Handbook of Ethical Educational Leadership

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The Interplay of Values

Publication details
https://test.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9780203747582.ch12
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Published online on: 16 May 2014

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THE INTERPLAY OF VALUES

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To believe that the art of educational leadership is simply a matter of technical capabilities and skills is to underestimate the complex web of personal and interpersonal influences at work beneath the leadership surface. Within the personal dimensions of educational leadership, ethical leadership and its associated sensitivities frequently lie at the heart of such complexity (Branson, 2010; Duignan, 2006; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005; Starratt, 2010).

This chapter sets out to background two leadership components that relate strongly to ethical sensitivities in schools. First, the concept of values-based leadership is examined through its formative theoretical phases, from scientific interpretations of educational administration to more humanistic approaches to educational administration theory, including values and ethical dimensions. Second, the concept of contextually responsive leadership is reviewed in relation to selected leadership theories and the internal and external contexts in which schools function.

The discussion then moves to describe the impact of leaders' values and school contexts through the findings of two Australasian research studies about school principals' engagement in ethical decision making. Ethical questions arising from the research are posed at appropriate stages for the reader's consideration. This is followed by an exploration of ethical implications for leadership theory and practice that involve features of leaders' self-reflection; dilemma management; and an ecological interpretation of context and the leadership self. The discussion closes by arguing for a stronger presence of ethical elements in leaders' professional learning programs. Finally, the chapter concludes with questions for further research into the processes of principals' ethical sensitivities and decision making.

VALUES-BASED LEADERSHIP

In a report on UK findings of a 3-year national research project on the impact of leadership on student learning outcomes, Day and colleagues (2010) make 10 strong

claims about successful school leadership, of which Claim 3 identifies head teachers' values as key components in their success. This finding reflects a cumulative body of research that supports values-based leadership as an emerging factor in the success of school leaders' practice (Beatty, 2005; Begley, 2006; Milstein & Henry, 2008; Notman, 2008). This section of discussion will set the scene for ethical understanding by summarizing earlier developments in values theory and their links to a philosophy of values-based leadership.

Early Developments in Values Theory

In relation to the field of values-based educational leadership, a major conceptual framework is located in the early work of Hodgkinson (1978) and Greenfield (1986) on values theory. There had been a consensus, among a growing group of supporters of values theory, that values were a springboard for human action (Greenfield, 1986) and that values were central to the successful practice of leadership and administration (Greenfield, 1986; Hodgkinson, 1991; Willower, 1987). The definition of a value had been drawn together by Leithwood, Begley, and Cousins (1994), building on the attributes of values in the work of Rokeach (1973) and Hodgkinson (1978). A *value*:

- is an enduring belief about the desirability of some means; and
- once internalised, a value also becomes a standard or criterion for guiding one's own actions and thought, for influencing the actions and thought of others, and for morally judging oneself and others. (Leithwood et al., 1994, p. 99)

Earlier theories of educational administration as a science had been promulgated in the 1950s and 1960s by theorists such as Simon (1957), Griffiths (1959), and Halpin (1966). Research activity became theoretically oriented, and training programs for educational administrators were based more on the scientific concepts of Taylorism than on educational principles. Also, role expectations, defined in the form of job descriptions, made their entrance into the field of school leadership.

During the 1970s, in recognizing the limitations of such scientific theoretical approaches, educational theorists began to promote a values perspective as an alternative theory of educational administration. Evers and Lakomski (1996) wrote:

The first of these [theories] was developed by the Canadian scholar Christopher Hodgkinson (1978, 1983, 1991), and declares administration not to be a science at all, but rather, a humanism. This is because, for Hodgkinson, science deals with factual matters whereas administration is values-laden. Hodgkinson also maintains that decision-making is central to administration. Because knowledge of logic and value constitute the essentials of decisions, administrators' training will involve some training in philosophy where these matters can be dealt with systematically.

(p. 5)

Hodgkinson (1978) initially conceived of a values framework that comprised three categories of values. He contended that type 1 values were largely metaphysical in

nature and were grounded in ethical principles. He referred to these as "transrational" values, which were often found in ideological or religious systems and which he regarded as more authentic than the other two types. Type 2 values were differentiated into two separate classifications based on a sense of "rightness" because they account for the will of the majority (Cunningham & Cordeiro, 2003). Hodgkinson referred to them as "rational" values. Type 2a values were grounded in consequences so that "rightness" was defined in relation to "a desirable future state of affairs or analysis of the consequences entailed by a value judgment" (Leithwood et al., 1994, p. 100). Type 2b values were grounded in consensus or the will of the majority. Finally, the "subrational" values of type 3 were based on a personal preference of what an individual perceived to be "good." These values were located in the affective or emotional domain.

Hodgkinson (1983) later expanded on this initial values classification to look more broadly at implications of values theory for leadership behaviors that were informed by an underlying philosophy of leadership:

> Affect, motives, attitudes, beliefs, values, ethics, morals, will, commitment, preferences, norms, expectations, responsibilities—such are the concerns of leadership proper. Their study is paramount because the very nature of leadership is that of practical philosophy, philosophy-in-action. Leadership is intrinsically valuational. Logic may set limits for and parameters within the field of value action but value phenomena determine what occurs within the field. They are indeed the essential constituents of the field of constituents of the field of executive action, all of which is to say that the leader's task is essentially affective.
>
> (Hodgkinson, 1983, p. 202)

A second major contributor to the link between values theory and educational leadership and administration was Thomas Greenfield. Greenfield (1983) contended that the focus for social science inquiry was not based on observation and fact but rather on people's subjective understandings. His interpretive approach rejected prevailing positivist theories that separated organizations from the people in them: "Organisations are inside people and are defined completely by them as they work out ideas in their heads through their actions in the practical world" (Greenfield, 1983, p. 1). Greenfield believed that the assumptions of the positivist paradigm were incorrect; they presumed that schools constituted an orderly environment, where people behaved predictably, instead of the reality where the school environment was often chaotic and, some believe, inherently anarchistic.

However, Greenfield's subjective assertions were not beyond criticism from those who held positivist views of educational administration. Griffiths (1978) took exception to such "Great Man" theories and maintained a deductive conception of administrative theory as "a set of assumptions from which propositions can be deduced by mathematical or logical reasoning" (Griffiths, 1978, p. 82). Willower (1979) also refuted Greenfield's propositions by maintaining a pragmatic outlook on educational administration, described by Gronn (1983) as a "kind of conveyor belt or delivery system" (p. 26). Nevertheless, there was considerable tension

between the two competing perspectives of scientific and humanist approaches to the development of educational administration theory. This is represented by Foster (1986):

> Greenfield's thesis has profound implications for the study of educational administration and for the preparation of administrators. Two extreme preparatory models suggest themselves. The administrator-as-scientist, schooled in the scientific method and concerned with quantifiable results, applies the findings of social science research as best he or she can, and brings progress to the school by performing all other required scientific or pseudoscientific activities. The administrator-as-humanist, trained in the arts and sciences and experienced in the ways of the world, brings feeling and intuition to the profession. Orthodox theory endorses the scientist model, but the humanist model may offer a more accurate description of the effective administrator.
>
> (p. 62)

In 1986, Greenfield added another dimension to this debate with the publication of his paper *The Decline and Fall of Science in Educational Administration.* In setting out an agenda for future inquiry in the administration field, Greenfield (1986) advocated "a humane science which would use interpretive and qualitative methods of inquiry; which would focus upon power, conflicts, values and moral dilemmas in educational leadership" (cited in Grace, 1995, p. 52). Not only did this broaden the parameters of the scientific/humanist debate but it also rekindled an awareness of theoretical views, such as Hodgkinson's (1978), about ethical and values dimensions of educational administration.

Subsequent studies supported the theoretical claims made by Hodgkinson (1978, 1983) and Greenfield (1986); in particular, research carried out by Leithwood and Steinbach (1991) and Begley (1999). Leithwood and Steinbach's (1991) study of chief education officers' problem-solving strategies identified four categories of values at work. "Basic human values," such as freedom, happiness, knowledge, respect for others and survival, equate to Hodgkinson's (1978) type 1 values based on principles. They also link to Rokeach's (1973) terminal values or "end states of existence." Categories entitled "general moral values" (carefulness, fairness/justice, courage) and "professional values" (responsibility, consequences) represent values that guide decision making and can be linked to Hodgkinson's (1978) type 2a values of consequence. "Social and political values," which incorporate Hodgkinson's (1978) type 2b values of consensus, "recognize the essentially social nature of human action and the need for individuals to define themselves in relation to others to make their lives meaningful" (Leithwood et al., 1994, p. 103).

In order to reinforce the complexity of values derivation and implementation, Begley's (1999) study of academic and practitioner perspectives on values illustrated a syntax of values terminology through an adaptation of a graphic found in several of Hodgkinson's books (1978, 1991). This graphic is shown in Figure 12.1.

The outer ring of the "onion" represents the observable actions and speech of the individual, the *only* way available for making empirical attributions of the values
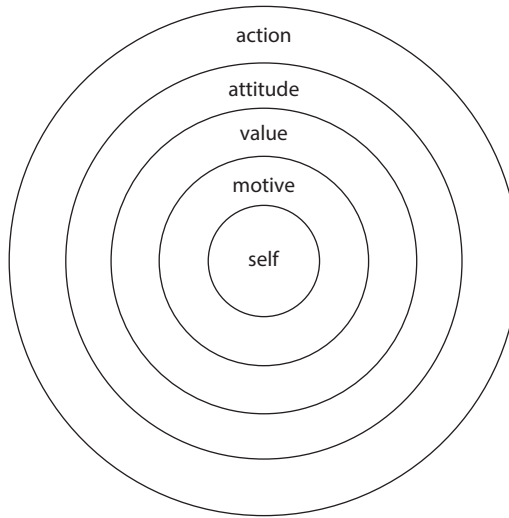
Figure 12.1 Syntax of value terms (Source: Begley, 1999)

orientations of the individual. The next layer represents attitudes. This is the thin, permeable membrane situated between values and actions or speech. The following layer portrays the idea that attitudes often foreshadow actions that are influenced by the specific values a person holds for whatever reasons.

The key to understanding the nature and function of values, Begley claimed, is found in the next layer of the onion: motivational base. It represents the motivating force behind the adoption of a particular value. Finally, at the core of the onion, there is the self, the essence of the individual: "the biological self, as well as the existential or transcendent self" (Begley, 1999, pp. 55–56).

The Role of a Values-Based Leadership Philosophy

An integral part of ethical leadership is the nature of the values employed by school leaders in the operation of their educational environment. Hodgkinson (1978, 1991) advocated for the role of values in effective educational administration from philosophical and analytical positions. In contrast, a political perspective on the values underpinning moral leadership focuses on the "nature of the relationships among those within the organisation and the distribution of power between stakeholders both inside and outside the organisation" (Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 1999, p. 11). A cultural perspective, on the other hand, focuses on those shared values and beliefs that lie at the heart of the school organization (Nias, Southworth, & Yeomans, 1989).

The central orientation of a values-based leadership philosophy, building on the foundational work of Hodgkinson and Greenfield, is toward what leaders think about and value. As Fairholm (1998) claimed, "Leadership partakes of the values

and principles of life as well as operational action. Therefore, it is a question of philosophy, of the principles of reality and of human nature and conduct" (p. 57). It is also a question of reflection on self: a critical examination of one's knowledge and values systems in comparison with the experience of others and the mores of the broader school context. Examining one's "personal compass" (Brock & Grady, 2012) is a first step in knowing how values inform a leader's behavior and where values might provide congruence between a leader's personal belief system and the school's philosophical directions. In addition, such a critical examination may inform how the leader might act ethically and with integrity.

This development and interrogation of the self is an ongoing process, one that does not assume closure but rather encourages an openness to critical analysis and justification of what the educational leader believes and why. The result of this critical self-examination may confirm or question a leader's fundamental beliefs and levels of self-awareness. This may, in turn, "lead to a willingness of participants to enter a place of vulnerability in order to challenge and then change assumptions and ways of being and thinking in education" (Robertson, 2011, p. 223).

The discussion now shifts focus from a values perspective on leadership to the milieu in which values are enacted. Here, the focus is on how leaders respond to the contingencies of their educational context in what can be termed contextually responsive leadership.

CONTEXTUALLY RESPONSIVE LEADERSHIP

One of the capabilities that successful educational leaders display is a capacity to understand, and respond to, challenges presented to them by the contexts in which they work. The mediation of different contextual influences is an important leadership skill that underpins school improvement processes. As Gu and Johannson (2012) claim, such processes are likely to be "a product of the interaction between the moderating effects of schools' external contexts and the mediating effects of their internal contexts" (p. 6). In this examination of contextual elements that may impact on educational leaders, the role of context will be explored in relation to selected leadership theory, external environment considerations, and internal factors relating to the school itself.

Selected Leadership Theory

Day and colleagues (2011) use a sample of four general leadership theories to illustrate the importance of context to educational leaders. Yukl's (1994) multiple linkage model points to the impact of "situational variables" such as the size of an organization, its procedures and policies, and the professional development and experience of its staff. Leader–member exchange theory such as that proposed by Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) offers a second perspective that centers on leader–follower relationships and leaders' perceptions of their staff's attributes and work experience.

A third perspective focuses on an information processing approach (e.g., Lord & Maher, 1993), whereby leaders' actions are shaped by the internal contexts of their

own knowledge base and personal dispositions and characteristics and by external contexts, where others respond to the actions of the leader, a response "which in part depends on the nature of the leadership 'prototypes' (internalised models of ideal leaders) possessed by colleagues and/or followers and judgments by those colleagues about how well the leader matches those prototypes" (Day et al., 2011, p. 5). Finally, cross-cultural leadership theory (e.g., House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004) makes links between cultural norms and values and preferred types of leadership practice that align and are accountable to an associated culture(s). Such theoretical links provide a useful background to appreciating a number of contextual variables confronted by schools and their leaders.

External and Internal School Contexts

Across a range of contextual literature, there are commonly recognized features that constitute a school's external environment. These pragmatic considerations encompass the *micro* world of students and their family/community, with features such as personal well-being (Mongon & Leadbeater, 2012), financial hardship linked to a lower socioeconomic status of the school's intake zone (Notman, 2011), varying degrees of social responsibility, and cultural diversity (Merchant et al., 2012). The external context also contains features that represent the *macro* political world of educational policy and regulatory requirements of various government administrative and school review agencies, and the broader social world of community values and expectations of education. In this way, the educational leader is subject to overarching social, economic, cultural, and political spheres of influence and need, all of which are found outside of the school.

The internal context of the school environment has been commonly described as including the following influence factors: school culture, teacher experience and competence, staff morale, financial resources, school size, and bureaucratic and labor organization (Hallinger, 2003). In addition, universal trends toward greater public participation in education (Woods, 2005) and the advent of self-managing schools, particularly in New Zealand, have brought about increasing demands for the democratization of leadership in the form of distributed leadership and shared decision making among staff, along with a greater appreciation of the need for student voice to be heard in the running of the school.

What types of challenging situations or contingencies do school leaders typically confront? School type, staff capacities and morale, and community support are among factors that may impact on the contextual setting for leadership responsibilities. In addition, leaders need to be ethically sensitive to the educational situation in which they work and operate, particularly in relation to the human dynamic. As Southworth (1998) commented earlier, "Leaders need to be aware of the power relations in their school, their organisational contexts, individual colleagues' professional maturity levels and groups' expectations" (p. 39). The important point of interest then focuses on the manner in which educational leaders respond to the unique set of contextual circumstances presented to them. This view has been reinforced by a key proposition underpinning the values of school leaders, that they must embrace

the distinctive and inclusive context of the school (National College for School Leadership, 2001), especially in regard to raising and sustaining levels of school performance (Gu & Johannson, 2012). Such contextual interactions can be linked back to situational or contingent leadership approaches to school leadership of the 1970s and 1980s. These theoretical positions came to prominence with a contingency theory proposed by Fiedler (1967) and Hersey and Blanchard's (1977) notion of situational leadership, which Day, Harris, Hadfield, Tolley, and Beresford (2000) summarized as the "conjunction of the person and the situation" (p. 10).

Given this theoretical overview of development within the respective fields of values-based leadership and contextually responsive leadership, how might the ethical application of such concepts be viewed through a research lens?

ETHICAL APPLICATION OF CONCEPTS THROUGH RESEARCH

The theme of ethical sensitivity is a major focus for this chapter, particularly in its links to educational leaders' behaviors that are informed by an intersection of understanding one's own values system, and how those values are aligned, contested, or compromised by different contexts in which schools work. Such educational leaders "are deeply aware of how they think and behave, and are perceived by others as being aware of their own and others' values, knowledge, and strengths; aware of the context in which they operate; and who are confident, hopeful, optimistic, resilient, and high on moral character" (Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans, & May, 2004, p. 4).

For the purpose of research illustration, two Australasian research studies will be examined to show how school principals engage in ethical decision making within the domains of values-based leadership and contextually responsive leadership. First, Dempster (2001) reported selected results from the Principals' Ethical Decision-making Study (PEDMS) carried out in partnership with Education Queensland in Australia. The study was designed around intensive principal interviews ($n = 25$) from a range of urban and rural schools, along with a survey of Queensland government school principals ($n = 552$). Its aim was to "identify and describe situations in which school principals face ethical dilemmas, to record the decisions they make, to explain their reasoning and why they take the action they do" (Dempster, p. 6).

The second research study was a New Zealand qualitative case study that examined the personal and professional lives of an urban and a rural secondary school principal in the South Island of New Zealand over a period of 35 months (Notman, 2005, 2008). Data collection methods included participant observation and intensive interviewing of each principal and of others significant to their work. The primary purpose of this study was to determine the personal dimensions of a secondary principal's job and, subsequently, how each school leader's personal and professional values acted as a motivating force behind their leadership behaviors. Using Dempster's reporting framework, I present relevant research results from both studies using three focus headings. These outline some of the frequent and troublesome circumstances involving ethical decision making reported by principal respondents.

Ethical Sensitivities

Circumstances Involving Students

In the Australian study, the issue of dealing with conflict between the internal context of the school's values and the external context of values taught to students at home was identified as the most frequent and troublesome. Dempster (2001) reported: "One third (32%) of principals indicated that they encountered this kind of ethical problem often or very often, and 38% of principals reported having much or a great deal of trouble with it" (p. 12). This finding was replicated in the contested values results of the two New Zealand principals. Here, it was evident from both principals that values contestation with adolescents constituted an ipso facto situation. They accepted an inevitability of a conflict in values between those of a middle-aged school principal and those of a developing adolescent. As Begley (1999) noted: "Students live in a world that reflects postmodern values and they regularly confront teachers and principals that represent, within educational organisations, a proceeding modernist generation" (p. 53). In a similar manner, the principals also regarded parents as holding values with which they did not necessarily agree, and as wishing to take different directions for their children than that espoused by the school's ethos, policies, or procedures.

Circumstances Involving Staff

Dempster's (2001) study revealed that for this category, the challenge of monitoring staff performance was identified in the survey results as the most frequent and troublesome for principals. As an example, the researcher cites a case where a secondary school principal placed a teacher on diminished work performance. The teacher had returned to work after a mild heart attack but continued to be affected by poor health, and his teaching performance continued to be unsatisfactory. In assessing the situation, the principal was cognizant of two competing interests: On the one hand, he was concerned about the well-being of the teacher; on the other, he was mindful of his responsibility for student learning. Similarly, "Helen Aiken," the female principal in the New Zealand study, was faced with a critical incident involving a teacher who left a class unattended during an important inspection visit by the Education Review Office. Helen's dilemma was whether to confront the teacher directly over the unprofessional behavior or to ignore the situation in the interests of staff stability, at a time of considerable tension in the school.

In this case, Helen's decision to chastise the teacher might be understood in terms of contested values between those held by the principal and the values represented by the teacher's behavior. A total of seven of Helen's core values seemed confronted by this act, and this was subsequently confirmed by her: her student-centered focus where student interests and well-being were paramount; high standards of behavior expected of staff as professional role models; a work ethic and demand for excellence and academic achievement that demonstrated real engagement in the learning process between teacher and students; an ethic of care that showed concern for the

safety of one's students; an inherent honesty about one's intentions in leaving the class so frequently; and a betrayal of Helen's and the staff's efforts to present a united front of effective teaching to a team of external reviewers. Such was the extent of the affront to Helen's core values that any consideration of a persuasive or compromise approach was simply out of the question. Fortified by the "rightness" of her values stance, Helen felt a moral justification in her direct action of taking the teacher to task about the incident.

Circumstances Involving External Relations

The most frequent and troublesome circumstance in the Australian study was the issue of dealing with overly demanding parents, where "30% of principals reported that this type of circumstance occurred often or very often, and 40% of them reported having much or a great deal of trouble in dealing with it" (Dempster, 2001, p. 13). One example of this kind of circumstance cited a principal dealing with an insistent father who felt his daughter should have received an achievement award and challenged the school's selection procedures. Staff, on the other hand, believed the father to be overbearing and unreasonable and that his claims should be ignored. The principal responded as follows:

> However, I explained that we couldn't do that [ignore the father], because we had a responsibility to respond in the way that the father had approached the issue: lucidly and logically. And at the end of the day we did. We explained to the father how we went about the award task and we apologised for not better informing parents about the rules until after the event. As it turned out that was his core concern, and so he accepted with more or less good grace what the situation was. In this case, I had to hose down those staff members who were responding emotionally and ensure that the parent was not belittled or treated like a fool.
>
> (Dempster, 2001, p. 16)

In this situation, the task for the principal's ethical decision making was to consider the "rightness" of each perspective, so that a negotiated settlement of the issue could result in a win-win situation for both parties.

There was also another area that posed interesting ethical situations for school principals. This centered on the interactions between a school and related government agencies. The issue of dealing with policy or directives from the central office created frequent ethical problems for 62% of Australian principal respondents. Their two New Zealand counterparts had different perceptions of values conflict between themselves and government agencies such as the Education Review Office and the Ministry of Education. Helen stated firmly that she had no difficulty in accepting the bureaucratic values of efficiency and accountability where they helped her to make improvements in student learning.

However, "Max James," the rural school principal, was just as determined that there was a definite conflict between bureaucratic values and his own personal and

professional values that focused on specific learning and social needs of students living in a rural community. He had an aversion to what he termed a "bean counting" mentality of government agencies that compelled him to react to *their* demands in assessment and curriculum objectives, rather than to students' unique learning needs. This values tension for Max is replicated by Bailey's (2000) belief that "teachers may be placed in the position of violating their own deeply-felt beliefs about what children in their care need when they are told how and what to teach" (p. 118). Max also believed that the market forces model of education, which aimed to achieve higher performance standards through interschool competition for students, was in direct opposition to his values of cooperation and consensus.

In Max's case, despite concerted disapproval of government agencies' values stance, he had adopted the approach of "pragmatism with principles" (Moore, George, & Halpin, 2002, p. 185) by mediating government policy and procedures through his own values lens. On a superficial level, Max conducted a localized form of political resistance. At a deeper level, his defense was built around values resistance. Here, he worked within national demands but at the same time held strongly to fundamental personal and professional values of his current philosophy as it pertained to the needs of his small rural school. It appeared that from a values perspective, Max's accountability to his rural community comprehensively exceeded his obligations to the demands of central government.

Managing Ethical Dilemmas

From this sample of research case studies, we gain some insight into the complex field of managing ethical dilemmas. Local dilemmas in the Australasian schools reflected a range of ethical, professional, and political dilemmas, whereby individual interests were often in conflict with and assessed against the common good of the wider group. For example, in the New Zealand research schools, Helen dealt with students wanting a second-chance education, staff employment issues, and intergroup conflict resolution. For Max, the observed dilemmas included the potential outcomes of student expulsion from a rural school, teacher professional conduct, and weighing staff personal employment issues against long-term school public relationships with the community.

From a personal perspective, the ramifications of their dilemma management were ever-present in their thinking. Helen and Max both felt the weight of decision making on their shoulders, whether it involved a compromise to elicit a win-win situation for the individual and for the group, or whether it involved the power of persuasion of logical argument to change people's minds or to take a contrary stand on the basis of policy or regulation. Their judgment calls were often centered on competing human needs that had them asking themselves: Who benefits? Who loses the most? What is the worst-case scenario that the school can withstand if this particular decision is taken? This was evidenced, in particular, by Helen's direct treatment of the teacher absent from class.

The dilemma management positions of these school principals can be seen as predominantly ethical ones. Research results from both countries also underlined the concept of principals as moral agents by the manner in which they lead and manage

their schools, particularly in respect of an ethical consideration of competing individual and group needs. Further examples from earlier leadership literature had included school appraisal activity, where individual needs and development were often at odds with organizational goals (Cardno, 1994), and loyalty dilemmas, where the principal was asked to assess the case of a student(s) against that of a teacher (Moller, 1998).

ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR THEORY AND PRACTICE

What, then, are some of the ethical implications for the theory and practice of educational leadership, as they arise from a sample of Australasian research studies outlined above and from the extant literature? This section will explore implications as they relate to the themes of: critical self-reflection; dilemma management reconceptualized as the management of contested values; an ecological interpretation of the juncture between school context and the leadership self; and professional learning for principals.

Critical Self-reflection

There are evident links among the notions of critical self-reflection, leaders' values, and the different contexts within which an educational leader carries out his or her daily work. A self-examination of core values and belief systems enables leaders to become more aware of the motivating principles behind their leadership behaviors (Fink, 2005; Smyth, 2001). Such an examination should also assist principals to understand how their personal and professional values may align with, and differ from, those values held by others in the broader contexts of the school. These concepts mirror Smyth's phases of critical self-reflection, whereby "interrogation and questioning of one's values may confirm their legitimacy or suggest their renegotiation in a contested situation, and where reconstruction of one's values stance may enable the principal to reflect on alternative courses of action" (Notman, 2008, p. 9).

This self-critical process is especially applicable when one considers current contexts in which principals operate. Increased public demand for educational services and reduced financial support for schools place further pressure on ethical dilemmas of educational leadership that make administering schools "different from such work in other contexts" (Goldring & Greenfield, 2002, pp. 2–3). This will require principals, in turn, to reflect on their values priorities in terms of where to spend a shrinking financial resource. For instance, does a principal's value of academic excellence support the development of a gifted and talented program for high-achieving students, or is it outweighed by the value of social justice that supports the employment of an English as a Second Language teacher to assist new immigrants in English language acquisition? Such ethical dilemmas continue to confront principals' philosophical and values-based positions.

Reconceptualizing Dilemma Management

The concept of values contestation and its management by the two New Zealand secondary school principals constituted a major finding of that research study. The study revealed principals' rationales behind their decision making in dilemma situations.

A sample of critical incidents demonstrated the principals' recourse to their core personal and professional values when searching for a resolution to the dilemma. In this way, using Begley's (1999) framework of values terminology, critical incidents surrounding principals' management of dilemmas can be conceptualized and interpreted as a values-based decision-making process. In Max James's case, one critical incident displayed the most profound form of values contestation in which values of principle of both staff and educational leader were in conflict. As Hodgkinson (1991) pointed out in his values typology, the contestation of values of principle or transrational values, and the contestation of values of preference or subrational values, are frequently the most difficult to resolve.

In addition, there are two other considerations within values contestation that may enhance an understanding of ethical dilemma management. First, it may be assumed that the notion of values conflict occurs *between* people on an interpersonal basis. Hodgkinson (1983) offered a less publicized but subtle view that true value conflict is always *intra*personal, deep within the self: "The essential subjectivity of value dictates that any conflict *between values* must occur within the individual consciousness; it must be part of the affective life of the individual and private to that phenomenology" (p. 106). Helen Aiken and Max James both underwent intrapersonal values conflict to varying degrees, exemplified best in Helen's self-review of her values position on school alcohol issues in the face of a lack of community support for her moral stance. This must constitute a watershed moment for any principal, who contemplates the prospect that the resolution of values contestation may well result in the principal's own values being superseded by the greater legitimacy of others' values or not perceived to be of any values currency at all. It is important for principals to be aware of the impact of this intrapersonal values conflict and the possibility of its occurrence at any stage of dilemma management decision making.

A second consideration within values contestation is a reemphasis of an underlying moral purpose behind educational leadership and values-based contingency leadership in particular (Day et al., 2000; Harris & Chapman, 2002). Max and Helen's decision-making processes, employed during their management of contested values, were influenced by the strength of their convictions, by doing what was right in the best interests of their school. Their decision making was also influenced by key personal values of honesty and integrity. These affected the ways in which they gave feedback to others, the levels of honesty within their own self-assessment of leadership performance, and the manner with which they resolved intrapersonal values conflict.

This moral purpose in educational leadership, and its origins in principals' unique sets of core values, has been underlined in the literature, for example, by Sergiovanni's (2001) frequent assertions that leadership is a far more cognitive process than simply being personality or rules based: "Cognitive leadership has more to do with purposes, values, and frameworks that oblige us morally than it does with needs that touch us psychologically or with bureaucratic things that push us organizationally" (Sergiovanni, p. ix). Equally, the proposed dangers of ethical relativism for administrators (Strike, Haller, & Soltis, 1998), and interest in the concept of "ethical intelligence" as a moral imperative (Day, 2004), have supported a need for educational

leaders to have a personal platform of clear values, beliefs, and a sense of moral purpose if their dilemma management is to be well informed.

It should be noted that there are no easy solutions to moral decision making, nor is it prudent to develop a definitive listing of values necessary to engage in effective values-based leadership. As Begley (2002) stated: "The processes of valuation in school leadership situations are much too context-bound to permit this quick fix" (p. 51). Of greater importance is to develop awareness within principals of how to make problematic leadership choices in dilemma situations, particularly those in which there are no clear right or wrong answers, where the choice is often between "right" versus "right." This latter perspective is cogently summarized by Hodgkinson (1996) in his writing on values theory:

> It comes down to this: an administrator, any administrator, is constantly faced with value choices. To govern is to choose. One can accept or not accept the value dictates imposed by the particular organizational culture in which one works. One can aspire to or disdain any of a number of systems of 'ethics' from workaholism to neo-Confucianism. One can allow, or not allow, one's leadership to be swayed by values deriving from hedonism, ambition, careerism, or by the prejudices and affinities one has for colleagues and peers. And one can do all of this in the open or in secret or somewhere in between. But each day and each hour provides the occasion for values judgements with each choice having a determining effect upon the value options for the future.
>
> (p. 109)

An Ecological Interpretation of Contextually Responsive Leadership

Under the concept of self-management in New Zealand schools, educational leaders have been asked to take up a responsive role in regard to internal contingencies, to be contextually aware of external influences, and to build trusting relationships with their school communities. This responsive role has been accentuated in New Zealand education by an expectation that leaders will meet multiple needs and be answerable to multiple accountability points within their educational constituencies:

> For example, the learning needs of students; the social, economic and cultural needs of families and ethnic groups, as they relate to well-being, financial hardship and diversity respectively; the professional needs of teachers and boards of trustees; and the policy and regulatory requirements of educational agencies such as the Ministry of Education and the Education Review Office.
>
> (Notman, 2011, p. 147)

This ecological approach to understanding the realities of the leadership role illustrates that educational leadership does not exist in a vacuum but rather within a broader sociocultural-economic-political context (Bottery, 2004). This blended context can impact on school directions and has the potential to both enhance and

constrain one's capability to lead and to manage. In this way, an ecological view of educational leadership supports a contextually responsive role, as educational leaders react to and engage with different contextual layers of influence and need. The educational leader, whether a principal, deputy principal, middle manager, or teacher leader, is in a challenging position, caught between the "micro" world of students and their family/community and the "macro" world of educational agencies and society's educational expectations and values.

Thus, we can gain an appreciation of the ethical demands facing educational leaders, where their values-based and contextually responsive leadership functions are subject to other forces within and outside the school. Hargreaves (2011) describes this as "fusion leadership," which moves beyond traditional notions of technical competencies and skills:

> Instead, it is the psychological integration of a personality and a community combined with the knowledge, empathy and strategic capability to know what parts of one's own and one's colleagues' leadership are the right ones, for the right time and for the challenges at that moment. Leadership beyond expectations is not a fission of competencies but a fusion of qualities and characteristics within oneself, one's community and over time.
>
> (p. 239)

Leadership Professional Learning

Increasingly, in the literature and research of educational leadership, there are calls to emphasize professional learning over professional development (Parsons & Beauchamp, 2012; Timperley, 2011). Timperley recommends that a clear distinction be made between higher-order professional learning and lower-order professional development. She argues that an increased depth of professional knowledge "may challenge existing beliefs, attitudes and understandings" (p. 4). One can point to the role of ethical leadership as an example of higher-order learning, and a worthy area for inclusion in a leadership preparation or in-service professional learning program.

From his research, Dempster (2001) suggests three areas of development that could help principals meet the ethical challenges of school decision making:

(i) *The policy context of ethical decision making,* where "principals should be engaged, formally and informally, in the reflective analysis of broad political and economic policy affecting education" (p. 17).

(ii) *Ethical values,* where such values might be built into in-service programs, particularly in relation to "contestable values dualities experienced in education" (ibid).

(iii) *Case studies of ethical issues,* where principals can juxtapose their own ethical dilemmas against others' in-school scenarios.

There still appears to be reluctance on the part of organizations to develop an ethical sensitivity among their staff and leaders (Cranston, Ehrich, Kimber, & Starr,

2012; Langlois & Lapointe, 2010; Shapiro & Hassinger, 2007). This is evident in the professional learning area of self-knowledge, where earlier research literature had advocated a paradigm shift in school leadership and administrator training that differs from previously dominant technical models. For example, Daresh and Male (2000) argued for an emphasis on personal values and ethical stances, while Day (2000) proposed a "formation" approach to principal learning that encouraged self-reflection and personal understanding of one's values to reveal the inner motives and ethical positions of the person behind the principal.

This chapter's discussion has drawn attention to the interwoven links between values-based leadership, with a focus on the personal and professional self, and contextually responsive leadership, with its focus on the situation or environment in which schools operate. This represents a duality of concept and practice, within which challenging ethical decisions must be made. In order to help school leaders meet these future challenges, professional learning strategies will have to adapt to a changing educational, social, and political world, as they encounter interactions of increasingly diverse values held by students, teachers, parents, community members, and those who work in educational bureaucracies. The changing knowledge bases held by each principal will be important features to be addressed in future principal learning programs. These will include the knowledge of the craft of educational leadership and administration; knowledge of students, teachers, and parents in their learning and social contexts; and, most importantly, knowledge of self and the belief systems that inform one's ethical behavior.

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Within the general domain of ethical sensitivities, it is recommended that further exploration be directed to the pathways chosen by principals in their ethical decision making, their management of contested values, and subsequent conflict resolution processes. How *do* principals arrive at complex ethical decisions in the context of competing personal, social, and professional interests? It is suggested that future research examine, in detail, the nature of critical incidents that principals have to confront and the manner in which contested values are resolved. Additional research questions are proposed in this regard: To what extent can principals appreciate how others determine right and wrong? Is there a sequence of steps that principals take before arriving at a solution to ethical dilemmas, not unlike Kohlberg's (1984) six stages of moral judgment? Is there a series of prioritizations as principals weigh up implications of critical decisions for themselves personally, as educational leaders, for the school as an organization, or for the greater good of the wider community?

SUMMARY

There are multiple layers of meaning that contribute to our understanding of how school principals engage with ethical sensitivities during the course of their daily work. An eclectic approach has been used in this chapter to show how ethical sensitivities in general, and school ethical decision making in particular, might be worked out against a backdrop of the interdependent influence of values-based leadership

and contextually responsive leadership: The former reveals the workings of the intra-personal leadership of self, where one's values and attitudes affect subsequent ethical actions; the latter demonstrates the relational connectedness of the principal to the range of constituents within each educational community. This can be viewed as a symbiotic relationship of person, place, and people, where the ethical sensitivities of the principal can be seen at work in a demand environment that is both bounded and situational.

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