

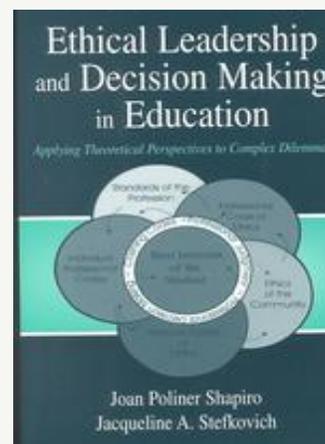
# ETHICAL LEADERSHIP AND DECISION MAKING IN EDUCATION

## APPLYING THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES TO COMPLEX DILEMMAS

As the inspiration for this book came to Joan Shapiro and Jacqueline Stefkovich in their enduring work in the area of educational leadership, it also comes from the great many students that have continually supporting their efforts to teach ethics in education. From the works of Nash (1996), Beck (1994) and Starratt (1994) and their work on ethical training of educational administrators, Shapiro and Stefkovich have transformed their graduate courses largely into a case study approach whereby theory and reflection melded into one. As Nash pointed out in his book on professional ethics, “A good case can be a provocative, almost in-

dispensable tool for teaching the relevant moral concepts...” In recognizing this fact, Shapiro and Stefkovich’s book has become somewhat of a manual in the understanding and analyzing of ethical issues as they relate to school leadership. Having said this, the main themes of this book are organized as follows:

- 1) Identify and understand the ethical paradigms and how they act as a tool for educational leaders.
- 2) Using the construction of a multiple paradigm approach, the reader is challenged to analyze real-life ethical dilemmas.
- 3) Building an ethics course while working within your own ethical pedagogy.



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### About the Authors

**Joan Shapiro** - Currently as a professor of Educational Administration and Policy Studies Department at Temple Universities College of Education, Joan has been largely shaped by her experiences as Co-Director of Women’s Studies Program at the University of Pennsylvania, and her past experience as high school teacher in the United States and the United Kingdom. While in her college years the civil rights movement was in full swing and Joan witnessed the injustices with regard to social class, race and ethnicity. Due in part to these experiences, (and many more) Joan continued to develop strong views in the areas of sexism, race, social class, sexual orientation and disability. As you read this book summary you will note the influence of the ethic of care and social responsibility that is prevalent in all of Joan’s work.

**Jacqueline Stefkovich** -As a Law professor at Pennsylvania State University and formerly a professor and coordinator of the Educational Administration Program at Temple University, Jacqueline credits her biases today as the result of influences by her Catholic working-class family. Jackie recalls the hard bit of the Great Depression and how people looked out for their own. Supporting the stigma of a “long, funny last name” Jackie’s family endured much hardship due to the discrimination of Eastern Europeans. Jackie’s generation was the first in Pennsylvania to attend college and it was the first time that she was exposed to people of other races and cultures. After hearing their stories, she quickly realized how much she had to be thankful for. It is here where her respect for the worth of each individual began and would continue to grow to this day.

**CHAPTER 1: Multiple Ethical Paradigms and the Preparation of Educational Leaders in a Diverse and Complex Era.**

As today's educational institutions become ever more so socially and culturally diverse, the need for administrators to receive ethical training is critical. In preparing educational leaders of tomorrow with the skills to adapt to student differences, recognize social gaps, and respond to gender and ethnic bias, we create a society prepared for challenges of tomorrow.

Shapiro and Stefkovich contend that by using a multiple ethical paradigm approach in analyzing complex and diverse issues, we will be better able to see the entire picture and not be influenced by perceptions and misleading untruths.

Shapiro and Stefkovich emphasize the value of using differing paradigms to view educational dilemmas as a necessary part in taking administrators outside their "self" and think more broadly in order to understand the views of others. While there is no one correct ethical paradigm, educational practitioners need to continually reflect upon their own ethical toolkit and be open-minded enough to accept differences and allow growth within oneself.

***Four components of the multiple ethical paradigms:***

***Ethic of Justice***

***Ethic of Critique***

***Ethic of Care***

***Ethic of Profession***

***CHAPTER 2: Viewing Ethical Dilemmas Through Multiple Paradigms***

As John Dewey (1902) pointed out, ethics is the study of conduct that is right or wrong, good or bad. If this is true, Shapiro and Stefkovich ask the question, right or wrong, good or bad, according to whom? To answer this question, this chapter deals with the four paradigms of Justice, Critique, Care and Profession. This chapter provides a brief description for the first three paradigms as they are widely accepted and practiced, and then will focus on the fourth paradigm of profession requiring more specialized attention.

**The Ethic of Justice** – The focus is on the legal and democratic process followed by the people. As Starratt (1994) points out there are two schools of thought on ethical justice. The first puts the individual's needs above the general populace, therefore relying on 'human reason' to justify the passing up of personal rights for social justice. The second thought places the state before the individual in which it is the responsibility of the state to 'teach' or train individuals how to behave in a community. While strong arguments can be made for either case, Kohlberg (1981) and Sergiovanni (1992) speak of justice not as a rule, but rather a moral principle. This moral extends well beyond the borders of our schools and influence the families and greater communities of our nation. Accepting this notion Sergiovanni states, "that every parent, teacher, student, administrator, and other member of the school community must be treated with the same equality, dignity, and fair play".

As laws apply to education, Shapiro and Stefkovich state that very often we see the court reluctant to impose restrictions on school and allow for boards to develop policy. While this creates a variance in practice throughout our nation, it allows for communities to react to their own specific needs. In certain cases when the courts have imposed law on school communities (ex. Racial segregation), it is imperative to use ethical principles to act as a guide to challenge these laws.



### *The Ethic of Critique:*

Alive and well in the ethic of critique is critical theory. In asking the difficult questions and raising the inequities within society, the ethic of critique aims to challenge societal practice, thought and direction. In asking, “Who makes the laws? Who benefits from the law, rule, or policy? Who has the power? Who are the silenced voices?” The ethic of critique forces us to look for possible alternatives to the status quo. For educators, whether it be the tracking or streaming of students, social, gender or race inequities, the difficult questions must be asked. **The ethic of critique gives voice to the suppressed.**

### *The Ethic of Care:*

As the ethic of care is often associated with the feminist movement, it has evolved into a strategy to capture, retain, and reinforce the values and morals of society. Well renowned ethicist Nel Noddings (1992) believes that ‘caring’ should surpass ‘achievement’ as the fundamental goal of our education system in order to lessen the competitive nature of our current system. Other theorists concur with Noddings and believe that the inclusion of reason and emotion within our curriculum would serve to strengthen the leadership qualities of our youth. With regards to disadvantaged youth, the care model is broken into three components; attention and support, discipline and “staying on them” (Shapiro, Sewell, DuCette, Myrick, 1997). Youth in these circumstances have viewed this form of caring as an indication that someone was interested in their success.

The application for educational leaders is to shed some of the business or militant top-down leadership models, and move toward resolving conflict through collaboration. In doing so we would serve to strengthen the school community and increase the collective skill.

*“Caring is the very bedrock of all successful education and ... contemporary schooling can be revitalized in its light”. (Noddings, 1992)*



### *The Ethic of Profession:*

The movement toward a fourth ethical paradigm is embedded in the increased emphasis on moral reasoning within the works of numerous contemporary educational writers. For application purposes, as school administrators/leaders are expected to have their own personal ethical code, it is only recently that professional educational organizations have developed codes for the teaching profession. The difficulty with standard codes is that they often serve to limit educators as they are universal in nature and do not conform to the day-to-day dilemmas we face. Professional codes should only serve to act as a ‘guidepost’, stating image and character. According to Shapiro and Stefkovich of utmost importance is the process of developing a personal code of ethics that is based on past experience and personal triumph. This personal code when combined with the professional code should serve as our ‘ethical toolkit’ and be in the best interest of the child.

Chapters three through seven highlight paradoxical dilemmas that will allow the reader to apply a multiparadigm approach through analysis. Understanding that any problem is best solved when taking all factors into consideration, the multiparadigm approach will enable the problem solver the benefit of finding the best solution using the ethics of Justice, Critique, Care and Profession..The following chapters will cover the issues of, individual rights versus community standards; the traditional curriculum versus the hidden curriculum; personal codes verses professional codes; the American melting pot versus the Chinese melting pot; and equality versus equity.

Chapter 3  
Individual  
Rights  
Versus  
Community  
Standards

As the history of the teaching profession placed the educator's personal and professional life in direct control of local community members, educational reforms of the 1850's began the movement toward bureaucratized school systems, and teachers as professionals and role models. Despite this change in thought, it was not until the 1960s and 70s that schools moved away from direct community control and autonomy. Today, as communities continue to play a significant role in the policy of our school divisions and the action of our schools, there is still a paradox that pits the personal actions of educators against the watchful eye of the community. In dealing with these issues educational leaders must wear the different hats of the individual and the community. Questions that need to be asked are:



- 1) **When do community standards take precedence over individual rights and liberties?**
- 2) **Is the ethical character of educators set at a higher level than those of other citizens in the community?**
- 3) **Does the community have the right to place educators at a higher ethical level than its other citizens?**
- 4) **Should the community have input into matters regarding school employees' individual liberties?**

***Ethical dilemma #1 The Adult Fantasy Center:***

An assistant principal in a rather conservative town completes a teacher performance appraisal on one of the school's master teachers. The only part of the evaluation that concerns the AP is the fact that this staff member has never taken part in any of the schools extra curricular programs. The AP assumes that her teacher's family life must be taking up his spare time. Conflict arises when the AP decides to purchase a gag gift from an unpopular adult fantasy store. In her hast while shopping she notices her master teacher emerging from the back room of the Adult Fantasy store. As it turns out he and his wife run the lucrative business and have preferred to keep their business enterprise a secret. They operate the business so that they can afford to put their children through university as well as afford the extras in life.

**Multiparadigm questions to ponder:**

- 1) Are teachers role models? If yes, then is it acceptable for a teacher to be part owner of and adult center?
- 2) Could the teacher's decision to take on this particular job be justified when one considers that his job as a teacher is valued so little by society that he is unable to earn enough from it to support his family? To educate his children?
- 3) What should the teacher do? What would be in the best interests of the students? Would you see this decision differently if the principal were male? If the teacher were female?



## Ethical dilemma #2 Artificial Insemination:

Sally Fabian is a Sr. High School teacher who has decided to go ahead with her plans for parenthood through artificial insemination. In informing her friend/principal, Mr. Edwards of her decision, Mr. Edwards is grappling with the decision to support or discourage her plan. Mr. Edwards is taking into consideration the community as a whole, diverse in race, ethnicity, religion and economic status. Mr. Edwards has always been a strong believer in listening to community stakeholders and believed in guiding his school consistent with community values. The community does have a small but committed fundamentalist Christian group who are “vitaly interested” in educational matters. On top of all these factors, Mr. Edwards is very concerned with the sharp increase in teenage pregnancies within his school. He fears Ms, Fabian’s decision will only serve to reinforce this negative school image. **Multiparadigm questions to ponder:**

- 1) Does Mr. Edwards have a right to intercede in Ms. Fabian’s Decision to have a child as an unmarried person? If so, what are the possible approaches he might take? What is his best course of action?
- 2) Does the community have a right to challenge Sally’s decision to have a child?

## Ethical dilemma #3 The Trouble with “Daddy’s Roommate”

Wedgewood High Schools principal Mary Evans is confronted with the inappropriate action of one teacher removing the book *The Trouble with “Daddy’s Roommate”* from another teacher’s desk and sharing it with another colleague and bashing the content of the book in front of their students. The teacher, who originally intended on using the book as part of a unit on prejudice against minority groups and censorship, had the book stolen from her room and was very upset. Further, the assistant principal entered the scene when he succumbed to an irate parent’s demand to ban the book from the school completely. The teacher who originally wanted to use the book confronted the principal and stated that the AP violated her academic freedom and demanded the book be allowed back in the classroom. What will Mary do?

**Multiparadigm questions to ponder:**

- 1) Which persons will be affected by Mary Evans’ decision? What would each of these persons like to see done? Is there a solution to this problem that would be fair and just to all those concerned? If so, what is it?
- 2) What would you do if you were in Principal Evans’ place? Would your decision be different if the issue were

## CHAPTER 4: Traditional Curriculum Versus Hidden Curriculum



The classic battle over curriculum continues to pit traditionalist thinkers versus contemporary realists. Traditional proponents evaluate their curriculum on the knowledge, skills and values that have stood the test of time. They see no need for change as their curriculum is “value-free and apolitical”. In challenging this belief, contemporary curriculum supporters are keen on exposing the ‘hidden’ curriculum that creates social inequities and limits the success of future generations. In using the ethics of critique, Shapiro and Stefkovich ask the hard questions about what is being taught in schools versus what is not being taught.



## Ethical dilemma #1 Aids and Age-Appropriate Education

Three years ago, Meadow Woods School District had implemented a policy that all students K-12 be provided a sex education program. This years grade seven project included posters that offered ways in which a person could protect themselves from AIDS i.e. abstinence or contraceptive). As the school welcomed parents for the annual Back to School

Night many parents noticed the grade seven class had proudly displayed their posters in the hallway. Parents of the grade six class complained of the influence upon their children who in their opinion did not need to be exposed to such graphic representations. While the classroom teacher and principal had conflicting feelings on the issue, it was the superinten-

dent who demanded that the posters be removed. As the principal walked toward the hall to assist the teacher in removing the poster he notice two grade seven girls walking down the hall, one girl was eight months pregnant.

### Multiparadigm questions to ponder:

- 1) Who decides at what age various parts of the curriculum should be introduced?
- 2) Should the community have input into the specifics of the school curriculum? How do teachers / administrators know where to draw the line?

## Ethical dilemma #2 Vivisection: A Classroom Physiologist's Dilemma

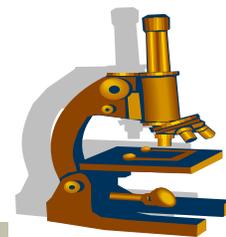
At the heart of dilemma two is the debate over the vivisection of pithed (brain dead) frogs versus the alternative computer generated simulation in which to train students on the functioning frog heart. Two students, one for and one

against the procedure debate their actions and the purpose of science in preparing them for their future as medical doctors.

### Multiparadigm questions to ponder:

- 1) If you were the director of curriculum would you permit this procedure?

- 2) Would your answer be different if the animal were a dog? A cat? A horse? How would you decide to draw the line?



## Ethical dilemma #3 Budget Blues and Copyright

A classic and all too real dilemma is presented in which a growing school district is confined by reduced budgets and extreme cutbacks. The division and all schools have been told that all multiple classroom photocopies were to be sent to a central copier to save costs. At the same

time all staff were reminded of copyright laws and informed of the consequences of breaking them. Dr. Sharif the principal was working late one day when he came across one of his valued staff members photocopying copyrighted materials. Dr. Sharif was perplexed, as not only was this against strict district policy, but it was also illegal. The teacher was caught.

### Multiparadigm questions to ponder:

- 1) Do you think Dr. Sharif is concerned because the superintendent might uncover what is happening? Because the publishing company might possibly find out and he would be held personally liable?
- 2) What actions do you think Dr. Sharif should take? What is your reasoning? What would be the most caring decision? What parties should Dr. Sharif consider in making a caring decision?



## **CHAPTER 5 Personal Codes Versus Professional Codes**

In this chapter Shapiro and Stefkovich examine cases wherein personal and professional codes collide. For educational leaders, common ground is difficult to come by and the appropriate actions force a decision between the two codes. Often described as a ‘no-win’ situation, Shapiro and Stefkovich have outline four of the more common code clashes.

### **Shapiro and Stefkovich ‘s “Clashes within the professional code of ethics”:**

- 1) Clash between individual code and the professional code.
- 2) Clash within professional codes. (Individual is educated in differing professions)
- 3) Clash of professional codes among educational leaders. (Their own interpretation)
- 4) Clash between educational leader’s professional code and expectations and code of community.

### **Ethical dilemma #1 Drunkenness or Disease?**

Mr. Kidder, a highly decorated and visible special education teacher worked for 20 years in the classroom enjoying each and every day. He completed his masters’ degree as well as a supervisory certificate and eventually earned the position of director of special education.

Dr. Wang, a strong supporter of Mr. Kidder was placed in the unpleasant position of confronting him upon hearing of Kidder’s third drinking and driving conviction. Mr. Kidder was to serve a three-month open-custody sentence and would be able to come to work each and every day. Mr. Kidder pleaded for help regarding his disease and asked to keep his position that he worked so hard to get. Dr. Wang is to present to the board her recommendations for Mr. Kidder.

#### **Multiparadigm questions to ponder:**

- 1) Do you believe that as a teacher Mr. Kidder should be held to a higher moral standard than ordinary citizens? Should what Mr. Kidder does in his private life make a difference in his job status?
- 2) Where would you draw the line between what is of public concern and what is strictly private when considering school employees?



***Ethical dilemma #2 Rising Star or Wife Beater?***

Coach Alex and his wife were excellent substitute teachers who committed themselves to their jobs. Coach Alex eventually obtained a permanent teaching position and his career was looking up. As time past, the community developed deep regard for such a visible and successful coach who helped many young athletes gain scholarships and professional sport membership. The home front Coach Alex was much different however. News began to spread that Coach Alex was arrested twice for beating his wife and placing her in hospital. Both times his wife dropped the charges and let her husband off the hook. As the news spread, many parents became outraged and wrote letters to the board and signed petitions to have coach Alex fired. At the next board meeting the oversized crowd became irate and shouted out commands for the board to take action. After the president of the Parent-Teachers Association spoke on behalf of the crowd, she turned toward Superintendent Brown and said, “What are you going to do about this?”

**Multiparadigm questions to ponder:**

- 1) What is the fairest choice Superintendent Brown could make? The most caring?
- 2) Compare Superintendent Brown’s dilemma with that of Dr. Wang in the previous scenario.
- 3) Could it be argued that spousal abuse is a disease as alcoholism is a disease? Why or why not?
- 4) What questions might a critical theorist ask in this situation? On what concerns might she or he focus?



***Ethical dilemma #3 Job Sharing:  
Some Real Benefits***

Assistant Superintendent Dr. Marisa Garcia was a first time superintendent entering contract negotiations with a veteran union president James Jacobs. The point of contention came when Jacobs stated that a current hiring policy violated equal opportunity for single parents by not allowing benefits to full-time staff who wished to move to a part-time job sharing position. Dr. Garcia’s options were few in that she could extend a one year pilot program and grant the benefits to job-share positions, or she could reject the offer completely and stand her ground. Being only 35 years old and new in the position she felt her decision could affect her young career. Dr. Garcia was unclear of her own feelings on the issue and had to determine if equal opportunity, as well as care and concern were afforded to all teachers in the district.

**Multiparadigm questions to ponder:**

- 1) In this situation, must there be a conflict between what is just and what is caring? Explain.
- 2) If benefits are extended to job-sharing individuals, should they then also be extended to other part time employees?

This chapter uses a comparison of the assimilation strategies used in American (often referred to as the “American Melting Pot”) versus the “Chinese Hot Pot” analogy in which people of all backgrounds live together each with their own distinct heritage and culture. While neither paradigm is without conflict, we can see the great benefits and challenges in either a unified group or a multicultural mosaic. Applying these ideologies to schools today Shapiro and Stefkovich have organized three ethical dilemmas to once again analyze using the multidimensional paradigms.

### *Ethical dilemma #1 A Home for Marlon: The Foster Child Case*

A 16 year old boy named Marlon was moving into a new foster home, a new town, and of course a new school. Jim Campbell, the schools director of pupil services was aware of Marlon’s past that included sexual and physical abuse. Jim also knew that over the past three years, Marlon had exhibited such behaviours as fire starting, and molestation of younger children. With this confidential information, Jim Campbell struggled immensely in whether or not to tell Marlon’s new foster home, the Kearns' of Marlon’s past. To complicate matters, the Campbell’s and Kearns were very close friends and community members. Mrs. Kearns even worked at the high school as a part time aid, and both the Kearns and the Campbell’s children were the best of friends. Jim’s first reaction was to tell his friends of the imminent danger their children would be in by allowing Marlon into their home. Jim weighed his professional code and the confidentiality laws that protected Marlon . Jim weighed the fact that Marlon had been a victim himself,

and to push him away from such a good family as the Kearns even more detrimental. In order to solve his dilemma, Jim asked himself, “How could he reach a decision that would be in harmony professionally and personally?” The next morning Jim reached his conclusion based on who he knew himself to be, he decided not to tell Marlon’s story to the Kearns family.

#### **Multiparadigm questions to ponder:**

- 1) Do you think Mr. Campbell made the right decision? Why or why not?
- 2) Assume Mr. Campbell did not know the Kearns family. Would that factor make a difference in your opinion as to the best course of action?
- 3) Mr. Campbell chose not to break his state’s law regarding confidentiality of foster children’s records. Do you agree with his decision? Is it ever justifiable to break a law when making an administrative decision?

### *Ethical dilemma #2 Parent’s Rights Versus School Imperatives*

A single father, Frank Buck who had sole custody of his son Robert was having difficulty in controlling his son’s behaviours. In doing the best he could to help Robert, Frank went to all PTA meetings, back-to-school nights, and supported the school in their disciplinary action regarding Robert. One day, Robert was sent to the school principal’s (Mr. Parker) office for acting ‘out of control’ in his classroom. Mr. Parker called Frank and within 20 minutes he was there to get his son. Angrily Frank pulled Robert out of the office pushed him against a locker threatening him and eventually spanking him there in the school until he cried out. Mr. Parker tried to intervene, but Frank was beyond help. Frank and his son left the building and Mr. Parker returned to his office. Mr. Parker did not know what to do, was it a case of child abuse or just a well-deserved spanking. Mr. Parker recalled being spanked as a child and he would not consider his father a child abuser. Mr. Parker truly believed that Frank was a good father and that he was doing the ‘best he could’. Calling the authorities would certainly place Robert in a foster home and send Frank to court.

#### **Multiparadigm questions to ponder:**

- 1) Do schools have a right to determine how parents may discipline their children? How do your local laws define child abuse?
- 2) Should Mr. Parker report this incident to the authorities?
- 3) Should exceptions in the law be made in some cases, or should the law be followed literally?



### Ethical dilemma #3 Responsibilities and the Organization

A musically gifted family moved to the United States to pursue a career in the arts. Upon choosing a school based on music programming, the father announced to the school that their son George would miss some school for family performance reasons. As the year went on, George, although talented, was missing many classes and not doing the work that other students were expected to do. When the report card went home with at “C” grade, George’s father rushed in demanding an “A” for such a

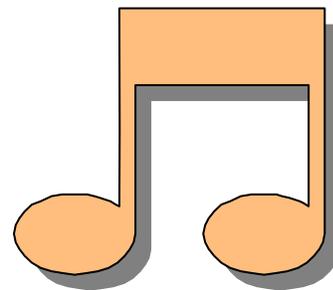
gifted child. The teacher explained the evaluation practice and could not justify an “A” for George. The father was outraged and sent George to argue as well. The teacher stood his ground.

a fair rule? Fair to whom? Who does the rule benefit?

- 3) George knew the rules regarding grading up front; was he then not obligated to abide by them? Why or why not?

#### Multiparadigm questions to ponder:

- 1) To what extent should George be responsible to his family? To his school?
- 2) Who made the rule that all students should be judged on class participation? Where would the basis for such criteria lie? Is this



## CHAPTER 7 Equality Versus Equity

**Equality - “In any given circumstances, people who are the same in those respects relevant to how they are treated in those circumstances should receive the same treatment.” (Strike, Haller & Soltis, 1988)**

Is what’s right for one person, right for all?

**The Ethic of Justice** “justice consists in treating equals equally and unequals unequally” Aristotle

**The Ethic of Care**  
Favors equity over equality. Using this paradigm, history plays a part as past voices would be heard in an attempt to rectify moral and ethical wrongs.

**The Ethic of Critique**—  
The critical questions would confront the issues of “oppression, domination and discrimination.” Current trends and popular belief play a significant role in how the questions are answered.

**The Ethic of Profession**  
The battle continues over the acceptance and celebration of difference **versus** the unified collective whole.



## *Ethical Dilemma #1 When All Means All*

The principal of Freedom Elementary (Jim Martin), was extremely proud of his school for its state renowned inclusion model. Staff, students and community worked together to support each and every child's needs. That is until the day Cody Smith moved into the neighborhood. Cody was a fourth grade student who suffered extreme emotional difficulties. Cody had always been pulled out of the regular class and so it was a pleasant surprise to Cody's parents that their son would be part of the regular program with 'normal students'.

The first month was fairly smooth with only minimal changes to Cody's educational plan. The next month however, gave inclusion a whole new meaning. Cody's teachers, parents and doctors tried everything they could to help Cody control his outbursts in school. Nothing worked. The next staff meeting, Jim Martin was ambushed as staff demanded that Cody be removed from their 'inclusive' class. Jim argued the foundational inclusion model of the school, but that did not work. Jim presented his next plan of attack, but again was met with great resistance. To make matters worse, Jim returned to his office to find that Cody's parents threatened legal action if their son were pulled from the regular class stream. Jim received a call from his superintendent to 'fix things' NOW. What was he to do?

### **Multiparadigm questions to ponder:**

- 1) Considering the support Jim has lost, should he continue the program?
- 2) Is it fair to sacrifice the needs of the individual even when he or she represents a voice not represented by the majority?
- 3) In this case is there an ethical choice that would support both sides?
- 4) There are important laws to protect individuals with disabilities, but there are also laws that require teachers to educate all children. Do you see these laws as conflicting? Who made these laws? Who were they designed to protect?

## *Ethical dilemma #2 Black and White and Shades of Gray*

As the community of the Northern Regional High School District grew, its population based changed from that of predominately White to that of 70% White, 22% African American and 8% Asian. As the Northern staff was all Caucasian, it did not reflect the change in demographics. Parents and students began the call for equal representation of staff and the school Principal Dr. DiCaprio responded by hiring the best African American and Asian teachers he could find. As the next year unfolded, the economic prosperity of the area drastically changed and it wasn't long before teaching cutbacks were required. From the teacher's union standpoint, the aged rule of "last hired, first fired" needed to be followed. Dr. DiCaprio struggled greatly with this notion as he could think of at least a dozen tenured teachers that he would rather let go than his new skilled minority staff. Upon reaching a decision Dr. DiCaprio planned on letting a mediocre White teacher (Mr. Weiss) with two years experience go, in favor of a highly popular African American teacher (Mr. Taylor) with one year experience. His justification was that the Mr. Weiss was teaching an African-American history course that had caused some difficulties both in presentation and knowledge. As Dr. DiCaprio gained confidence in his decision, he was confronted by Mr. Weiss who asked Dr. DiCaprio if he wanted to see something. What he showed him was a sonogram of his expectant twins.

### **Multiparadigm questions to ponder:**

- 1) Is what is fair or caring for Mr. Weiss the same as what is fair or caring for Mr. Taylor?
- 2) What do you assume would be the consequences to Dr. DiCaprio if he broke the "last hired, first fired" rule? Are there times when rules or laws must be broken to achieve a higher moral level?



### *Ethical dilemma #3 Access to Knowledge*

Mackenzie High School was a grade 7-12 comprehensive collegiate boasting a student body of approximately 3000 students. With a student demographic of approximately 55% minority, including groups of African-Americans, Asian-Americans and Hispanic backgrounds, the issue within the school stems from the access to knowledge, and equality of educational opportunity for the minority student population. The crux of the issue is that many of the staff at Mackenzie High supported the research of Jensen (1969) who concluded that there are real genetic differences (both positive and negative) in intellectual ability among members of groups. One staff member who believes in Jensen's findings is Ms. Polkalsky who is the chairperson of the guidance office. She believes that she is 'looking out for the best interests of the students and their families' when placing students in academic tracks based on student assessment, family success, and her view of an 'attainable goal' for any one particular student.

Enter Alberto Soler, a Hispanic student who has dreams of going onto college, but has traditionally struggled with the English language and has always been tracked into the low ability groups. Alberto's parents are upset with Ms. Polkalsky and the school for placing Alberto in the vocational track, as they feel he should have the same opportunity as the rest of the student population. The principal Pat Meyerowitz is assured by Ms. Polkalsky that her recommendation is correct, but Pat also knows that Ms. Polkalsky is "strongly influenced by past practices that have had an unsympathetic outcome on minority students." What is Pat Meyerowitz to do?

#### **Multiparadigm questions to ponder:**

- 1) One could argue that because Alberto had been tracked into low ability groups from early on that he had received an inequitable education from the beginning and, thus, was not given the preparation he needed to compete for a college preparatory program. Do you agree with this statement?
- 2) Is tracking just? Is tracking in the best interests of students in general? Any students? Are there types or methods that are more fair than others?
- 3) What are the benefits of tracking? What are the detriments? Is tracking mostly an economic issue?

### III TEACHING AS SCHOLARLY WORK

**“To educate is to take seriously both the quest for life's meaning and the meaning of individual lives” (Witherell and Noddings, 1991)**



## ***CHAPTER 8 Ethics, Ourselves, and Our Pedagogy***

In the final chapter Shapiro and Stefkovich focus on the teaching of ethics to educators. Using the concepts of Boyer (1990), Shulman (1997) and Hutchings (1998) they provide a framework for teaching as scholarly work. (See chart below) Also included in this section are their own personal experiences in educating educators in the area of ethics. Shapiro and Stefkovich divulge their own codes and explain them in terms of their own life experiences that have shaped their views and ideals. While both similar in terms of degrees and socio-economic backgrounds, Shapiro and Stefkovich are very different in how they came to be who they are today. Please refer to page one “About the Authors”.

### **Components of a valuable ethics course:**

- 1) *Embrace diversity as a strength and challenge.*
- 2) *Guard against stereotypes. Always challenge pre-conceived assumptions and ingrained notions.*
- 3) *Be forever reflective in your pedagogy.*
- 4) *In-depth, thoughtful and provocative discussions will help bring forth the voices of justice, care, critique and profession*



### **Critical Evaluation:**

As Shapiro and Stefkovich have created a multidimensional ethical toolkit for educational decision making, they have done so in a way that melds the vital components of practice, theory and reflection. In supporting the inclusion of the ‘ethic of profession’ within the multidimensional approach, they have solidified the process of analysis by adding another instrument for educators to make use of.

As this book would be well utilized within an ethics course, it falls short for the average grade school teaching professional reading this book unaccompanied, without others to discuss and debate the outcome of each case. As Shapiro and Stefkovich pose many thought provoking case studies and realistic examples of educational dilemmas, they fall short in allowing the reading to see the multidimensional analysis in action by providing realistic and possible solutions for each case.

Shapiro, J.P., & Stefkovich, J.A. (2001). *Ethical leadership and decision making in education*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.