Chapter 22
A Kaleidoscopic Approach to Teaching Ethical Dimensions of Leadership

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ABSTRACT

A kaleidoscopic teaching method using a variety of media challenges the course facilitator to lead, guide, and offer insight so that listeners interpret and become the learners and purveyors of action. The teacher is not the focal point of the course; rather, the learner is directly, immediately, and continually self-challenged to discover a personal path of ethics that allows for good and effective leadership. The idea is not to be extensively detailed in the readings but to allow basic concepts to unfold and discussions to excite the expectations of the audience serving in part as a "chorus." Brief overviews are used to incite active discussion based in part upon questions and examples that arise from the life experiences of the participants. Additionally, the lecturettes offer insights from different cultural and ethical perspectives in an attempt to avoid moral relativism and to help develop critical multiplism of ethical behavior in leadership and followership. Students are also given suggestions for further reading in matters of specific interest. Integrative assignments provide a personal cap to each session. The films are shown in their entirety. Questions on key points of ethical behavior are expressed before the film and discussed in small groups thereafter. In this sense, the work is that of "edutainment" as a part of the educational process. Materials in this chapter are based on teaching this course to Master of Business Administration (MBA) students.

INTRODUCTION

Each wave of corporate greed brings a new call for business schools to enhance teaching, learning, and preparing students for dealing with ethical issues. Critics of business schools suggest a greater emphasis on individual ethics and corporate responsibility. While business schools have traditionally excelled at teaching the functional dimensions of business and the need to maximize stakeholders' outcomes, the need to comprehend the ethical dimensions of leadership and follower-

ship has not been extensively emphasized. Some companies and professors believe that practicing ethical leadership promotes business sustainability and social well being along with profit. Properly led business can and should be both profitable and ethical.

In this chapter, a unique approach to teaching the view of ethics and leadership being both good and effective is described as it is offered in a course entitled the Ethical Dimensions of Leadership. The class begins with an overview of the context and general content of the course. Then a more detailed examination evokes key questions that students seek to explore for answers or practical, ethical approaches to everyday work experiences.

STUDENTS' BACKGROUND

Students in this course are participants in a professional, practice-oriented Master of Business Administration (MBA) program. On average, they are 35 years of age and approximately evenly distributed by gender. Class is taught on campus, and enrollment is capped at 25. The majority of students begins their studies with substantial work experience and continues working full time while attending classes nights and weekends. Students' exhibit varied backgrounds in terms of academic preparation, levels attained within their organizations, cultures, and nationalities. Approximately one-fourth of the graduate enrollment is composed of international students, with as many as 50 countries represented at any time. Although the University is a Catholic institution, the Judeo-Christian perspective is not dominant among the graduate MBA population. This diversity of students creates a rich learning environment and interesting dialogues, experience sharing, and storytelling throughout the course.

THE COURSE

Ethical Dimensions of Leadership is an advanced level elective. Students involved in the course have met prerequisites in the foundations of management course and have completed a required core course on Value Based Leadership. Three assumptions underline the construct of the course.

1. Ethics is about good and evil, right and wrong, justice and injustice, in individuals and in our relationship with people and all sentient beings.
2. Leadership is a subset of Ethics rather than Ethics being a subset of Leadership.
3. "By their acts you shall know them." Consideration is given to a variety of media, including assigned readings, cases, videos, and personal vignettes to integrate the learning of ethical leadership.

The purpose of this course is to understand the moral responsibilities of leadership and followership in a variety of views. The course has the following objectives:

- To analyze the moral obligations of leadership and followership in context.
- To learn how leaders and followers shape the moral environment.
- To broaden students' moral perspective and develop moral imagination.
- To develop students' ability to present and critique moral arguments.
- To practice ethical problem solving.
- To reflect on the moral perils of power on leadership and followership.

The course is taught as an interactive seminar in which the professor actively participates in the course discussion, but is not the locus of facilitation. Rather, the students share the responsibility

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