

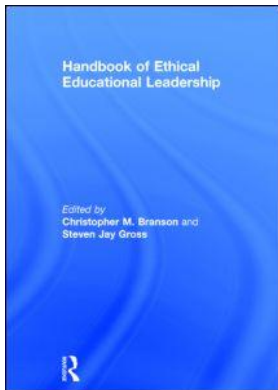
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On: 23 Oct 2021

Access details: *subscription number*

Publisher: *Routledge*

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Handbook of Ethical Educational Leadership

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Ethical Leadership: A Critical Transformative Approach

Publication details

<https://test.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9780203747582.ch3>

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Published online on: 16 May 2014

How to cite :- Carolyn Shields. 16 May 2014, *Ethical Leadership: A Critical Transformative Approach* from: Handbook of Ethical Educational Leadership Routledge

Accessed on: 23 Oct 2021

<https://test.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9780203747582.ch3>

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3

ETHICAL LEADERSHIP: A CRITICAL TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACH

CAROLYN SHIELDS

When I hear the phrase “ethical leadership,” I am always reminded of a strange conversation with a senior colleague when I was still a young and untenured assistant professor. Together, we had been assigned to develop a position description for a potential new colleague, and as we thought about areas of expertise we might want to emphasize, my colleague stated bluntly in response to one of my suggestions, “Ethics has nothing to do with educational administration.”

At the time, I was so taken aback, I failed to respond. But the comment festered. Perhaps his response came from adherence to the highly technical emphasis of much of the last quarter of the 20th century related to making educational administration a respected academic discipline. Perhaps his response grew out of an understanding of ethics as a set of immutable moral principles good for all times and places and a sense that this might not be an appropriate concept for educational leadership. In any case, I believed then, and still believe unequivocally, that he was wrong. Ethics is at the heart of good leadership. And yet, the topic is challenging and consensus is elusive. What do we mean when we speak about ethical leadership? In an age of increasing leadership pressures for accountability, new forms of educator evaluation, fiscal crises, concern about achievement gaps, rapidly changing demographics, and polarized political perspectives, is it possible to determine what ethical leadership might comprise? In recent years, in the United States at least, conflict over moral and ethical positions has epitomized political debate and caused gridlock in terms of decision making. In fact, taking firm and unequivocal positions led several politicians, during the 2011 presidential election, to make outlandish and erroneous claims—for example, regarding rape, pregnancy, and abortion.¹

I want to make it clear from the outset that taking firm and ridiculous positions, sometimes in the guise of a particular religious belief, is *not* what I understand by ethical leadership. In other words, taking a firm stance to support a policy that

mandates suspending any student who might swear three times or be absent without excuse four times or forget his or her homework is *not* ethical leadership. Moreover, even following rules in a more flexible fashion, taking into account a student's particular home situation (or homelessness) may come closer to being ethical but is insufficient in today's complex and diverse world where educational institutions are as often chilly, unwelcoming, and unsupportive as they are inclusive and supportive intellectual communities. Moreover, when countries throughout the world are struggling to provide equitable educational opportunities to male and female, rich and poor students, and when what is commonly called the "achievement gap" dominates much of educational discourse and policy deliberations, it is clear that more is needed than simply adhering appropriately to rules and regulations. In fact, I believe firmly that ethical intercultural leadership requires an approach to school leadership that is ethical, socially just, and indeed transformative.

However, in today's highly politicized educational climate, school leaders who wish to promote an inclusive, equitable, excellent, socially just, and transformative agenda for their educational institutions are often confronted with questions about how to ensure that their leadership praxis is ethical. My position is that despite the need for rules, regulations, and policies, there may be times when following the letter of the law (i.e., being right) is absolutely not the right course of action. Moreover, as one thinks about the diverse sociocultural mix of most classrooms and educational institutions in this century, trying to develop and adhere to "one size fits all" policies and practices may actually be unethical. A common and relatively simplistic example might relate to imposing similar sanctions for swearing on a homeless child who hears coarse words on a regular and daily basis from most of the adults in his or her life and on an affluent middle-class student who intentionally chooses illicit language to emphasize her displeasure with a teacher's disciplinary action. Although both students have committed an "offense" against school rules, applying a policy without attending to context may be "right" but concomitantly highly unethical.

With the increasing diversity of today's schools, students from various ethnic groups, differing socioeconomic conditions, religious beliefs, sexual orientations, and abilities/disabilities find themselves living and studying side by side. Further, growing diasporic populations throughout the globe bring people with conflicting beliefs and practices into daily contact, forcing school leaders to develop ways of interacting that demonstrate respect for multiple perspectives, without falling into relativistic "anything goes" attitudes and approaches. School leaders are therefore frequently faced with the need to develop some principles for ethical action in the face of conflicting values and belief systems. Thus, in this chapter, I first briefly discuss what I understand "ethical leadership" to be and provide a cursory overview of how historic approaches to thinking about administrative and leadership theories have exacerbated the challenges for today's educational leaders. Then, I propose some ways of thinking about, and developing, principles from which ethical intercultural leadership may emerge and illustrate with examples drawn from my international studies of school leadership.

FROM ADMINISTRATION TO LEADERSHIP: A MOVE TOWARD ETHICAL PRACTICE

To begin, when we think of ethics, we may think about a branch of philosophy defined in the *Merriam-Webster* dictionary as a system or “set of moral principles,” or as “the discipline dealing with what is good and bad and with moral duty and obligation.” When one turns to the definition of *moral* in the same dictionary, one reads: “of or relating to principles of right and wrong in behavior” and “expressing or teaching a conception of right behavior.” Although ethics and morality are often thought of by the layperson as synonymous, philosophers and ethicists have spent many hours and numerous pages attempting to distinguish between the two concepts. Although I am not convinced that educational leaders need to focus on the nuances, I am convinced that it is the focus on moral *principles* found in each definition that most appropriately and helpfully undergirds the praxis of ethical leadership. This is to say that an ethical leader does not develop a rigid set of practices and policies to which every individual must conform but that, instead, she develops a system for determining what is right or wrong in a given situation, informed but not determined entirely by the beliefs of the society in which the school is located.

Hence, if a school principal lives in a highly conservative community in the United States in a state that may have rejected any acknowledgment of domestic partners (or gay marriage), he or she will not simply uphold the position of the community to criticize or perhaps even ostracize the child of same-sex partners, but instead will uphold the democratic principle that every taxpayer’s child in America has the right to the same safe, caring, and high-quality education—regardless of the child’s home situation. Similarly, if a school principal in a fundamentalist Muslim community attempted to exclude female students from the processes of education, a higher principle related to the right of every individual to an education should likely override the local practice.

Upholding the rightness of the principle, instead of the community norm or practice, is what distinguishes ethical leadership; however, this is challenging because it seems to imply that educational leaders must each decide for themselves when to uphold the community moral code and when there is a different set of principles that might inform their actions. Nevertheless, there are historic antecedents for today’s confusion over what constitutes ethical educational leadership that may help us to better understand current tensions.

LONG-STANDING TENSIONS

From the time of Plato’s *Republic*, written in 5th-century b.c.e. Greece, arguments have been waged about the purposes and role of education. The class of teachers known as Sophists, for example, demanded a form of education that could enhance one’s opportunities for desirable employment and hence largely reflected a desire for (spurious) learning that would lead to political success. Sophists were concerned more with the *form* of an argument than with its truth. In fact, clearly demonstrating this equation of power with ethics (or justice), Thrasymachus states, “Justice is nothing else than the interest of the stronger” (Plato, Book I, <http://classics>).

mit.edu/Plato/republic.2.i.html). This leads Socrates, Thrasymachus, and others to a lively debate over whether the stronger and more powerful are always right, with such circuitous logic that Socrates concludes by having Thrasymachus agree with him that “the life of the unjust is more advantageous than that of the just” (Book I). The conversation continues in Book II (<http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/republic.3.i.html>) between Socrates and Glaucon, with Glaucon’s questioning whether Socrates really wanted to persuade them that “to be just is always better than to be unjust.” Wanting to be right for the sake of being right, upholding existing rules, and being unwilling to consider nuances and meanings, as well as statutes, led ultimately to similar ridiculous conclusions.

Over 20 centuries later, in North America, with the origins of compulsory, free, public education in the early 19th century, Tyack (1974) describes schools as largely bureaucratic and instrumental institutions, whose primary purposes were to socialize, sort, and often segregate various social groups in society. He states that along with a strong police force, public education was seen as a means of maintaining social order and that “stringent legislation [was passed] to force truants to go to school” and remove them from the decadent influence of “the streets” (p. 68). Here again, we see an emphasis on conformity, on forcing everyone to uphold the same code and values, regardless of background or culture. If one came to America, one learned to conform; America had little, if anything, to learn from newcomers.

As these early compulsory schools expanded, largely to educate immigrants and the working class, a theory of administrative leadership developed as well. In those early days, various perspectives may be found—some argued that “educational organizations are not ‘objective’ phenomena regulated by general laws” (Payne in Culbertson, 1988, p. 3); others were influenced by the scientific norms of management theorists like Frederick Taylor and Henri Fayol and urged the development of a “science of leadership” that followed a specific set of objective principles. Hence, by the time that a group of “more than fifty professors from twenty leading universities travelled by car, train, and plane to Chicago on November 10, 1957, to take part in a seminar’ entitled *Administrative Theory in Education*” (Culbertson, p. 34), the climate was ripe for what became known as the “theory movement.” Inspired by the thinking of members of the Vienna Circle, a group that strongly believed that “natural science methods can and should be applied to the study of social and human phenomena” (p. 35), the scholars agreed that “ought” questions—i.e., questions about ethics and moral purpose, right and wrong—had no place in science, and hence lay outside of the study and practice of educational administration. Halpin, author of the influential book *Administrative Behavior in Education*, explained: “Theory must be concerned with how the superintendent *does* behave, not with someone’s opinion of how he *ought* to behave” (in Culbertson, 1995, p. 41).

For a quarter of a century, the theory movement was unchallenged, until T. B. Greenfield in 1975 argued for a different approach that redefined theory as “sets of meanings which people use to make sense of their world” (quoted in Culbertson, 1995, p. 77) and launched a series of often acrimonious debates between himself and Daniel Griffiths, as part of what became more widely known in social science as “the paradigm wars.” The current emphasis and uncertainty about ethical leadership has

its origins in these Greenfield–Griffeths debates; although with extensive writing by such authors as Starratt, Shapiro, Langlois, and Lapointe represented in this volume, as well as many others, the issue of ethical leadership has come into much clearer focus.

And, of course, the “postmodern” acknowledgment of the existence of multiple and valid views of reality offers an important counterbalance to logical positivistic, “modernist” thinking, with its emphasis on objectivity and value neutrality. Simultaneously, these new perspectives also raise the spectre of relativism, a kind of “anything goes as long as one believes it is a right or good” approach—another perspective I believe it necessary to eschew. Parker Palmer (1998) emphasizes the need to reject both approaches—absolutism and relativism, saying that if one takes an absolutist stance, there is “no need to continue in dialogue”—either to evaluate our position or to engage with one another, because our position cannot be influenced; similarly, if one takes a relativistic stance, “we cannot know anything with certainty beyond our personal point of view”; there is one truth for you and another for me, and so, again, there is no need for dialogue, as there is nothing to be decided (Palmer, p. 109).

These cursory comments capture the ethical dilemma of educational leaders in today’s diverse educational contexts. As we attempt to serve students from numerous linguistic, cultural, socioeconomic, political, and religious backgrounds, we constantly encounter perspectives that are not our own, traditions and values that seem to contradict the traditional norms of the communities within which our schools are located, and hence we find ourselves challenged and often conflicted. How can one, for example, ensure a safe and challenging learning environment for all students and, at the same time, take into account the varied needs and backgrounds of different segments of the student body? To respond to this question and to develop a reasonable and workable approach to intercultural ethical leadership, we must return to the topic of *principles* that help us to determine what is right and wrong in a given situation.

DEVELOPING SOME PRINCIPLES FOR ETHICAL INTERCULTURAL LEADERSHIP

As one thinks about developing some principles, the question of whether it is ever possible to develop universal principles or guidelines is at the forefront. Here I hasten to emphasize two points. The first is that context is always critically important in education. It does make a difference whether a school is in the middle of a bustling urban area or in a more remote rural setting, or whether it is adequately funded and resourced or struggling with basics, whether children come from advantaged or disadvantaged backgrounds, and whether immigrant or refugee children have had prior opportunities to attend school or not. At the same time, we must be able to identify some general ethical principles and guidelines that may be universally applicable—even though they may play out very differently across different contexts. Trying to develop a parental involvement program, for example, may be a laudable and important goal for every school leader, but it will be quite a different task depending on whether the school is located on the Navajo reservation of southeastern Utah, where

Table 3.1 Two sets of principles

Principles for Democratic and Social Justice Education	Tenets of Transformative Leadership
All persons in a given organization shall be treated respectfully	The mandate to effect deep and equitable change
The education institution will ensure equitable access for all	The need to deconstruct and reconstruct knowledge frameworks that perpetuate inequity and injustice
The education institution will promote equitable outcomes for all	A focus on emancipation, democracy, equity, and justice
The practices of the organization should emphasize mutual benefit	An emphasis on both private and public (individual and collective) good
The norms and practices of the organization shall be equally inclusive of all members	The need to address the inequitable distribution of power
All members of a designated group (society, community, school) shall have equal civil, political, and social rights as citizens	An emphasis on interdependence, interconnectedness, and global awareness
Competition for funds to ensure basic needs is undemocratic	The necessity of balancing critique with promise
	The call to exhibit moral courage

many parents live in remote and distant dwellings; a New Zealand Marae working hard to uphold traditional Maori cultural practices; a blighted and dangerous urban center where many parents hold several jobs in their struggle to support their families; or a relatively well-to-do suburban center. In each case, the needs, timing, and approaches may differ, while the principle of the importance of parental involvement would need to be upheld.

In a chapter in the *Handbook of Educational Theories* (Shields, 2013a), in which I was asked to develop some principles related to “theorising democratic or social justice education,” I identified seven principles, which I argued might be good starting points for democratic education; elsewhere, I have developed eight tenets of the theory of *transformative leadership*—a theory, I argue, that is inherently ethical and focused both on excellence and social justice. Here I attempt to unify these two sets of principles as starting points for thinking about transformative and ethical leadership. The seven principles identified on the left-hand side of Table 3.1 are those discussed in the *Handbook of Educational Theories*, while those on the right come from several publications related to transformative leadership (Shields, 2011, 2012, 2013b).

As I reflected on how the two sets of principles intersect, I reorganized them as presented in Table 3.2. I am convinced that one can behave ethically without necessarily focusing on either social justice or transformation; however, when we consider the challenges related to intercultural leadership and the ways in which most highly diverse (or multicultural) educational institutions tend to fail some of their students or groups of students, it behooves us to expand our definition of “ethical” to ensure a focus on equity and transformation. Moreover, as I reflected deeply on what it takes to engage in ethical, transformative leadership for intercultural contexts, it seemed to me that one implements the tenets of transformative leadership *in order to* promote the principles of ethical intercultural leadership, and so I reversed

Table 3.2 Starting points for ethical transformative leadership

The call to exhibit moral courage	
The mandate to effect deep and equitable change	
The necessity of balancing critique with promise	
Transformative ethical intercultural leaders . . . need to deconstruct and reconstruct knowledge frameworks that perpetuate inequity and injustice	So that . . . all persons in a given organization shall be treated respectfully all members of a designated group (society, community, school) shall have equal civil, political, and social rights as citizens
focus on emancipation, democracy, equity, and justice	the education institution will ensure equitable access for all
emphasize both private and public (individual and collective) good	the education institution will promote equitable outcomes for all
address the inequitable distribution of power	the practices of the organization should emphasize mutual benefit
emphasize interdependence, interconnectedness, and global awareness	the norms and practices of the organization shall be equally inclusive of all members

and reordered the items from the two columns. The final aspect of the 2011 handbook principles, identified in Table 3.1 as relating to competition for funds, is more an illustration of a topic that requires concerted ethical leadership than an actual principle, and hence I deleted it from Table 3.2. Instead of identifying the call for a leader to exhibit moral courage as the final tenet of ethical leadership, I moved it to the beginning to signal its central importance. Similarly, the mandate to effect deep and equitable change and the necessity of balancing critique with promise are general principles that undergird all other aspects of transformative ethical intercultural leadership.

EXHIBITING MORAL COURAGE

It must be said at the outset that taking a principled stand not necessarily on behalf of the majority, or based on principles that have always been accepted as the norm in a community that is rapidly changing, requires moral courage. A few years ago, as I engaged in dialogue with the staff of an elementary school in a very wealthy, highly homogeneous, and largely white and conservative Christian community, one of the teachers asked how one should treat a situation if it went against the values and beliefs of the community. The issue at hand was a discussion and recognition of Islam. A fourth-grade teacher had been reading with her class a story that happened to have, as a character, a young Muslim child. When the story prompted a number of comments and questions about Muslims, the only Muslim student in the school stepped up and said, “I am Muslim and I would like to have my father come and talk to the class about what we believe.” Following the presentation, the teacher, school principal, and district superintendent were bombarded with angry phone calls, wondering how the teacher could possibly have permitted this discussion in class. One especially distraught parent complained that the Muslim father had stated that Islam

is a religion of peace, and argued that the children should have been taught, instead, that Muslims were out to “take over America.”

Although this example may seem extreme, it is actually quite typical of situations facing school leaders in increasingly diverse communities. Moreover, there is little doubt that the principal needed to have thought carefully about his reasons for permitting the discussion in the face of general community opposition. In fact, he might want to claim he had done so in order to promote the first principle of equal respect for all members of the school community and the right of every parent, whose child legitimately attended that school, to have his or her beliefs understood and respected.

Whenever a situation relates to a deeply seated religious belief, it requires considerable courage to go against the majority. Here, Gutmann (2001) is helpful. She uses the example of a science curriculum teaching about evolution (one might also add the topic of human impact on global warming). Consistent with the argument for a set of basic principles that I am making here, she argues the importance of “finding a principled, rather than simply a pragmatic, way of living with the tensions” (p. 217) inherent in contentious situations. For her, the principle is that a decision should be “nonrepressive and nondiscriminatory” (p. 222). Hence, upholding a request from parents that children should not be taught a theory with which they disagree would not meet either test. Although it is every parent’s right to draw a line regarding right and wrong in their home or place of worship, it is not acceptable to “stifle rational understanding and inquiry” (p. 226). She argues that repression “entails restriction of rational inquiry, not conflict with personal beliefs, however deeply held those beliefs” (p. 227); moreover, excluding “some children from [certain] educational goods for reasons unrelated to the legitimate social purposes of those goods . . . therefore is discriminatory” (*ibid.*).

To take such a stance—that it is in the interest of all children to learn specific information even if their parents believe it is wrong—requires a bold and courageous educational leader who has a firmly and carefully developed understanding of what is possible and what should not be permitted within the walls (or curriculum) of a public school. These examples barely scratch the surface of the situations a school leader will encounter that require moral courage.

THE MANDATE TO EFFECT DEEP AND EQUITABLE CHANGE

Unless an educational leader is convinced that his or her school meets all of the criteria identified on the left side of Table 3.1, then the next step is to consider carefully how to attain that goal and to determine what change is necessary. Oakes, Rogers, and Lipton (2006) wrote extensively about the failure of decades of educational reform to promote educational equity—either in terms of narrowing the “achievement gap” or in terms of providing more inclusive and equitable educational environments for all children. They argue that this failure is not a surprise, given that

[t]echnical changes by themselves, even in the hands of committed and skillful professional “change agents” or backed by court orders, are too weak to interrupt the intergenerational transmission of racial inequality.

(pp. 21–22)

Moreover, they claim: “Theorists and change agents have not treated equity reforms as distinctly different from other school improvement initiatives” (p. 20). In part, this is because technical changes (changing rules, schedules, organizational structures) do not address the underlying inequitable power structures of schools and do not address the fundamentally unequal “cultural norms about race, merit, and schooling that underlie the status quo” (p. 14).

To effect deep and equitable change, therefore, requires the moral courage to take on deep-seated issues of power and privilege and to carefully consider what changes will level the playing field to permit both equitable access and equitable outcomes for all students. Hence, ethical leaders adopt criteria that promote equity for all members of the community, as opposed to simply identifying approaches that might make the organization in the aggregate seem to be more efficient or even more effective. For example, it may well be true that eliminating free or reduced-price lunch or breakfast programs would reduce expenditures and help to balance the budget, but if one’s school population includes a number of students who are either homeless or live in poverty (as is so often the case today), then one must ask if it is the most ethical decision. Further, reducing nourishment may have the more costly consequences of increasing student absenteeism and illness, as well as repressing students’ abilities to learn.

Similarly, it may be that a popular senior teacher has, for years, proudly required students to complete an independent study project about a state or country beyond their own and to present their research with data, charts, images, and even typical food of the chosen entity. Nevertheless, the requirement to provide food for the class may appear to make the assignment more interesting and engaging but will certainly make it less equitable for impoverished or homeless students. I once heard of a situation in which a homeless student carefully selected the state of Florida for his research project, believing he could find enough pennies to provide orange juice for the class. Imagine his dismay when the teacher informed him that juice was not a food and hence did not meet the assignment’s criteria. Ethical leaders will ensure that those who are already struggling are not further disadvantaged by school practices or policies.

BALANCING CRITIQUE WITH PROMISE

Ethical leadership also requires building capacity and providing conditions that offer hope for present and future success. It is not adequate for a school leader to simply critique current practices, whether of a legislature, governing district, or individual teacher.

Critique, for ethical, transformative leadership, may begin with an examination of schoolwide data and a dialogue about why immigrant students, whose home language is not the language of instruction, outperform indigenous minoritized² students who speak the language of instruction at home. In the United States, for example, one might ask why non-English speaking immigrant students so often outperform African Americans whose home language is English; in New Zealand, one might ask why students from India outperform Maori students in many schools. Obviously it

is not simply an issue of language proficiency. Critique might therefore begin with an examination of current assessment practices and an in-depth discussion of the term “achievement gap” itself. An ethical leader would help others to understand the extent of the cultural bias (racial and socioeconomic) inherent in standardized tests and of the ways in which tests reward those from the dominant (test-making) culture and stigmatize many children whose backgrounds differ from that (often dominant middle-class) culture. Children from inner-city areas, for example, where fresh food is often difficult to obtain, might find it more challenging to write about a trip to the supermarket than their middle-class peers or to recognize and distinguish among pictures of various fruit on a test. Here, critique might be accompanied by recognition that the achievement gap may actually be a gap in the ability of families to access adequate nutrition and in the ability of educational institutions to offer relevant and equitable educational opportunities to all students. Promise, in this case, will not be provided by narrowing the curriculum and increasing test preparation sessions, but by working to eliminate the barriers that create “food deserts” in urban contexts and perpetuate an unequal playing field for students of some “subgroups.”

These critical examinations could lead to a need to address the norms of race and class identified by Oakes and colleagues (2006) as central to inequity. But, as they rightly pointed out, acknowledging inequity and critiquing it do not automatically lead to change. They express it this way: “Merely documenting inequality will not, in and of itself, lead to more adequate and equitable schooling” (p. 13). What is needed is both political will and courageous action. Moreover, as we also teach students the art of deconstructing and critiquing political arguments, economic premises, or cultural assumptions, they will learn to understand not only that the world is full of inequities (“unfulfilled promises,” Maxine Greene [1998] would say), but why they exist and how to begin to offer redress. It is not enough, for example, to document the association of high blood levels of lead in impoverished children and lower academic test scores if one does not take action to change the situation.

To engage in deep and meaningful ethical, transformative leadership, therefore, requires that a leader have the courage to examine, challenge, and, as necessary, correct situations and practices that promote inequity. But perhaps more difficult, and more important, is the need to also challenge beliefs, attitudes, and assumptions associated with the perpetuation of the status quo. Once one has reflected on the starting points—moral courage and the need for change, action, and advocacy to affect the change—several specific aspects of schooling will need to be considered.

NEW KNOWLEDGE FRAMEWORKS

The above discussion has implied the need to deconstruct existing knowledge frameworks that promote inequity and to replace them with reconstructed knowledge frameworks with respect to a more equitable education. This reconstruction is absolutely fundamental to creating an environment in which every child, regardless of his or her home situation, is treated with respect. For example, it is common amongst overworked educators to hear discussions of particular children who are struggling to succeed, often in terms that place the locus of blame and responsibility on the

child or home. One hears comments like “They are hardly ever in school; the parents just don’t care; they never have their homework done”; and so on. Rarely do we stop to consider that for families living in impoverished or challenging situations relocation is rarely voluntary. While middle-class families tend to relocate for a better job or a newer, bigger, or more luxurious house, families from less fortunate situations often relocate for reasons beyond their control. Although middle-class parents sometimes also struggle with finances, they are generally much more able to take a day off of work to attend a child’s musical or dramatic performance or to participate in a school event than is a single parent who is holding several jobs to put food on the table. I was recently involved in a conversation at the university about new, higher admissions standards and how the university could attract students “with more ability to learn.” I was amazed. The assumption that families in poverty care less or have less intrinsic ability to learn is absolutely incorrect and leads to inaction and blaming the victim; acknowledging lesser opportunity to learn and fewer prior opportunities can lead to corrective action.

Hence, deconstructing inappropriate knowledge frameworks begins with the need to reject deficit thinking. Assumptions based on inappropriate generalizations about who cares and does not care, blaming children for their family situation, assuming students have less ability to succeed must all be rejected. Too often we still hear reports of students’ aspirations being quashed, with comments like “You should not think about going to university; you should really consider being a hairdresser, a housecleaner, or a waitress.” Too often, children who do not look or sound like those from the mainstream are relegated to low-level classes or streams when educators have failed to differentiate between what is often called “opportunity to learn” as opposed to “ability to learn” (Shields, 2008). A child who has never seen the ocean may find it much more challenging to write a paragraph about a summer vacation than one whose parents own a timeshare and travel extensively. A small child who is often required to fend for himself, preparing a meal from whatever is available in the cupboard, may be less likely to understand measures or even fractions than one who has spent hours baking with a parent. Similarly, it is well known that children who come to school ready to learn to read have spent hours in pre-reading activities at home—pointing to elements of pictures, learning vocabulary, distinguishing between letters and numbers, understanding that one reads from left to right (in English), and so forth. Children who come from disadvantaged homes may not have had these opportunities due to a lack of available reading material, lack of parental time, or even lack of confidence on the part of the parent. Nevertheless, taking the time to teach students these basic skills and to provide a breadth of vicarious experiences can provide the foundation for academic success and high-level achievement. Moreover, Jensen (2009) emphasizes how important it is to provide disadvantaged children with high-quality enriched learning experiences (in contrast to the more traditional, slow, and sequential remedial activities) if they are to be successful in school.

The first step is to ensure that children feel that they each belong at school, that their family and cultural traditions are accepted, and that their lived experience is valued so that their knowledge and experience base will help them to succeed. The importance of this step cannot be overestimated. Too often, a child whose parents

may be in a loving homosexual relationship or whose religious or linguistic background differs from that of the majority of the community is made to feel less important and less valued than his or her peers. Too often, the child is forced to go, ashamed, to the teacher to beg for assistance, an alternative assignment, or exclusion from a requirement he or she cannot meet. I have often been asked by teachers and principals what course of action is appropriate if the community engages in fund-raising for a field trip and a child from an impoverished background does not meet the target (we find alternative tasks they *can* accomplish to permit their inclusion). I have been asked what to do if a parent complains that a child's depiction of his family with two same-sex parents is contrary to community values. For educators in public schools, I believe the response is simple (but often contentious): "Every taxpayer's child has the same right to be respected, accepted, and valued in this school. Every school activity must be equally open to all children. At home, one may teach whatever values one wishes, but here, we show and teach acceptance and respect for every individual." Parents who do not wish their children to be exposed to alternative lifestyles or belief systems will not like or accept this response easily, but it is my belief that no other approach is acceptable in a public school system. As discussed above, Gutmann's (2001) criteria of nonrepression and nondiscrimination are helpful guidelines.

Traditional and largely negative assumptions about children who are in some ways different from the historical norm in a given school or community represent the kinds of knowledge frameworks that must be deconstructed. To exercise ethical and transformative leadership, one must reconstruct the knowledge frameworks of the school community in ways that permit every child to be successful.

EMANCIPATION, DEMOCRACY, EQUITY, AND JUSTICE

The foregoing discussion of changing, deconstructing, and reconstructing knowledge frameworks lays the groundwork for a leader, wanting to be equitable and transformative in a multicultural and diverse school community, to focus on what I have termed "emancipation, democracy, equity, and justice." The connotations of each word differ slightly but, taken together, provide a basis for creating learning environments that are accessible to all students.

The first of these terms, "emancipation," is likely the most unexpected and perhaps even the most contentious. To *emancipate*, according to the *Merriam-Webster* dictionary, means to "free from restraint, control, or the power of another; to free from bondage." Bondage may, of course, refer to physical constraints but more often in education implies a kind of servitude, or servility, that is imposed on one segment of the population by another. We have already noted that school systems tend to value and perpetuate the community norms and academic traditions of those who historically have held power. The impact of this with respect to test bias is fairly well known; however, the ways in which tradition may inhibit full participation and success of others in other ways is less often discussed. Sometimes examples are well publicized—stories of Muslim girls not being allowed to play soccer or another sport because, somehow, wearing a hijab might be dangerous; stories of how children learning a second

(or third) language are considered rude because they have inadvertently used a word deemed to be inappropriate or have been caught speaking their home language to a classmate in an attempt to understand the nuance of an assignment. Examples are endless. The point, however, is that unless school leaders take action to create structures and cultures that are inclusive, some children do not really have full access to the benefits of schooling.

I once visited a large, diverse, urban high school with a very multicultural population that included a substantial number of indigenous students. After being shown the school's multiplicity of programs, including advanced, international baccalaureate, and gifted programs, one of our group observed that she had not seen any indigenous children in these enriched classes but that they had all seemed to be in the lower-level sections. Our guide responded, in all seriousness, "They have the same opportunities as anyone else to apply, but these programs just aren't for them." When the questioner persisted, asking if the school ever had indigenous students in these higher-level courses, we were told that there had once been one indigenous girl in the program but that she had dropped out after 2 months and that the educators did not know why. I can only speculate on how a lack of understanding of her heritage or of the challenges presented to her in being the only one of her linguistic or cultural group might have led to her feeling isolated and unwelcome. Putting the onus on a student to accommodate, rather than on the institution to help and support her success, is unethical.

Judith Green (1999) argues that we need a kind of democracy she characterizes as deep—one that expresses the "experience-based possibility of more equal, respectful, and mutually beneficial ways of community life" (p. vi); it is, at its core, a "*realistic, historically grounded ideal, a desired and desirable future possibility that is yet to be*" (p. ix, italics in the original). It is in this context that an ethical school leader needs to think of democracy—an approach that focuses on mutual benefit (something that indigenous girl was clearly not afforded) and that emphasizes hope and possibility for the future. As long as school is seen as primarily a means of providing a middle-class experience, the potential contributions of others will continue to be ignored and their voices silenced. When one combines recognition of the need for more equal, respectful, and mutually beneficial experience of community life within a school, one will find that equity of access and of achievement becomes a greater reality as well. Russell Bishop (personal communication, 2013) argued that it is not sufficient to

promote solutions to educational disparities in ways that are socially just, but rather [we must] do so in ways that acknowledge the aspirations, preferences, and practices of currently marginalized peoples. Such gains must acknowledge the cultural aspirations of Indigenous and minoritized peoples because as many leaders suggest, "what is the value of 'gaining all,' if we lose who we are in the process?"

This is the crux of the need for an ethical and transformative approach to leadership that, in its quest for equity, emancipates and liberates instead of simply readjusting the inequities in ways that re-inscribe domination and marginalization.

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE GOOD

Shields, Bishop, and Mazawi (2005) write that

in a socially just education system, if we were to place the scores of the total population, the scores of the dominant group, and those of a minoritized group on a graph, they would be coincident. There would not be a lower range of scores for the minoritized group. Neither would there be higher drop-out rates among minoritized groups, lower school leaving grade point averages, higher rates of suspension or disciplinary incidents, or disproportionate numbers of students who fail to go on to higher levels of education.

(p. 142)

In other words, the educational outcomes of all students would be equitable. This is consistent with Farrell's (1999) argument that equity involves four components: access (of which we have spoken), survival, outputs, and outcomes. Survival requires that students from diverse social groups have a roughly equal probability of completing school to the same level. Equity of *outputs* requires that students will "learn the same things to the same levels at a defined point in the schooling system" (p. 159); and equity of *outcomes* requires a focus on both the public and the private good outcomes of schooling. It suggests that

children from various social groupings will live relatively similar lives subsequent to and as a result of schooling (have equal incomes, have jobs of roughly the same status, have equal access to sites of political power, etc).

(*ibid.*)

Often we talk in terms of private good outcomes; those who complete a certain level of school will enjoy greater lifetime earnings, better career opportunities, and in general better health. We neglect to identify the communal benefits that derive from greater educational equity as well: less crime, lower costs for the judicial or penal systems, more equitable incarceration rates, and more available male role models in minoritized families. Ensuring that all children achieve to high levels provides not only a greater economic benefit to a society, but greater levels of social well-being, health, and civic participation (McMahon, 1999).

ADDRESSING POWER IMBALANCES

Oakes, Rogers, and Lipton (2006), in discussing why change does not naturally occur once inequities have been identified and acknowledged, state:

Equity reforms are often cut short by political struggles for comparative advantage, as middle- and upper-class parents seek to ensure that their children have the same absolute and relative social and economic privileges that they enjoy. The intractability of these norms and politics cannot be understood, let alone altered, absent consideration of the larger social, economic, and political milieu

in which current inequalities between and within schools seem so sensible to so many of those who are privileged currently.

(p. 14)

Their point is that power imbalances are at the root of social inequities and that those who hold power attempt to preserve it for themselves and their children at the expense of others who strive for equal opportunities.

The need to understand and then to address power imbalances is central to Delpit's argument that power imbalances continue to marginalize those who strive for access to mainstream cultures and institutions. In a seminal article, Delpit (1993) states that although it is well known that the power operating in organizations is that of the dominant culture and reflects its rules and values, it has not been as widely recognized that

[i]f you are not already a participant in the culture of power, being told explicitly the rules of that culture makes acquiring power easier [or that] those with power are frequently least aware of—or least willing to acknowledge—its existence. Those with less power are often most aware of its existence.

(p. 86)

Leading ethically in diverse communities requires a two-pronged approach to organizational power. The first, Delpit argues, is to educate those who do not understand the rules. As an example, I have often cited an incident from my first visit to New Zealand. As I was accustomed to doing, I completed my academic presentation and then perched on the corner of a table to respond to questions. Suddenly, and to my surprise, my hostess came up behind me and whispered, "Off the table." I quickly complied, although I then had no comprehension of my misdeed; sitting on a surface that might at some time contain food, I subsequently learned, was considered offensive by my Maori hosts. Fortunately my hostess understood the need to make the rule explicit, for I have no idea how long it might have taken me, or how many people I might have offended, before I realized my error on my own. Telling a person the implicit rules of a culture is so much kinder than assuming she will be upset to be told.

Delpit (1993) goes on, however, to explain that making rules explicit and helping "outsiders" gain access to a given culture is only a first step, which must be accompanied by helping students "to learn about the arbitrariness of those codes and about the power relationships they represent" (p. 100). And, of course, if these rules are arbitrary, then that arbitrariness must also be addressed if we are to level the playing field in ways that acknowledge and value the diverse cultures represented. Delpit concludes:

This can only be done, however, by seeking out those whose perspectives may differ most, by learning to give their words complete attention, by understanding one's own power, even if that power stems merely from being in the majority, by being unafraid to raise questions about discrimination and voicelessness with people of color, and to listen, no, to hear what they say.

(p. 101)

It is easy for educational leaders to listen to those who support and are in agreement with them. However, leaders who want to ensure that their practices are ethical and transformative will take seriously these comments about seeking out and hearing those whose ideas differ from their own. Only when we listen to those who cause us to reflect on our beliefs and approaches will we begin to overcome power imbalances and learn what change may be necessary.

INTERDEPENDENCE AND GLOBAL AWARENESS

To this point, we have focused primarily on attitudes, beliefs, and practices that lead to more equitable learning environments for all students. Ethical educational leaders must also attend to issues of pedagogy and curriculum. In other words, the learning environment and the content of what we teach and how we teach it all contribute to whether we have provided a transformative educational experience to our students.

Educators are increasingly aware of both the reality and the diversity of the global community. Students who inhabit schools and classes throughout the world increasingly come from other continents and many countries, often having experienced conflict, war, displacement, or the death of one or more family members. Sometimes, educators bemoan the time away from school when students accompany their parents on a return trip to their birth country or place of origin, perhaps failing to understand that learning occurs outside of the schoolhouse as well as within it—and that we need to learn from one another in multiple ways and in diverse places. Nevertheless, the rich diversity of humanity and the world in which we live is what nourishes and sustains us and, as we learn to live together in mutual benefit, is what offers hope for a better future.

Hence, ethical and transformative leaders will ensure not only that their educational learning environments are inclusive and respectful of all students but that they also offer opportunities for equitable access, survivability, outputs, and outcomes. We will go further. Elsewhere (Shields, 2012) I have distinguished between what I have called a socially just education (referring to ensuring a level playing field within the institution) and a social justice education. The latter, I believe, prepares students for life in a pluralistic society in which we must recognize our interdependence and global connectedness. The rate of diaspora and the intricacies of the global economy make it increasingly difficult to ignore the impact of what happens in one community on another, far distant community. Global warming, caused in part, scientists generally agree, by human activity, including the burning of fossil fuels, manufacturing, and the destruction of forests, has resulted in increasingly severe conditions worldwide. In 2012 alone, the United States experienced shrinking ice sheets, blistering heat, severe drought, and devastating storms. Volcanic ash from an erupting volcano in Iceland disrupted air traffic in Europe, affecting passengers around the world for over a week. When an Egyptian resident was arrested for killing four Americans (including the ambassador) in Libya as a result of political unrest in the Middle East, the political reverberations were worldwide.

In other words, we cannot escape the fact that what happens in one part of the world impacts many other places. Hence, I argue that it is important to teach students

global awareness, critique, and understanding. Studies by Westheimer and Kahne (2004) and Vedøy and Møller (2007) demonstrate clearly that what is taught matters. The former conducted a 2-year study of three programs focused on teaching students different aspects of critical awareness—developing personally responsible citizens, participatory citizens, and justice-oriented citizens. Their findings are important in the context of this discussion about ethical leadership in that students who participated in the program that emphasized participatory citizenship showed statistically significant learning related to knowledge about how the government works and how to participate by conducting polls, interviewing, and so forth, but no gains related to understanding “broad social critiques and systemic reform” (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004, p. 261). In contrast, students who were enrolled in a program that focused on creating justice-oriented citizens showed the opposite: They emphasized social critique and posited “structural explanations for social problems” but did not emphasize “technocratic skills associated with participation” (p. 262).

Thus, as economic inequality (as measured by the income gap of a country) widens, there is an increasing responsibility on the part of educators to help students understand issues of disparity, privilege, and social justice and how to address them in their roles as future global citizens. Teaching respect and understanding may be the starting point, but it is also critically important to teach students how to be engaged in the world in which they live and in which they will take on leadership roles. This is essential because there is significant evidence that

income inequality, measured by the Gini index, has a significant and positive effect on the incidence of crime. This result is robust to changes in the crime rate when it is used as the dependent variable (whether homicide or robbery), the sample of countries and periods, alternative measures of income inequality, the set of additional variables explaining crime rates (control variables), and the method of econometric estimation.

(Fajnzylber, Lederman, & Loayza, 2002, p. 25)

Learning about the effects of income inequality on global quality of life and about possible courses of action and beginning to develop new frameworks for thinking about and living in the wider community will help to prepare students to participate appropriately in the complex world of tomorrow.

ETHICAL, TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP: HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

I have argued here, based on numerous theories and empirical studies, that ethical, transformative leadership offers a way forward. To accomplish this, I have posited the need for moral courage, for deep and equitable change, and for both critique of our current beliefs, approaches, and systems and action that promises hope and a better, more equitable future. I have suggested that the principles of transformative leadership theory—the need to deconstruct inequitable knowledge frameworks and to reconstruct them in more equitable ways: a focus on emancipation, democracy, equity, and justice; on both public and private good; on addressing power imbalances;

and acknowledging our global interdependence—will lead to more inclusive and equitable education for all, education that includes equity of access, survival, outputs, and outcomes.

To fulfill these tenets, I have also argued that it is not simply a matter of following or upholding the rules. In fact, sometimes, in order to ensure that school is inclusive and just and that all students are welcomed and included, one must actually contravene the policy or rules in order to ensure equitable treatment for students from diverse backgrounds. Punishing students for something they have always learned was normal, or for neglecting something they have not had the opportunity to learn, is neither helpful nor equitable. Indeed, Jensen (2009) argues that punishment does not change behavior, but rather that a new knowledge framework and new understandings are prerequisites for behavior change. Disproportionate suspension, detention, or retention will not lead to the kinds of changes we want in our schools. What is required is strong and caring relationships, respect for all students, a willingness to teach them what they do not know, and holding everyone to high expectations. And, after all, isn't that what a good teacher automatically does: teach every child engaging and enriching material?

Thus, if we are satisfied with the status quo, with the widening achievement gap, with continued crime in our most diverse and disparate communities, then we might say, with my colleague of long ago, "*ethics has nothing to do with educational administration.*" On the other hand, if we are concerned about the polarized and polarizing politics of many nations, with social unrest, with economic inequity, and with constant internal and external threats to our well-being, we will want to prepare today's students for a different world—one in which Greene's (1999) vision of "more equal, respectful, and mutually beneficial ways of community life" becomes a reality. A quarter of a century ago, William Foster (1986) stated that educational leadership "must be critically educative; it cannot only look at the conditions in which we live, but it must also decide how to change them" (p. 185). Ethical educational leadership for diverse and pluralistic contexts requires a critical and transformative approach to leadership, one that even goes beyond the decision of how to change the conditions in which we live but that acts ethically and courageously to ensure that change occurs.

Starting with the principles outlined here provides school leaders with some benchmarks and guidelines, but there are no easy answers. Sometimes, indeed, what we have been taught is right is not; the rules we are asked to uphold should be disregarded or torn down; the values of the community should be challenged. These are not easy or popular positions to take or uphold, but they are characteristics of ethical, transformative leadership.

NOTES

1. During the 2012 presidential election campaign, several candidates (e.g., Todd Akin, Phil Gingrey) discussed what they called "legitimate rape," using an erroneous and spurious argument to support an unequivocal position against abortion that they believed to be a moral response. This is, in fact, antithetical to ethical leadership.
2. The term *minoritized* refers to a group of people who have been ascribed the characteristics of a minority (Shields, 2005) regardless of whether or not they are in the numerical minority. In other words, those groups that have traditionally held power may continue to exclude or marginalize others regardless of shifting numbers, resulting in people who may actually be in the numerical majority, being treated as if their position and perspective were of little worth. Minoritized populations have less influence, and their

perspectives are often silenced by the voices of the powerful. For example, schools on the Navajo reservation, with over 95% of the population being Navajo students, still use a largely Western and Caucasian-based curriculum; schools with majority Latino or African American populations may still use a Eurocentric curriculum that distorts or misrepresents history.

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