution to a dilemma at the end of a deadline. On the other hand, when given a short amount of time, minutes or hours, in which to formulate a solution, a person may not apply the best possible option. Hence, time is crucial in making decisions, and rarely does a scholar-

practitioner leader have time to pull a textbook from off a shelf to use as a reference in formulating a solution to an ethical dilemma.

Toni's ethical dilemma case is unique and perhaps not the ordinary day-to-day routine dilemma one expects to encounter as an educational leaders. However, the nature of an ethical dilemma is anything but ordinary and often enters one's personal and professional life unexpected and certainly undefined in the moment. Toni's situation required her to make choices between multiple options. Confronted with concern for her husband and at the same time her administrative responsibilities to the school district, she had to make a decision.

In making the decisions illustrated in Toni's case, each step forward added a level complexity the situation and making the dilemma epistemic (Robins & Trabichet, 2000). Here Toni is confronted with a contradiction of concern for her husband and her administrative duties, both of which are legitimate albeit one personal and one professional. The need for careful analysis and discernment (Enomoto & Kramer, 2007) is set aside in the moment as Toni's confusion over her husband's absence evokes concern. Her ability to be ethically sensitive to her the situation and ascertain what the exact nature of the situation is distracts her from the dynamics that contribute to ethical decision making overpowered by the dynamics that shape the dilemma. As well, the ability to ethically reason through dynamics and make well-reasoned decisions is compromised. Toni's decisions, her actions, the choices she makes are governed by a force that distracts her from professional duties and responsibilities. The nature of an ethical dilemma, as Robins and Trabichet (2000), explain, is that a situation revolves around making decisions often conflicted as to which norms to follow. Choices are not always clearly delineated or easy, nor are choices aligned as two rights versus a right and wrong. Sometimes choices are degrees of right or wrong dependent on the consequences for self and others. The importance of the moral literacy framework lies in the cultivating of a level of ethical sensitivity and ethical reasoning that can lead to moral imagination that profits alternative possible decisions and actions.

Findings

Addressing the first research question (RQ1) the analysis of extant literature related to case-based pedagogy resulted in a delineation of the following types of case-based pedagogies: profession aligned cases (UCEA, ISLLC case studies, etc.); research-based cases (case study, ethnographic, phenomenological, etc.); professor-authored cases (personal/professional experience); and edited or authored case books. What was notably absent was substantive research that focused on autobiographical approaches to ethical dilemma cases, i.e., where the student was responsible for authoring his or her own ethical dilemma case.

The authors found, in response to the second research question (RQ2) that participants emphasized the need not only for ethical organizational cultures but also the importance of having clear personal ethical values and professional ethics. Participants emphasized the need not only for ethical organizational cultures but also the importance of having clear personal ethical values and professional ethics. Such an understanding implied that leadership has a moral basis. Moral literacy

surfaced as an essential element of preparing leaders. In a sense, data reported in this study draws to the foreground the notion of a “web of tension” surrounding the working lives of educational leaders (Sergiovanni & Carver, 1980, p. 19). Further, data resonates with research by Duignan and Collins (2003), which indicated that the tensions or dilemmas facing principals “are usually people centered and involve contestation of values” (p. 282). Table 1 reports that 80.8% of the cases were person-centered and 19.2 % were non-person centered ethical dilemmas. It is noted that in analyzing the 52 cases and determining whether a case was person centered versus non-person centered, the authors found that in all cases there is a level of involvement of individuals; no case is totally non-person centered. In order to analyze the cases, the authors used a rubric that evaluated whether persons involved were directly integral to the event discussed in case or were peripheral to the event. In 19.2% of the cases, the event was more non-person centered and related more directly to fiscal resources, curriculum issues concerning racial bias in content or not sensitive to minority students, programmatic issues related to inequities in scheduling (which indirectly impacted teachers based on principal decisions), and accountability issues related to standards that impacted minority students.

Table 1
Person Centered versus Non-Person Centered Ethical Dilemmas

	Person Centered		Non-Person Centered	
	n=	%=	n=	%=
Social arrangements	6	11.54	0	0
Conflicts emerging when personal and professional boundaries are crossed	4	7.7	0	0
Internal versus external relationships	5	9.6	0	0
Students, staff, finance and resources	0	0	1	1.9
Equity/inequity in decisions, actions, practice, etc.	5	9.6	0	0
Accountability, both within the system and to others, and competing accountabilities between social groups	3	5.8	6	11.5
Sexual orientation	3	5.8	0	0
Social performance	7	13.5	0	0
Politics – community, professional, cultural, etc.	5	9.6	0	0
Teacher and student relationships	4	7.7	0	0
Curriculum and programmatic issues	0	0	3	5.8
	42	80.8	10	19.2

In answering the third research question (RQ3), based on the first author’s observation during each class and across the courses/semesters, student feedback during the activity and in end-of-course student evaluations highlighted the experience as a personal journey that changed their lives. In reading the 52 cases during the activity as well as during analysis of collected data, it was noted that students found the experience of writing a case drawn from personal experience memory of an ethical dilemma enabled them to resolve remaining personal conflicts. Exemplars of doctoral student’s personal reflections conflicts are

presented to offer the reader an understanding of the nature of struggles students have experienced.

One doctoral student, Christine, in reflecting on the ethical case dilemma activity shared:

I did not feel the administrators' decision was ethical but was not able to prevent them from following through. I did fail to have the courage of conviction to completely stand against it and for that I will forever be angry at myself. My hope is to be the influencer of change in the future of our organization. The issues that presented themselves in this situation and pervade our organization will not be solved quickly. I hope to model this leadership perspective in my daily actions.

Here Christine is noting an internal conflict she struggled with as a result of decision made by administration. Her case was concerned with a teacher's performance, over which Christine was responsible and had evaluated as inappropriate and yet her immediate supervisor overruled Christine's decision.

Personal struggles and internal conflicts remained a part of the doctoral students' memory. Lauren, shared her inner struggle still present after seven years:

I struggle with the concept of balanced processing. I did attempt to consider all sides of this issue, and the more I considered the consequences of the actions taken, as well as the ones not taken, the less comfortable I felt with any of them. It is difficult, perhaps even impossible, to objectively analyze a situation when the ramifications of decisions for colleagues, as well as self, are so significant. Seven years later, I still wrestle with this event, and wonder what would have happened if another course of action had been taken, and how it would have impacted the lives of these three young adults.

Lauren notes she still wrestles with the event that she detailed in her ethical dilemma case. The issues of objectivity and balanced processing related to internal relationships in her school setting at the time of the event. The concern Lauren is one of alternative decision paths and the consequences that occurred versus what might have been a more balanced or equitable consequence for parties involved.

Karina, an experienced principal faced with making decisions that required a deep understanding of the levels of consequences, dealt with a student death following a sequence of events. As Karina noted, she strove daily to make good decisions for the individual and the group but sometimes the two parts of the whole were in conflict. She shared that in her experience the conflict between doing the right thing for the children cannot always be defined by the individual student, unfortunately, and this fact combats the very essence of her belief system. In her ethical dilemma case she was confronted with making decisions to save a high school student, Sam, who was dealing with psychological issues and at the same time drifting into a drug culture. Karina's decisions as expressed in the case reflected conflicts in her responsibility to other students and school policy, and her decisions related to a single student, Sam. Ultimately Karina made the decision to expel Sam from school, following school policy. In the end, Sam was murdered by a meth dealer. Karina reflected back on the event and her decisions:

As I reflect on the events some years later, I believe I had no choice but to expel Sam. I had an obligation to keep the environment safe and I did feel

that Sam was a threat to the teachers and students. But I also feel that Sam was failed. Society failed Sam because community members did not take steps to intervene on his behalf. The school failed Sam because they quietly accepted his plight and did not act with courage to defeat binds that held him in a perpetual downward spiral created from a lack of hope. I failed him as his principal because I failed to take action before it was too late to stop it.

The inner conflict represented in Karina's sharing about the ethical dilemma she faced was recorded as post-activity reflections. Because principals are faced with situations like the one Karina wrote about in her case, understanding ethical leadership provides a lens to evaluate the decision-making processes. Ethical sensitivity, ethical reasoning, and moral imagination are interrelated dimensions of moral literacy that, when embraced in practice, enable the principal as leader to make decisions (Tuana, 2007; Walker, et al., 2007).

Each of the 52 doctoral student shared post-activity reflections that characterized the inner conflicts they had felt months and years prior. Writing about the event, framing the theoretical lens, and analyzing the case enabled the participants to step back from the case, frame the ethical lens, and then examine the case from a different perspective, adding yet another level of understanding. The original perspective that each doctoral student exhibited in the case, at the time of event as presented in the reconstruction of the event from memory in rich detail, was juxtaposed with the ethical lens perspective introduced in Part II of the activity. The ethical lens perspective introduced a different perspective grounded in philosophical positions such as consequentialism as non-consequentialism. As each doctoral student developed his or her ethical lens in order to analyze the ethical dilemma case, the beliefs about leadership practice exhibited in the case were called into question

With respect to use of the ethical dilemma case-based activity, and the authors' inquiry concerning this approach to preparing ethical leaders, it is notable that reoccurring and specific patterns and factors were identified that determined prospective leaders' critical thinking and moral reasoning processes. The authors, in analyzing the data sets, within and across the cases, identified patterns in the narrative discussions that were emblematic of reasoning processes, both critical and moral in nature. The theoretical frame used in analysis was based on the work of Begley (1996,1999, 2005, 2006), Cranston et al. (2003, 2005), and Tuana (2003, 2006, 2006). The focus on moral literacy and the three components of ethical sensitivity, ethical reasoning, and moral imagination were reported as helpful by the doctoral students, albeit the moral imagination component seemed to be an outlier for some. In analyzing the original ethical case and the case analysis narratives, the three dimensions of moral literacy served as framework. In approximately 93% of the cases, evidence of ethical sensitivity was determined in varying degree. Ethical reasoning was determined in approximately 87% of the cases, in varying degree of application to the primary issue central to the dilemma. Moral imagination was not as evident in terms of applying the self-selected ethical lens to analyzing the case, with only 79% of the cases demonstrated a clear understanding this dimension of moral literacy. In examining both original decisions and their implications and presenting alternative possible decision paths that could have been considered,

many of the doctoral student analyses were less well formulated in terms of imagining alternative possible decision paths. Overall, the experience of participating in the ethical dilemma activity illuminated for the participants the array of social, political, emotional, and moral considerations that affect leaders in all stages of their careers.

Turning to the fourth research question (RQ4), the authors found that typically, the dilemmas authored and analyzed by the doctoral students focused on difficult personnel and student issues, however there were instances of personal ethical dilemmas that involved complex moral considerations that left the participant emotionally charged (see Table 2). In particular, conflict among the dimensions of ethical conduct and conflict emanating from blurred or competing accountability, as Begley (2005) noted, seem to have been the most prevalent.

Table 2

Themes of Ethical Dilemma Cases and Embedded Issues

Dilemma Themes and Related Issues	<i>N</i> =52 <i>f</i> =
Social arrangements	6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues between student and student (within and across grade level, bullying, etc.) • Issues between teacher and teacher (early career versus experienced) • Issues between principal/superintendent and teachers 	
Conflicts emerging when personal and professional boundaries are crossed	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues between teacher and teacher (within and across disciplines) • Issues between teacher and parent or guardian • Issues between male and female personnel • Issues between teaching and non-teaching personnel 	
Internal versus external relationships	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues related to school personnel and non-school personnel • Issues related to public demands concerning school personnel performance • Issues related to school personnel personal relationships 	
Students, staff, finance and resources	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue related to fiscal resource allocation and inequity based on race 	
Equity/inequity in decisions, actions, practice, etc.	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues directly related to diversity • Issues directly related to placement of students and assignment of teaching personnel • Issues directly related to gender bias and salary 	
Accountability, both within the system and to others, and competing accountabilities between social groups	9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues related to standardized testing and test administration • Issues related to accountability standards and adherence to standards across campuses • Issues related to principal accountability to school district policy and decision making • Issues related to state and federal guidelines for funding • Issues related to competing social groups seeking to mediate inequities 	
Sexual orientation	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues related to gay/lesbian teachers and students personal relationships • Issues related to “outing” gay/lesbian teachers and students by principal or colleague 	

Social performance	7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues related to teacher behavior and decisions in public at school and non-school activities • Issues related to social media and teachers using social media for non-school related activity • Issues related to teacher and student interactions • Issues related to principal decisions based on public actions of teachers and students • Issues related to superintendent decisions concerning actions of personnel 	
Politics – community, professional, cultural, etc.	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues related to internal politics in the school district • Issues related to external politics and control of school personnel • Issues related to manipulation of school policy and decision making for political purposes 	
Teacher and student relationships	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues related to male teachers and female students • Issues related to female teachers and female students • Issues related to principals decisions concerning teacher and student relationships 	
Curriculum and programmatic issues	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues related to curriculum requirements that disadvantage minority students • Issues related to principal decisions concerning teacher selection of curriculum 	

With respect to RQ4, the set of themes reported result from an analysis of the life events that served as the basis for the ethical dilemma cases authored by doctoral students. The frequency of themes appearing in an ethical dilemma case is presented for each theme. It is noted that the themes are not narrowly defined, but rather the themes are representative of life events that shape the day-to-day practices and experiences of the doctoral students. It is also noted that in some instances the there was a tendency for more than one theme to present within a case and therefore the dominant theme is reported.

The mental rehearsal and revisiting deep-seated memories of practice related to ethical dilemmas enabled the students to think, critically, about issues in a practical way. Writing the ethical dilemma enabled the student to examine his or her memory of practice, whereas the theoretical lens served as a mirror within which to reflect and examine the dilemma and make sense of its ethical and moral dimensions.

As the doctoral students engaged in deconstructing the ethical case, identifying the ethical dilemma embedded in the case, the original experience that fostered the ethical case was revisited and the doctoral students often reported and shared emotional tensions and levels of emerging self-awareness concerning their original response to the event. The doctoral students self-examined their own decisions and actions in relation to the event, evolving their own self-awareness of who they are as ethical and moral beings. As Branson (2007) noted, structured self-reflection, such as in an autobiographical approach to ethical dilemma case-based pedagogy, nurtures moral consciousness, and at the same time fosters ethical sensitivity and reasoning.

Concerning the fifth research question (RQ5), the earlier discussion of the ethical case dilemma activity as well as in the exemplar ethical dilemma case offer insight as to what the case-based approach looks like in terms of its pedagogical

orientation and interface with doctoral students as a situated learning experience. The overall discussion presented in this paper of case-based pedagogy, as well as the focus on what an ethical dilemma is in relation to fostering ethical leadership and moral literacy, presents a detailed examination of the pedagogical and ethical/philosophical underpinnings of a doctoral studies program course and the complexity of advancing self-authored ethical dilemma cases as a context for learning.

Conclusions

One conclusion that is drawn from the study is best represented in the words of Greenfield (1985), writing:

Moral socialization does not occur in a contextual vacuum, and thus aspects of the work setting itself are believed to have an important mediating influence regarding both the substance of moral socialization outcomes as well as the processes through which such learning occurs. In this regard the culture of the school organization, the role relationship between the socializee and socialization agents, and the day-to-day work activities of the socializee are salient. (p. 102)

The findings of this study reveal that education leadership preparation should be concerned with moral awareness and responsibilities, and that identifying and resolving an ethical dilemma is a reality in educational settings. Moral literacy and ethical leadership are premised on personal values and valuations of leaders.

Equally important, this study demonstrated that leadership dispositions, skills, knowledge, and practices relevant to educational leadership are only part of a complex equation of preparing ethical leaders with the moral abilities to take on the day-to-day work and responsibilities. Starratt (1994) is instructive in matters of preparing ethical leaders when he states:

. . . ethical behaviour, while always involving interpersonal relationships, is shaped by the circumstances and status of the persons involved. Acting ethically requires one to be sensitive and responsive to the other person within the circumstances as well as the context. So it is not simply a question of one person in relation to another person; the relationship is supported as well as limited by the culture in which the two parties live their lives. (pp. 34-35)

It is important to understand the pedagogical needs for preparing leaders who embrace an ongoing learning of moral literacy as part of the responsibility of ethical leadership. An ethical dilemma approach to case-based pedagogy where students are situated in an authentic learning experience presents a unique and important pedagogical approach to understanding the complex and problematic nature of leadership. At the same time, the introduction to moral literacy as a heuristic for self-reflection and development of moral consciousness presents important considerations for the preparing morally literate leaders.

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