

Growing up morally: An experiential classroom unit on moral development

Jerry J. Gosenpud
Jon M. Werner

Abstract

One reason why many of today's business leaders are frequently viewed as unethical, corrupt, and corruptible is that values transmitted (implicitly) by university business education courses influence students to ignore ethics. This paper argues that to help future business leaders become more ethical, business school implicit values should reflect a more ethical direction. The present paper describes an experiential pedagogy designed to help students develop morally. It does so by asking students to: 1) participate in exercises sensitizing them to ethical issues, 2) reflect on their own ethical values and decisions they've made in the past that either mirror or contradict those values, 3) read about and understand moral development models, and 4) self-assess in terms of stages of their own moral development, as portrayed in the models.

Qualitative and quantitative results are summarized for five separate uses of the complete pedagogy in undergraduate Social Responsibility courses at a large Midwestern university in the United States, as well as for portions of the pedagogy used in nine other classes over a 14-year period.

Keywords: moral development, teaching ethics, experiential pedagogy, values exploration

Introduction

This paper focuses on ethical values and moral development, particularly for business students. Personal values and value development have been the topic of academic study for decades (Erikson, 1963; Hanson & Moore, 2013; Meglino & Ravlin, 1998; Ritter, 2011; Schmidt & Posner, 1982; Suar & Khuntia, 2010). Tyler and Tyler (2006) define moral development as progress towards behavior that includes ethical sensitivity in decision making, the cognitive ability to integrate information to a world view that includes prioritizing ethical values, and the ability to solve problems while incorporating an ethical perspective. For Narvaez and Rest (1995), moral behavior includes: 1) moral sensitivity, which involves the receptivity of the sensory/perceptual system to social situations and the interpretation of situations in terms of what actions are possible and the consequences of such actions, all with a moral perspective, 2) moral judgment, which involves deciding which of the possible actions are moral, 3) moral motivation, which implies that the person gives priority to moral values above all other values, and 4) implementation, which combines ego strength with the social and psychological skills necessary to carry out moral actions. It should be pointed out that, given Narvaez and Rest's classification and a typical college lecture-discussion class, it is feasible to help students improve their sensitivity to moral stimuli and improve their moral judgment, but less feasible to change their moral motivation or help them implement moral decisions.

The construct moral development presumes a hierarchy, in that some moral behaviors and decisions are more developed and mature than others. Two widely known and well-established (Dean & Beggs, 2006; Martynov, 2009) conceptualizations of moral development, one by Kohlberg (1981) and the other by the Rest group (Rest et al., 1999; Narvaez & Bock, 2002), are similar in that both feature progressive stages. In both, behaviors classified as belonging to the earlier, less developed stages are less sensitive and relatively self-centered, while behavior in the advanced stages, called post-con-

ventional in both theories, is less selfish, more other-centered, and more likely to be guided by ethical values. There are differences between these models, but both as well as many of the scholars who write about moral development accept the notions that moral ideas and behavior vary among individuals, that some stages are more advanced than others, that most people advance with time and experience, and that cognitive complexity, other-centeredness, and ethical principles characterize this advancement (Curzer, Sattler, DuPree, & Smith-Genthôs, 2014).

This paper presumes that if there are stages and that some are more advanced than others, then it may be possible to help people progress from the less advanced to those more advanced. As Weber (2007) suggests, values and ethical sophistication can advance over time, with maturity, experience and education, and ethics training can play an important role in that moral advancement process. This training, according to Weber (2007), will help the individual take more 'other-oriented' factors into consideration in determining what is right. Some of this training can begin while these managers are still in college, and Taft & White (2007) and Treviño & Brown (2004) argue that business education can lay the groundwork for students to become ethical agents over the course of their careers. If these students indeed become ethical agents, then ideally they would become catalysts to more ethically grounded corporate activity (Cornelius, Wallace, & Tassabehji, 2007).

The following paragraphs describe five parts of a moral development unit, how they have been taught, and why. Both qualitative and quantitative results are then presented. We conclude with a discussion of important points we have learned, and how we intend to improve the whole unit, given our experience teaching it to date. Next, relevant literature on business ethics education is discussed.

Literature on Business Ethics Education

The numerous well-known scandals among American businesses have pro-

voiced criticism of university schools of business, including American business schools (Beggs & Dean, 2007; De Cremer, van Dick, Tenbrunsel, Pillutla, & Murnighan, 2011; Treviño & Nelson, 2011). These critiques argue that one of the reasons for the scandals is that business education has failed to train future business leaders to attend to responsibilities beyond profit maximization (Freeman, Stewart, & Moriarty, 2009; Giacalone, 2004; Ghoshal, 2003, 2005; Pfeffer, 2005; Wang, Malhotra, & Murnighan, 2011). Ghoshal (2005) points out that business schools have freed their students from any sense of moral responsibility by propagating an amoral philosophy, which characterizes man as utility-maximizing and opportunistic, and prioritizes profits, while minimizing the importance of morality.

If businesses are going to become more ethically responsible, they must be managed by persons who understand that profit aspirations must be integrated with generativity, i.e., a concern for others and giving back to the world around one (Erickson, 1963). Further, Giacalone (2004) points out that wealth creation and transcendent concerns are not inherently incompatible. Many argue that business schools have a responsibility to provide future practitioners with training with an increased emphasis in ethics, leading to a more informed and sensitive workplace, so such practitioners can more easily make principled decisions and hopefully prevent corporate scandals (Cornelius, Wallace, & Tassabehji, 2007; Giacalone, 2004; James & Smith, 2007; Pfeffer & Fong, 2004; Ricci & Markulis, 1992; Taft & White, 2007).

College students are amenable to developing morally and college courses can help them do that (Curzer et al., 2014). These premises are augmented by studies by Acevedo (2001), Glenn (1992), and Stead and Miller (1988), showing that ethical attitudes change with academic exposure or training, beyond that which takes place from age alone, and also by studies which show that taking courses in ethics enhances moral development (Gautschi & Jones, 1998; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Rest, 1999; Rodriguez & Sans, 2011). However, there is also research showing no correlation between number of ethics courses completed and a measure of moral reasoning, e.g., Traiser and Eighmy (2011).

Pedagogical Concerns

If it is accepted that business schools should teach in a way that seeks to enhance student moral development, then the question becomes how to do this? The literature points to a number of potential pedagogies. Pfeffer and Fong (2004) advocate a framework akin to traditional professional education, with clear statements of professional values, responsibilities, and sanctions for violations, which exist for other professions. Ritter (2011) is also concerned with professional development, and stresses student self-awareness, coaching, and student identification with professional roles and values. James and Smith (2007), Miller (2009), and Tomlinson (2009) are among those who advocate and use cases; James and Smith (2007) accompany their cases with six ethical decision making strategies, such as the categorical imperative and legalism, so that students will have a better understanding of their own and others' decision making strategies. Meisel and Fearon (2006) support the inclusion of critical thinking in helping students develop morally. For them, critical thinking is a valuable tool to help decision makers sift through competing ideas and conflicting personal and organizational agendas.

Many authors argue for active values exploration on the part

of students, with a direct connection between the ethical material and the student's self (Dean & Beggs, 2006; Dewey, 1938; Kolb, 1984; Marturano, 2005; Taft & White, 2007). Taft and White (2007) contend that because efforts to teach ethics must rely to a considerable extent on the values and principles that students bring to their education, and because moral development parallels the development of self, faculty need to incorporate those personal values into students' learning paradigms. Values exploration includes having students examine their own values, identify and question their own ethical base (Taft & White, 2007), and work through ethical conflicts, which helps the decision maker gain conscious awareness of the impact of her decisions and improves her ability to solve future ethics related problems (Glass & Bonnici, 1997).

There is some evidence to support the idea that values exploration impacts moral development. Grob (1995) analyzed factors that affected environmentally supportive behavior and found that personal-philosophical values were the strongest contributor. Ferris (1996) found that students taking a course in moral philosophy, which included developing their own ethics codes, reported improved ethical behavior and refined ethical systems nine months after course completion, and Weber and Gillespie (1998) found that ethical intent affected real behavioral choice, while suggesting that the intent could be influenced by ethical education.

Values exploration is a form of experiential learning, in that it comes from the learner's real experience. Many if not most of those who write about educating learners to develop morally advocate experiential pedagogies and criticize the use of teaching methodologies that are not experiential. For example, Dean and Beggs (2006) argue that concept exploration which includes attending to, and being made aware that a concept exists, is, given Krathwohl, Bloom, and Masia's (1984) taxonomy, the lowest level of learning, a level which is passive, does not facilitate behavior change, and is almost always temporary (Dean & Beggs, 2006), because there is no connection between the material and the self (Dewey, 1938; Kolb, 1984). These scholars have argued for active and experiential paradigms, where the participant's role is to be responsible for his own learning and to be an active and constructive contributor to the moral enhancement process (Weber, 2007).

It is likely that values exploration alone will not result in the kind of comprehensive self-understanding that will affect future behavior and decisions. Learners should also understand the etiology of their values, the role that both their values and the situation play in ethical decision making, and theoretical contexts covering the way people think about ethics-related behavior. The etiology of values includes parental teaching, the influence of religion, reflection on emotionally significant stories (Miller, 2009), and cultural norms (Jackson, 2006; Stablein, 2003; Weber & Wasieleski, 2001). The context or the decision situation influences ethics-related behavior, which suggests that many ethics-related decisions are likely to be, and according to Jackson (2006) and Stablein (2003) should be, situation specific. According to Dean and Beggs (2006), this also means that predicting ethical compliance or violation in any given case may be difficult because reasoning for decisions will be influenced by how the decision maker frames the situation. In recent years, there has been an increase in scholarly attention to the role of context in ethics-related decision making in response to the realization that often, unethical decisions are made by otherwise good people (Alavi & Rahinpoor, 2010; Tichy et al, 2010; Tomlinson, 2009).

If the goal is to help students better understand their own

values and how their values compare with the values of others, then placing these values in the context of accepted moral development theory should also be desirable (Dean & Beggs, 2006; James & Smith, 2007; Taft & White 2007). Taft and White (2007) want students to begin values exploration, and then link those values with philosophical ethical frameworks to provide a coherent and moral ideal as a foundation for action.

Method

The Pedagogy for the Present Moral Development Unit

Our moral development unit is experiential, helps the learner to explore his or her own values, focuses on the role that the situation plays in one's ethical decision making, and applies an ethical theory. This unit is in five parts. Some parts of it have been offered in twelve sections of four separate courses at a large Midwestern university in the United States since 1998. The entire unit with the explicit purpose of developing students morally has been offered five times, i.e., in the falls of 2007 and 2012 (twice), and the springs of 2009 and 2011. This unit in its entirety is designed to be taught in a Business Social Responsibility course. At our university, this course is offered as part of the requirement package for undergraduate General Management majors. This undergraduate course is also an elective for any business major or minor. It is three units/credits, and is usually offered for 75 minutes twice a week.

Part 1: Leadership, Corporate Culture, and Ethics. In part 1, the unit is introduced by assigning an Enron case (Sims & Brinkman, 2003), which focuses on the role of corporate culture as responsible for Enron's collapse. This is followed by an approximately 45-minute discussion on the causes for the wrong doing in the case.

Part 2: Establishing the role of ethics in the students' lives. The next part focuses on the students' present lives and values. This is an instructor-led, full-class exercise, in which students respond by sharing opinions and answers to questions. Students are asked to reveal their definition of ethics, identify important ethics-impacted issues in their present lives, and discuss how ethics affects both their lives and the experiences important to them. This part of the unit is designed to stress the importance of ethics to the students in their present lives, and implicitly asks students take into account the moral perspective on situations they encounter. Its content is guided by the students' values, experiences, and interests. It is free flowing, and allowed to continue for up to 150 minutes.

Part 3: Work-related values exploration. Part 3 consists of exercises in which students either assess the ethics of a protagonist, or indicate what they believe they would or should do given a particular situation, for example, whether as a salesperson they would hide a non-quality-threatening flaw in a product to a potential customer. This type of exercise is intended to further legitimize ethics as important to attend to, especially in areas of life associated with work. It also introduces the idea that those who manage organizations are responsible for more than just financial results, and that their responsibilities can include fairness, integrity, and protecting stakeholders from harm.

Part 4: Values-ethical dilemma assignment. The assignment for part 4 is written and asks the student to express their deeply held values, describe an ethical dilemma they have faced (preferably either at work or school), how it was resolved, and discuss clearly whether the deeply held values were affirmed or violated with dilemma resolution. Its purpose is to reinforce the ideas that ethics permeates many important dilemmas we face, and that our values influence many of our decisions. The goal

here is for students to be aware of how their values play out (or are ignored) in their experiences, with the hope that by working through ethical conflicts and dilemmas, they will improve their abilities to solve ethics-related problems (Glass & Bonnici, 1997). It is also hoped that, for the long term, doing this assignment will help students to seriously consider the ethical aspects of their future decisions and guide their managerial decision making towards a socially responsible direction.

Together with the assignment in part 5, this exercise was completed by students outside of class, and was graded. It has been assigned in thirteen classes, three OB classes, one taught by one of the authors and two taught by a departmental colleague, and ten SR classes, seven taught by one of the authors (three in MBA classes), and one taught by a different departmental colleague. In eight of the nine author-taught SR classes, part of the assignment (see part 5, below) was to apply moral development theory to the resolution of the dilemma. The grade on the assignment was worth five percent of the class grade in the OB classes, seven percent in the two of the author-taught SR classes, fifteen percent in the other seven, and extra credit in the colleague-taught SR class. With a few exceptions (described below), the grade was not based on the content of responses, but on the ability to: 1) clearly articulate core personal values, 2) thoroughly and clearly explain the ethical dilemma the student faced and how it was resolved, 3) discuss clearly how personal values affected dilemma resolution and when assigned, 4) accurately apply the moral development theory (for a fuller explanation, see part 5, below). The assignment was graded to encourage students to take personal values exploration seriously, and the assignment was to be written partially because it is easier to grade papers than presentations, and because the main purpose for the exercise was for students to explore their values, rather than share them.

This exercise deals with values and ethics-related situations, and descriptions of exercises similar to the present one appear in the literature. Cavanagh (2008) and Gentile (2010) report exercises in which values are explored, though in both exercises, students picked values important to them from a list. In the present exercise, students are asked to express their most deeply held values; without a list to guide them. Also, exercises designed by Baker and Comer (2012) and Gentile (2010) ask students to respond to ethics related situations. Gentile (2010) has students describe only situations where the student knows what is right and wants to do the right thing but pressures exist to do otherwise. Our exercise does not limit the ethical situation to a certain type. Baker and Comer (2012) ask students to report situations they have observed, and also to report on whether situation resolution reflected 'best practice' or 'raises concerns.' In the present exercise, students are asked to describe situations where they were the decider, and whether their values were affirmed or violated. So while Baker and Comer (2012) wanted to help students learn how to assess and understand ethical dilemma outcomes, the goal of the present exercise was for students to learn about the role of values in resolving the ethics related dilemmas they have faced.

Part 5: Applying moral development theory. In this final part, students are exposed to frameworks of moral thinking, and asked to apply these frameworks to the values and decisions they've made in the face of ethical dilemmas. This theory application was the second part of the written values dilemma assignment, and was done after the initial part of the written assignment was finished and returned. The idea was for students to perform the first part of the assignment without theory, obtain feedback that they did it correctly, and then apply the

theory.

Applying theory to academic exercises is not unusual. An obvious example of applying theory to practice situations is in chemistry laboratories. Many ethics scholars, including Baker and Comer (2012), Curzer et al. (2014), Matherne et al. (2006) and Taft and White (2007) advocate combining theory and values articulation, and while in Baker and Comer's published exercise (2012), students discussed theory during exercise debriefing, nothing was found in the literature indicating a graded assignment for students to apply theory to the ethical dilemmas that they have personally experienced.

There are at least five purposes to this part of the unit. The most important reason is to help students organize their thinking about values and ethics. The second is to expose them to prominent ways to think about ethical issues. The third is to expose them to the idea of moral development, i.e., that there is a progression of responses to ethical issues, that some ethical responses are more mature and 'better' for the people affected than others. The fourth purpose is academic, i.e., for students to be exposed to scholarly ways of thinking, and to know about and be able to apply ethical and moral development theory. In addition, having students apply academic material makes grading more credible.

Students are exposed to, and asked to apply, two major theoretical approaches to moral development theory, Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development (Kohlberg, 1984) and The University of Minnesota group's approach to post conventional moral thinking (Narvaez & Bock, 2002; Rest et al., 1999; Rest, Narvaez, Thoma, & Bebeau, 2000), often referred to as the Defining Issues Test or DIT.

Parts 4 and 5 of the unit were introduced in author-taught Social Responsibility classes with a lecture focusing on how the instructor handled important ethical dilemmas in the instructor's life, as examples demonstrating how the students should do the written, graded assignment. In this lecture, the instructor disclosed personal values and whether he followed or violated them in deciding what to do when faced with a dilemma decision with moral implications. For example in college, an attractive woman suggested they copy off of each other while taking exams. To gain a potentially closer relationship, the instructor agreed while violating his overt value of not cheating. In a second example, the instructor discussed whether to hit his adopted child who was hitting him. In this case, the instructor violated his values of non-violence once, but after that never hit.

Each class was assigned to read moral development theories before this lecture, so the instructor could classify decisions made according to moral development theories of Kohlberg's (Kohlberg, 1984) and the DIT (Narvaez & Bock, 2002; Rest et al., 1999; Rest, Narvaez, Thoma, & Bebeau, 2000) while lecturing, again as a way to show students how to do the assignment. The instructor stated the personal belief that cheating was a result of self-interest, a pre-conventional response according to both Kohlberg and the DIT, and the not hitting was in his self-interest (not liking to hit), consistent with his reference group (most of the parents he knew did not hit their kids) and principled. According to these interpretations, the not hitting would be stages 2 (self-interest), 3 (approval seeking) and 6 (Kantian/principled- Beck, 1902) given Kohlberg's model and categories 1 (personal), 2 (normative) and 3 (principled, i.e., post-conventional) of the DIT. Introducing the exercise in this way makes it personal and honest, as it was hoped students would approach the assignment. The examples also tried to capture the complexity of factors inherent in an ethical dilemma and legitimized

pre-conventional reasons for decisions. Of four dilemmas described during this lecture by this instructor, the reasoning for only one of his decisions was post-conventional.

Research Method

A mixed methods design was used in this study, justifiable in situations difficult to design for experimental purposes (Onwuegbuzie & Corrigan, 2014; Yin, 2009). In parts 1 and 3 of the exercise, information was collected from instructor notes. In part 2, information about student values and ethically connected situations was collected both from instructor notes and tallies on the whiteboard created during this unit. For parts 4 and 5, student responses to a written assignment were categorized and tallied by the first author after each semester. Categories and numerical counts are presented below in tabular form. No statistical analyses were conducted in this study.

Results

Part 1: Leadership, Corporate Culture, and Ethics. During the discussion of Enron, it was obvious to most students that most Enron managers knew that what they were doing was wrong, and that they participated in and created an unethical culture anyway, because of the rewards and the pressure to conform. No formal measurement was conducted on this first part of the ethics module, as this was primarily completed as an introduction to the subsequent ethics modules.

Part 2: Establishing the role of ethics in the students' lives. The discussion of ethics in students' own lives is almost always exciting. One of the authors has done this with freshmen three times and upper classmen in the Social Responsibility (SR) class six times, and only once has even a part of this unit not been very exciting. To our knowledge, this kind exercise/discussion has not previously been described in the literature.

When asked what ethics mean to students, large numbers have mentioned topics such as honesty, the golden rule, belief in G-d, valuing loving and loyal relationships, trustworthiness, and being true to one's self. When asked which kinds of situations they find themselves in with ethical implications, drugs and alcohol, and cheating in school almost always top the list, and romantic relationships are often mentioned. Binge drinking and getting drunk are seen as unethical because these are mind wasting, facilitate loss of control, and put pressure on others to be helpful when they may not want to be. Drinking and driving is almost but not quite universally frowned on. Cheating in school is usually seen as taking unfair advantage, and even letting others copy is perceived as unfair and wrong. Sometimes, though, students blame professors who test for trivia as partly responsible for the cheating. Most agree that cheating on a romantic partner is dishonest, but students almost always argue about whether flirting or spending time with members of the opposite sex (presuming that the romantic relationship is heterosexual) is unethical. Almost always, these sorts of arguments result in discussions about the value of communicating between romantic partners.

In recent years, romantic relationships have become less salient in these discussions, while the ethics of job seeking and web-based social networking more so. Social networking raises privacy issues, and in 2011 and 2012 many students said they hid their identities while using social networking websites. In job seeking, outright lying to enhance oneself is wrong according to most students, mostly because the chances are high that such lies will eventually be uncovered. On the other hand, most

students said that stretching the truth to convey a positive impression was acceptable.

Part 3: Work-related values exploration. Detailed notes were not collected during this part of the exercise. However, both authors of this paper recollect an attentive and serious attitude from most students in most classes to this part of the exercise.

Part 4: Values-ethical dilemma assignment. For the values-ethical dilemma assignment, the content of 194 student papers from eight classes has been categorized in Table 1. This table contains results listing values mentioned by ten or more students. Of the 194 papers, 42 were from graduate students. From all 194 papers, 169 students made value statements, and 137 of the statements reflected personal, moral values. The statements that did not reflect moral values included statements such as make money, do your best, flexibility, don't get caught, consider the consequences, happiness, and determine right and wrong, and one student said he hadn't developed his moral values yet. Most students listed more than one moral value. Honesty was the most frequently expressed moral value (n=89, but for six, honesty was limited to friends and family, for three it was being honest to oneself, for two it was being honest to one's boss, and for one, it was okay to embellish. Devotion to friends or family (n=42), hard work (n=34), respect (n=30), religious devotion (n=28), the golden rule (n=27), do not steal (n=21), be helpful, be trustworthy, and refrain from breaking the law were also frequently mentioned. It was difficult to tell if some of the statements reflected ethical values. For example, it was difficult to determine if one saying he valued hard work or respecting a person was a moral value or just a value.

All students were able to describe an ethical situation that they had faced, but some of the situations were not really dilemmas, in that they presented an easy choice for the student. For example, a boss suspected a coworker of the report writer to be stealing. The reporter hadn't seen anything and said so. Table 2 shows types of ethical dilemmas expressed, for example temptation to do something wrong or exposure to boss's unethical behavior. As indicated in Table 2, three types of dilemmas were

Value Category	Undergraduate (N=42)	Graduate (N=152)	Total (N=194)
Honesty	74	15	89
Hard working	29	5	34
Respect	25	5	30
Family	23	6	29
Religion/religious	21	7	28
Golden rule	22	5	27
Don't steal	17	5	22
Follow the law	13	6	19
Do the right thing	13	5	18
Don't cheat	11	5	16
Fairness	12	3	15
Loyalty	10	5	15
Trust/trustworthy	7	8	15
Friendship	12	1	13
Don't harm	7	5	12
Help/serve/compassion	7	5	12
Integrity	10	2	12
Responsible	11	0	11

Table 1: Categories and Frequencies of Expressed Student Values

DILEMMA TYPE AND FREQUENCY REPORTING	POSSIBLE RESPONSES AND FREQUENCY
Exposure to co-worker unethical behavior (n=35)	Ignore (n=6) Confront (n=6) Reported (n=21) Quit job (n=2)
Peer pressure to do something unethical – including breaking organizational rules (n=27)	Succumb (n=16) Resist (n=11) Quit (n=1)
Temptation to do something unethical – including breaking organizational rules (n=26)	Succumb (n = 13) Resist (n=12) Quit Job (n=1)
Temptation to lie (n=12)	Succumb (n=5) Resist (n=7)
Group supported temptation to do something unethical -- including breaking organizational rules (n=9)	Succumb (n=7) Resist (n=1) Left field (n=1)
Exposure to boss unethical behavior (n=5)	Ignore (n=1) Report (n=3) Quit (n=1)
Pressure from boss to do something unethical (n=6)	Succumb (n=0) Reported (n=1) Quit (n=5)

Table 2: Breakdown of Student Responses to Ethical Dilemmas by Dilemma Type

reported more frequently than others: being exposed to unethical co-worker behavior accompanied by pressure to keep quiet about it, co-worker pressure to do something unethical, and the temptation to do something unethical. Of note in Table 2 is while in most situations involving temptation, those that succumb and those that resist are nearly equal, when the temptation is to lie, most tell the truth, and when the situation involves being tempted along with friends, most succumb. This last result is of particular interest.

In Enron (e.g., Sims & Brinkman, 2003), part of the reason for the high level of corruption was a culture of conformity, and many argue that the unethical culture of an organization can influence many individuals to inhibit the expression ethical concerns (Baker & Comer, 2011; Fraedrich, 1992; Kaptein, 2011; Madu, 2012; Paine, 1994). It could be argued that the culture at Enron was unethical, breeding unethical individual behavior, regardless of individually held norms. With the present sample, there is a hint of the same thing happening. In tempting situations faced as an individual, about half succumbed, yet when tempted in a group, almost all succumbed.

In addition, from table 2, five students reported observing unethical behavior on the part of their immediate boss, and four of the five did something about it, three reporting the behavior to higher authorities. Six students faced pressure from their employer to behave unethically, a phenomenon employees often experience (Thompson, Strickland, & Gamble, 2007). No one reported that they succumbed. Finally, some students were explicitly remorseful when violating their values in the face of their ethical dilemmas. For example, one of those who aborted was talked into it by her partner and regretted it later. One student stole to be able to spend money on a woman, was rewarded with her attention (she did not know he stole, though), but felt very guilty anyway. A third student gossiped untruthfully to show a friend how 'worldly' she was, and was caught in the lie and was embarrassed. All claimed to have "learned a lesson" about the consequences of violating moral values.

Part 5: Applying moral development theory. For Part 5, applying moral development theory, one of the authors has done this module eight times, although the first time with poor re-

sults. More than half of the students in that class did not apply the theoretical approaches, or did a very poor job of doing so, and received a lower grade as a result. Since then, about 75 percent have applied the theories competently. We've tabulated the categories used in 94 of the student attempts to apply the theoretical approaches. In both of the approaches, there are three major stages, the last being post-conventional, which depicts mature, self-sacrificing, and often transcendent responses. Of the 94 attempts, 25 categorized their decisions as post-conventional.

Discussion

As a whole, the complete pedagogical unit sought to accomplish the major goals of sensitizing students to the facts that ethical dilemmas inevitably arise in their lives, that ethical issues have important consequences, that some choices are more developed or mature than others, and that values can play a role in guiding choices. Judging from the excitement level in the classroom and the apparent seriousness and transparency of responses, this pedagogical unit did well in helping students learn about themselves and about phenomena important in their lives. In three informal feedback sessions, there were no complaints about content. It should be noted that this unit covers a lot of ground and covers multiple activities and content. The author teaching this entire unit devotes more than three weeks of a 15-week term to moral development, and one could argue that devoting even more time would be appropriate.

Some observations may be useful for those interested in replicating this unit in other contexts. First, most students do not appear to be afraid to disclose information, and most know their limits. Students (at least in the U.S.) are willing to discuss most topics, including sex and drugs. They will generally do so in abstract terms, and if they get too personal, the instructor can let the nervousness of others help to decide when to limit. Second, it is important to emphasize that the units are contradictory in tone. Parts 2 and 3 are spontaneous and fun, while part 5, in particular, is serious and rigorous. Students need to be warned early in the unit that academic standards apply to the work done for units 4 and 5, and that the *laissez faire* attitude in parts 2 and 3 no longer apply. In the first attempt at this unit, there was no communication concerning the importance of standards in parts 4 and 5, and no instruction in theory application. The result was papers generally lacking in quality. In later trials, standards were communicated and instructed fairly thoroughly, with examples, as how to do the assignments competently, with much better results.

The papers showing that students are likely to succumb to temptation if they are part of a group are instructive. As has been well-demonstrated before, individuals will violate their own ethical values and will follow group- and organizational culturally-supported norms that lead to unethical behavior, a result that has been demonstrated experimentally (Asch, 1955; Milgrim, 1974). In other words, most individuals will conform to group norms instead of their own values when they are in group and organizational settings important to them. As a result, a class session on conformity has been added to more recent iterations, though with disappointing results. The conformity session consisted of a discussion of the implications of the Asch experiments (Asch, 1955). However, a final exam question revealed that a low percentage of students connected the Asch results with behavior in an unethical corporate culture. In the future, an essay will be included by James (1984) advocating whistle blowing when an organization behaves un-

ethically, while at the same time suggesting ways for the whistle blower to protect himself. In an ensuing class discussion, we would apply the article to Enron and some of the dilemmas reported by students, where the corporate culture encouraged unethical behavior.

Improvement in the unit is sought in one more way. To this point, results have been poor when designing a review session of the dilemmas that students have faced after the assignments have been turned in. Students seem reluctant to share their issues in a classroom setting. Such discussions can be valuable, as students should be exposed to the kinds of issues others have faced. Therefore we will continue to hold these discussions. To prevent suppression of disclosure, topics will be presented by the instructor anonymously as to author (with the author's permission). After these presentation, students will be asked to discuss potential strategies for solving presented dilemmas.

Conclusion

Along with the works of others (Baker & Comer, 2011, Curzer et al., 2014; Gentile, 2010, Hanson & Moore, 2013; Micheletto, 2011; Ritter, 2006, Taft & White, 2007), this study is part of growing scholarship concerned with helping university students develop morally by giving them reflective and conceptual skills to heighten their sensitivity to the ethical issues inherent in many decisions. The present approach is intended to strengthen student awareness of their own moral values, and ask them to both reflect on important ethical dilemmas they have faced in the past and the role that their values played in the resolutions of those dilemmas. Students are asked to reflect on whether their values guided dilemma resolution or resolution violated stated values. They are asked to apply moral development theory to reinforce the idea that some decisions are morally more advanced than others. The seriousness of the exercise is emphasized by devoting considerable class time to the unit and grading an assignment.

Most students understood the assignments and took them seriously. They reported real dilemmas in that there were costs associated with all available paths to resolution. Most understood the moral development theory used in the exercise, and most were open and self-aware enough to realize that their reasons for their decisions were at least in part pre-conventional (avoiding punishment or self-interest). A high number reported resolutions that violated held values and at least some pronounced intentions to not repeat the violation.

As instructors, we have sought to facilitate student value/dilemma exploration by our own behavior in class. Not only have we encouraged values discussions among students, we've been open and honest about our own values and about the ways we've handled our own moral dilemmas, acknowledging the complexity of factors that contribute to the resolutions of moral predicaments. We have attempted to establish an explicit non-judgmental atmosphere during these morals discussion, but by facilitating student opinions on issues important to them, a culture emerges among students that seems to value self-interest but not at the expense of harming others. In that sense the unit advocates, perhaps slightly and implicitly, moral maturity.

Follow up on the long-term effectiveness of this exercise is planned. Students permission to do so has been obtained – though it seems practically impossible to objectively judge the long-term effectiveness of this kind of exercise. Yet, the worth of the exercise seems defensible. Such exercises might facilitate the moral development of future decision makers. Other scholars are performing similar exercises for similar reasons. Ac-

creditation organizations are calling for increased attention to moral issues (AACSB, 2004). Prominent educational theorists stress the superiority of experiential learning (Baker & Comer, 2012; Kolb, 1984; Kolb & Kolb, 2005). Perhaps most importantly, most students seemed genuinely engaged, and since they

are in the process of growing up, why wouldn't they? It is our hope that other college instructors and programs will engage in experientially-oriented ethics education, and can learn from both our successes and failures in developing their moral development modules.

References

- AACSB (2004), *Ethics Education in Business Schools: Report of the Ethics Education Task Force to AACSB International's Board of Directors*. AACSB, Tampa, FL.
- Acedo, A (2001), "Of fallacies and curricula: A case of business ethics," *Teaching Business Ethics*, Vol. 5, pp.157-170.
- Alavi, H.R. and Rahinpoor, T. (2010), "Correlation of managers' value systems and students' moral development," *Educational Management Administration and Leadership*, Vol. 38 No. 4, pp. 423-442.
- Asch, S.E. (1955), "Opinions and social pressure," *Scientific American*, Vol. 193, pp. 31-35.
- Beck, L.W. (1902), *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Königliche Preussische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin.
- Beggs, J.M. and Dean, K.L. (2007), "Legislated ethics or ethics education?: Faculty views in the post-Enron era," *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 71, pp. 15-37.
- Cano, C.R. and Sams, D. (2011), "Advancing cognitive moral development: A field observation of college students." *Journal of Academic and Business Ethics*, Vol. 3 No. 1, pp. 1-16.
- Cherrington, J.O. and Cherrington, D.J. (1992), "A menu of moral issues: One week in the life of *The Wall Street Journal*," *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 11, pp. 255-265.
- Cornelius, N., Wallace, J. and Tassabehji, R. (2007), "An analysis of corporate social responsibility, corporate identity and ethics teaching in business schools." *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 76 No. 1, pp. 117-135.
- Curzer, H.J., Sattler, S., DuPree, D.G. and Smith-Genthôs, K.R. (2014). "Do ethics classes teach ethics?" *Theory and Research in Education*, Vol. 12, pp. 366-382.
- Dean, K.L. and Beggs, J.M. (2006), "University professors and teaching ethics: Conceptualizations and expectations," *Journal of Management Education*, Vol. 30, pp. 15-44.
- De Cremer, D., van Dick, R., Tenbrunsel, A., Pillutla, M. and Murnighan, J.K. (2011), "Understanding ethical behavior and decision making in management: A behavioural business ethics approach," *British Journal of Management*, Vol. 22, pp. S1-S4.
- Dewey, J. (1938), *Experience and education*. Macmillan, New York.
- Epstein, S. (1994), "Integration of the cognitive and the psycho-dynamic unconscious," *American Psychologist*, Vol. 49, pp. 709-724.
- Erikson, E.H. (1963), *Childhood and society*, 2nd edn. W.W. Norton, New York.
- Ferris, W.P. (1996), "The effectiveness of teaching business ethics using moral philosophy and personal ethical codes," *Journal of Management Education*, Vol. 20, pp. 341-357.
- Fraedrich, J.P. (1002), "Signs and signals of unethical behavior," *Business Forum*, Vol. 17 No. 2, pp. 13-17.
- Freeman, R.E., Stewart, L. and Moriarty, B. (2009), "Teaching business ethics in the age of Madoff," *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, Vol. 41 No. 6, pp. 37-42.
- Gautschi III, F.H. and Jones, T.M. (1998), "Enhancing the ability of business students to recognize ethical issues: An empirical assessment of a course in Business Ethics," *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 17, pp. 205-216.
- Giacalone, R.A. (2004), "A transcendent business education for the 21st Century," *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, Vol. 3, pp. 415-420.
- Glass, R.S. and Bonnici, J. (1997), "An experiential approach to teaching business ethics," *Teaching Business Ethics*, Vol. 1 No. 2, pp. 183-195.
- Glenn, Jr., J.R. (1992), "Can a Business and Society course affect the ethical judgment of future managers?" *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 11, pp. 217-222.
- Goshal, S. (2003), "Business schools share blame for Enron," *Financial Times*, 17 July, p. 21.
- Goshal, S. (2005), "Bad management theories are destroying good management practices," *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, Vol. 4, pp. 75-91.
- Grob, A. (1995), "A structural model of environmental attitudes and behavior," *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, Vol. 15, pp. 209-220.
- Hanson, W.R. and Moore, J.R. (2013), "Ethical decision-making by business students: Factors of influence," *Electronic Journal of Business Ethics and Organization Studies*, Vol. 18 No. 1, pp. 15-26.
- Jackson, K.T. (2006), "Breaking down the barriers: Bringing initiatives and reality into teaching business ethics," *Journal of Management Education*, Vol. 30, pp. 65-89.
- James, C.R. and Smith, J.G. (2007), "George Williams in Thailand: An ethical decision-making exercise," *Journal of Management Education*, Vol. 31, pp. 696-712.
- James, G.G. (1984), "In defense of whistle blowing." *Business Ethics: Readings and Cases in Corporate Morality*, pp. 249-260.
- Kaptein, M. (2011), "Understanding unethical behavior by unraveling ethical culture," *Human Relations*, Vol. 64 No. 6, pp. 843-869.
- Kohlberg, L. (1981), *Essays on moral development: Vol. 1. The philosophy of moral development*. Harper & Row, New York.
- Kohlberg, L. (1984), *The psychology of moral development: The nature and validity of moral stages*. Harper & Row, San Francisco.
- Kolb, A.Y. and Kolb, D.A. (2005), "Learning styles and learning spaces: Enhancing experiential learning in higher education," *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, Vol. 4 No. 2, pp. 193-212.
- Kolb, D.A. (1984), *Experiential learning*. Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ.
- Krathwohl, D.R., Bloom, B.S. and Masia, B.B. (1984), *Taxonomy of educational objectives: The classification of educational goals*. Longman, New York.
- Madu, B.C. (2012), "Organizational culture as a driver of competitive advantage," *Journal of Academic and Business Ethics*, Vol. 5, pp. 1-9.
- Marturano, A. (2005), "On being a moral agent: teaching business leaders to think ethically," *European Business Forum*, Vol. 20, p. 68.
- Martynov, A. (2009), "Agents or stewards? Linking managerial behavior and moral development," *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 90, pp. 239-249.
- Matherne, B.P., Gove, S. and Janney, J.J. (2006), "'Walk the talk': Developing personal ethical agency through a business partnership program," *Journal of Management Education*, Vol. 30, pp. 106-132.
- Meglino, B.M. and Ravlin, E.C. (1998), "Individual values in organizations: Concepts, controversies, and research," *Journal of Management*, Vol. 24, pp. 351-389.
- Meisel, S.I. and Fearon, D.S. (2006), "Choose the future wisely:

- Supporting better ethics through critical thinking," *Journal of Management Education*, Vol. 30, pp. 149-176.
- Micheletto, M.J. (2011), "Using audio response systems to encourage student engagement and reflection on ethical orientation and behavior," *Contemporary Issues in Educational Research*, Vol. 4 No. 10, pp. 9-17.
- Miller, R.A. (2009), "The ethics narrative and the role of the business school in moral development," *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 90, pp. 287-293.
- Milgram, S. (1974), *Obedience to authority: An experimental view*. Harpercollins, New York.
- Narvaez, D. and Bock, T. (2002), "Moral schemas and tacit judgment or how the Defining Issues Test is supported by cognitive science," *Journal of Moral Education*, Vol. 31, pp. 297-312.
- Narvaez, D. and Rest, J.R. (1995), *The four components of acting morally*. In K. Kurtines, and J. Gewirtz, (Eds.), *Moral Behavior and Moral Development: An Introduction*. McGraw-Hill, New York.
- Onwuegbuzie, A.J. and Corrigan, J.A. (2014), "Improving the quality of mixed research reports in the field of human resource development and beyond: A call for rigor as an ethical practice," *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, Vol. 25 pp. 273-299.
- Paine, L.S. (1994), "Managing for organizational integrity," *Harvard Business Review*, Vol. 72 No. 2, pp. 106-117.
- Pascarella, E.T. and Terenzini, P.T. (2005), *How college affects students*, Vol. 2. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.
- Pfeffer, J. (2005), "Why do bad management theories persist? A comment on Goshal," *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, Vol. 4, pp. 96-97.
- Pfeffer, J. and Fong, C.T. (2004), "The business school 'business': Some lessons from the U.S. experience," *Journal of Management Studies*, Vol. 41 No. 8, pp. 1501-1520.
- Posner, B.Z. (2010), "Values and the American manager: A three-decade perspective," *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 91, pp. 457-465.
- Rest, J.R. (1988), "Can ethics be taught in professional schools? The psychological research," *Easier said than done*, Winter, pp. 22-26.
- Rest, J.R. (1999), *Postconventional moral thinking: A neo-Kohlbergian approach*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Mahwah, N.J.
- Rest, J.R., Narvaez, D., Bebeau, M.J. and Thoma, S.J. (1999), "A neo-Kohlbergian approach: The DIT and schema theory," *Educational Psychology Review*, Vol. 11 No. 4, pp. 291-324.
- Rest, J.R., Narvaez, D., Thoma, S.J. and Bebeau, M.J. (2000), "A neo-Kohlbergian approach to morality research," *Journal of Moral Research*, Vol. 29 No. 4, pp. 381-395.
- Ricci, P. and Markulis, P.M. (1992), "Can ethics be taught? A simulation tests a traditional ethics pedagogy," *Developments in Business Simulation & Experiential Learning*, Vol. 19, pp. 141-145.
- Ritter, B.A. (2006), "Can business ethics be trained? A study of ethical decision making processes in business studies," *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 68, pp. 153-164.
- Ritter, J.L. (2011), "Growin' up: An assessment of adult self-image in clinical law students," *Akron Law Review*, Vol. 44, pp. 137-165.
- Schmidt, W.H. and Posner, B.Z. (1982), *Managerial values and expectations: The silent power in personal and organizational life*. AMACOM, New York.
- Stablein, R. (2003), "Teaching business ethics or teaching business ethically," *Management Communication Quarterly*, Vol. 17, pp. 151-154.
- Stead, B.A. and Miller, J.J. (1988), "Can social awareness be increased through business school courses?" *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 7, pp. 553-560.
- Suar, D. and Khuntia, R. (2010), "Influence of personal values and value congruence on unethical practices and work behavior," *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 97, pp. 443-460.
- Taft, S.H. and White, J. (2007), "Ethics education: Using inductive reasoning to develop individual, group, organizational, and global perspectives," *Journal of Management Education*, Vol. 31, pp. 614-646.
- Thompson Jr., A.A., Strickland III, A.J. and Gamble, J.E. (2007), *Crafting and executing strategy*, 15th Ed. McGraw-Hill Irwin, Burr Ridge, IL.
- Tichy, M., Johnson, D.W., Johnson, R.T. and Roseth, C.J. (2010), "The impact of constructive controversy on moral development," *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, Vol. 40 No. 4, pp. 765-787.
- Tomlinson, E.C. (2009), "Teaching the interactionist model of ethics," *Journal of Management Education*, Vol. 33 No. 2, pp. 142-165.
- Traiser, S. and Eighmy, M. (2011), "Moral development and narcissism of private and public university business schools," *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 99, pp. 325-334.
- Treviño, L.K. and Brown, M.E. (2004), "Managing to be ethical: Debunking five business myths," *Academy of Management Executive*, Vol. 18, pp. 69-81.
- Treviño, L.K. and Nelson, K.A. (2011), *Managing business ethics: Straight talk about how to do it right*, 5th ed. Wiley, San Francisco.
- Trocchia, P.J., Swanson, D.L. and Orlitzky, M. (2007), "Digging deeper: the laddering interview: a tool for surfacing values," *Journal of Management Education*, Vol. 31, 713-729.
- Tyler, C.L. and Tyler, J.M. (2006), "Applying the theoretical model of change to the sequencing of ethics instruction in business education," *Journal of Management Education*, Vol. 30, pp. 45-64.
- Weber, J. (2007), "Business ethics training: Insights from learning theory," *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 70, pp. 61-85.
- Weber, J. and Gillespie, J. (1998), "Differences in ethical beliefs, intensions, and behaviors," *Business and Society*, Vol. 37, pp. 447-466.
- Wang, L., Malhotra, D. and Murnighan, J.K. (2011), "Economics education and greed," *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, Vol. 10, pp. 643-660.
- Yin, R.K. (2009), *Case study research: Design and methods* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Authors

Jerry Gosenpud, Ph.D., Professor of Management, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, gosenpuj@uww.edu

Jon M. Werner, Ph.D., Professor of Management, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, wernerj@uww.edu