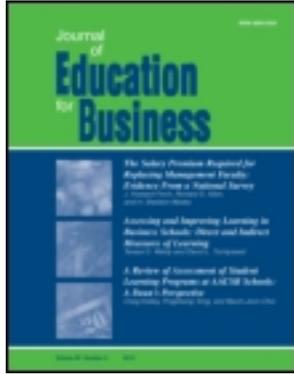


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Journal of Education for Business

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/vjeb20>

Applying What Works: A Case for Deliberate Psychological Education in Undergraduate Business Ethics

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To cite this article: Christopher Drees Schmidt, Kathleen M. Davidson & Christopher Adkins (2013): Applying What Works: A Case for Deliberate Psychological Education in Undergraduate Business Ethics, *Journal of Education for Business*, 88:3, 127-135

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/08832323.2012.659295>

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Applying What Works: A Case for Deliberate Psychological Education in Undergraduate Business Ethics

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The teaching of business ethics continues to be a topic of great concern as both businesses and business schools seek to develop effective approaches for fostering ethical behavior. Responses to this objective have been varied, and consistent empirical evidence for a particular approach has not emerged. One approach, deliberate psychological education, offers a means for extending and integrating elements of developmental theory and has proven effective in professional settings, with college students, and recently, with undergraduate business students. The authors propose that this model be considered as an effective approach for business education programs and offer suggestions for integrating this model within undergraduate business curricula.

Keywords: cognitive developmental theory, deliberate psychological education, ethics, moral development, pedagogy, reflection

The multiple corporate scandals in recent decades continue to negatively impact the public's trust in business (Kracher & Marble, 2008; Swanson, 2004). One dimension of the response effort has been to charge business schools with the responsibility of promoting increased levels of ethical training with undergraduate students (Halbesleben, Wheeler, & Buckley, 2005; Swanson) especially given business schools are heavily criticized for producing graduates obsessed with making money regardless of moral consequences (Alsop, 2003). Business students cheat more, are less cooperative, and are more cynical than students from other majors (Brown, Sautter, Littvay, Sautter, & Bearnes, 2010; Covey, 2006; Frank, 2004; McCabe & Trevino, 1995). There are concerns in the literature that university education in vocational areas such as business is not accomplishing well the goal of moral development and that an ethical crisis exists within these disciplines (Cagle, Glasgo, & Holmes, 2008; Falkenberg & Woiceshyn, 2008; Mayhew, Seifert, & Pascarella, 2010;

McNeel, 1994; Nguyen, Basuray, Smith, Kopka, & McCulloh, 2008). Among undergraduates, business majors were more likely to show significant decreases in principle reasoning across their four-year programs. Additionally, graduate business students enter university with the lowest level of moral reasoning skills of any graduate students and are the only students to experience a decline in their moral reasoning upon graduation (Aspen Institute, 2003; Conroy & Nelson, 1989; Poff, 2007). More specifically, much of the business ethics education literature has focused on business schools' need to increase efforts to foster moral reasoning development in students (Christensen, Pierce, Harmon, Hoffman, & Carrier, 2007), emphasizing that "sound moral reasoning is necessary for good business" (Kracher & Marble, 2008, p. 504). Hence, though it is accepted that higher levels of moral reasoning can positively impact ethical decision making, there remains a significant lack of ethics coursework in business curricula (Breux, Chiasson, Mauldin, & Whitney, 2010) and a lack of coherence about the most effective pedagogies for enhancing moral development (Falkenberg & Woiceshyn; Mayhew & Enger, 2010; Poff).

Deliberate psychological education (DPE; Mosher & Sprinthall, 1971; Sprinthall & Thies-Sprinthall, 1983) is

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grounded in cognitive developmental theory (Hunt, 1971, 1976; Kohlberg, 1968; Loevinger, 1976; Piaget, 1954) and seeks to positively impact the constructive nature of the meaning-making process through deliberate cognitive discourse and instructor-assisted systematic personal reflection. The DPE model is designed to promote growth toward formal operations, increased psychological complexity, and identity formation (Brendel, Kolbert, & Foster, 2002; Royal & Baker, 2005) and has been repeatedly shown to promote moral reasoning (principled) in different professions as well as assisting in the acquisition of desirable behavioral skills within professional roles (Neukrug & McAuliffe, 1993; Reiman & Peace, 2002; Royal & Baker; Sprinthall, Peace, & Kennington, 2001). A recent DPE intervention with 178 undergraduate business students in a one-credit, semester-long course significantly increased student moral reasoning (Schmidt, McAdams, & Foster, 2009). Here we deliver a detailed account of DPE and the unified and grounded framework it offers as well as its connection to some presently recommended teaching practices in business ethics. We suggest that this framework effectively responds to present business ethics education critiques. As university accreditation bodies call for more effective ethics coursework, determining the most beneficial delivery methods is critical (Breux et al., 2010).

BACKGROUND

Intent on shaping effective and ethical future business leaders, recent literature addressing best practices in business ethics education emphasizes a strong commitment to considering ethical dimensions throughout courses, curriculum, and academic communities in business education (Breux et al., 2010; Business Roundtable Institute for Corporate Ethics, 2007; Poff, 2007; Wilhelm, 2008). Additionally, the literature recommends developing pedagogy focused on enhancing the moral reasoning capacities of students in order to prepare them for the ethical challenges they will face (Cain & Smith, 2009; Traiser & Eighmy, 2011).

To date, interventions toward these goals have consisted primarily of traditional classroom lectures coupled with case-study approaches, which introduce students to present ethical issues in business while providing frameworks for ethical analysis and decision-making (Adams, Tashchian, & Shore, 1999; Falkenberg & Woiceshyn, 2008; Fort & Zollers, 1999; Lampe, 1997; Sims, 2002; Wilhelm, 2008). Additionally, some programs have attempted to incorporate experiential learning approaches, ranging from role-playing, trips to local prisons, and various other service learning experiences (Bok, 1988; Bowden & Smythe, 2008; Castleberry, 2007; Kracher, 1999; Lampe; Sims).

Although some teaching techniques have successfully enhanced student moral reasoning (Falkenberg & Woiceshyn, 2008; Nguyen et al., 2008), questions persist regarding the most effective educational interventions for promoting eth-

ical graduates (Breux et al., 2010; Cagle et al., 2008) and the theoretical orientations that inform them. Various authors (King & Mayhew, 2002; Williams, Yanchar, Jensen, & Lewis, 2003) have emphasized that business ethics education interventions must be grounded in relevant research and introduced early in the educational process when students' character development is presumed to be in a more formative place. Still, there is presently no accepted pedagogical model for this population (Breux et al.; Cagle et al.). Interestingly, the educational intervention designed specifically to promote moral development, DPE (Mosher & Sprinthall, 1971; Reiman & Peace, 2002), has only once been applied in the area of business ethics education (Schmidt et al., 2009).

DELIBERATE PSYCHOLOGICAL EDUCATION (DPE)

Theory and Research

Based on cognitive developmental theory (CDT), DPE is a comprehensive theory of human development that explains how humans create meaning making systems used to interpret and make sense of their experiences in the world (Merriam, 2004; Merriam & Heur, 1996; Sprinthall et al., 2001). Educational efforts toward promoting growth in the moral domain of cognitive development stem from the work of Kohlberg (1976), and Rest, Narvaez, Bebeau, and Thoma's (1999) and Rest, Narvaez, Thoma, and Bebeau's (2000) neo-Kohlbergian approach. The tenants of CDT include, but are not limited to, the following: (a) individuals construct knowledge through experience; (b) development entails cognitive dissonance, and assimilation and accommodation assist in the process of equilibration; (c) cognitive and skill development occurs as an individual's values and reasoning's become more complex, integrated, and principled over time; (d) cognitive developmental growth is not automatic, but it occurs due to interactions within a supportive and progressively challenging context (Dotger, 2006); and (e) the process of cognitive development occurs in hierarchical and sequential stages (Cain & Smith, 2009; King, 2009; Zhang, 2002).

Adhering to these principles, DPE stimulates the cognitive and psychological processes that form individual meaning making systems. DPE illustrates that the process of development occurs through person-environment interaction, wherein an individual is required to understand experiences in a more complex fashion and hence develop cognitively (Reiman & Peace, 2002; Reiman & Thies-Sprinthall, 1993; Royal & Baker, 2005). Individuals at higher levels of cognitive development have a propensity to function more effectively in a complex society; they tend to be more flexible, more adaptive, and more accurate in their responsiveness to change (Bennet-Levy, 2006; Duys & Hedstrom, 2000; Sprinthall, Reiman, & Thies-Sprinthall, 1996; Whiston & Coker, 2000). Additionally, those at higher levels are better

able to read and flex to changing circumstances, better able to take the emotional perspective of others, more tolerant of diverse perspectives, and more likely to find alternative solutions to problems (Brendel et al., 2002; Choate & Granello, 2006; Mudrack, 2003). DPE interventions performed with teachers at various levels of experience, law enforcement trainees, dentists, veterinarians, and multiple college student populations contribute to significant change in conceptual complexity, principled moral reasoning, as well as performance tasks (Bebeau, 1994; Clarkeburn, 2002; Duckett & Ryden, 1994; Kaiser & Ancellotti, 2003; Lawson & Foster, 2005; Morgan, Morgan, Foster, & Kolbert, 2000; Ponemon & Gabhart, 1994; Reiman & Peace, 2002; Reiman & Thies-Sprinthall, 1993; Royal & Baker, 2005; Self & Baldwin, 1994; Self, Olivarez, & Baldwin, 1994; Thies-Sprinthall, 1984).

Present business literature demonstrates the increasing recognition of CDT and moral development theory's applicability to business ethics education (Bok, 2006; Falkenberg & Woiceshyn, 2008; Fraedrich, Thorne, & Ferrell, 1994; Izzo, 2000; Kracher, Chatterjee, & Lundquist, 2002; Mudrack, 2003; Poff, 2007; Traiser & Eighmy, 2011; Wilhelm, 2008). Authors have utilized these theoretical perspectives to conceptualize business student ethical development. Some of the suggested teaching strategies within business ethics education overlap with the instructional approach of DPE (e.g., Felton & Sims, 2005). However, the educational implementation of these perspectives has been haphazard at best (Traiser & Eighmy, 2011; Wilhelm, 2010; Nguyen et al., 2008), lacking the comprehensive connections to the theory's major tenants and the conditions that stem from them.

DPE Conditions and Process

The DPE model identifies five necessary conditions of a learning environment in order for developmental change to occur (Reiman & Peace, 2002; Royal & Baker, 2005; Schmidt et al., 2009; Thies-Sprinthall, 1984), situating learning in a social role-taking context in which development is facilitated through collaborative activities, dilemma discussions, and active, guided inquiry. As mentioned, while some of these conditions have been implemented in business ethics education, all five are what constitute significant and replicable change. The first condition is that the learners experience a new and qualitatively significant role-taking experience (Poff, 2007; Wilhelm, 2008). The new role must require an advanced level of cognitive functioning from the learners' present one, but it must not be so advanced that they become overwhelmed. Second, learners must be provided with careful and continuous guided reflection throughout the learning process by a more capable other (Mayhew et al., 2010; Reiman & Johnson, 2003). Learners must be given ample opportunities to reflect on and come to understand the unique meaning of their experience through activities such as small and large group discussions and journaling, whereby they

can balance their own perception of an experience with that of peers and the instructor (Poff; Wilhelm). This act includes both analysis (self-assessment) and metacognitive processing. A new experience alone is insufficient to promote development and hence, for cognitive growth to occur, reflection must be purposeful and continuous to ensure that the experience has functional meaning to learners (Guiffreda, 2005; King & Kitchner, 1994; Schön, 1983; Walsh, 2010); this balance describes the third condition. The fourth condition necessitates that the experience and reflection be continuous over time. Though 6–12 months is suggested (Rest, 1986), significant moral reasoning change has occurred in three-month-long interventions (Fischer & Pruyne, 2002; Griffith & Frieden, 2000; Schlaefli, Rest, & Thoma, 1985). Continuity enables learners to accomplish the difficult task of incorporating newly acquired ways of making meaning. The final condition entails a combination of support and challenge. Challenging learners to incorporate new systems for understanding their experiences requires that they also be supported through the pain and dissonance resulting from the abandonment of old systems (Kitchener, Lynch, Fischer, & Wood, 1993; Knowles, 1980; Maslow, 1968). Without ample individualized support and challenge, learners may revert back to the safety of old patterns of thought and action (Bower, Diehr, Morzinski, & Simpson, 1998).

DPE utilizes the Piagetian concept of facilitating cognitive growth through the establishment of a deliberate learner-to-environment mismatch in which learners are encouraged to use a mode of thinking one developmental level above their presently preferred one (Holloway & Wampold, 1986). Hunt (1976) stressed the importance of this Plus One approach as a means to encourage learners to pursue new levels of cognitive complexity without becoming overwhelmed in the task. An appropriately mismatched and individualized learning condition enables changes in how one reasons cognitively and, thus, impacts future behaviors (Lawson & Foster, 2005). Though any strong university course should challenge students to higher levels of thinking, DPE is unique in that such challenges are individualized within reflective activities, paired with individualized support, and used in conjunction with the other conditions.

DPE Application

Adaptability to existing courses and curricula is a consistently reported strength of the DPE framework in previous applications. Therefore, satisfying the necessary DPE conditions in an existing course requires revision to only some aspects of course content delivery, not the course itself. Table 1 outlines the goals, activities, and objectives utilized to organize such a course. In line with a developmental model and a moral deliberation approach to teaching ethics, utilizing case studies for dilemma discussion and teaching the processes of psychological development (Falkenberg & Woiceshyn, 2008; Penn, 1990) remain requisite. With moral reasoning growth

TABLE 1
Course Goals, Activities, Objectives in Relation to Deliberate Psychological Education

Goal	Activities	Objectives
Raise awareness of ethical issues in business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case studies • Class discussion 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Obtain knowledge of five different philosophical perspectives of ethics and morality: justice, relativism, utilitarianism, egoism, and deontology 2. Recognize and understand the influential effects of a group or culture on an individual's moral judgment
Expose students to ethical issues and means for responding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class discussion • Presentation team meetings 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Obtain knowledge of moral reasoning as characterized by Kohlberg and of the stages of moral development
Expose students to models of decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilization of ethical decision-making model for team presentations 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand the importance of ethical decision-making models and practically apply one of these models to an ethical dilemma
Moral reasoning stage advancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class discussion • Perspective-taking activities • Reflective journals • Guided reflection team meetings 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Advance stagewise 2. Utilize metacognitive processes through reflective activities 3. Evaluate personal stage level 4. Recognize the many possible decisions to be made when confronting ethical situations and incorporate multiple perspectives in deliberating on a decision 5. Process and evaluate actions as a presentation team and as individuals 6. Accept and incorporate the feedback of peers and the instructor(s) throughout the course and in particular, in response to presentations and journal reflections.

as a defining goal of the curriculum, the additional elements stemming from the DPE conditions should include (a) students engaging in written reflection via responses to prompts that highlight personal thought processes related to ethical reasoning; (b) instructor-assisted guidance through support and challenge by means of regular and detailed responses to the written reflections; (c) team evaluation of ethical dilemma case studies and a presentation of their findings and principles used for decision making; (d) face-to-face team reflections with one another and then the instructor postpresentation, focused on students' intra- and interpersonal experiences; (e) directly and purposefully offering support and challenge to students in the classroom discussions to take multiple perspectives when considering the case studies and differing student viewpoints; and (f) integrating micro and macro moral-ethical development assessments over the length of the course.

The DPE framework supports the emphasis of present business ethics education literature in that ethics courses should be grounded in moral philosophy and relevant research, applied to a present ethics course with minimal intrusion, employ an analytical framework, attain concrete ethical knowledge and skills, illuminate the intrapersonal aspects of ethical development, increase self-understanding, develop an individual's moral imagination, and clarify personal boundaries (principles). DPE is designed to foster precisely this type of growth. Thus, on the basis of its pedagogical and professional relevance, the DPE framework emerges as one that seems particularly appropriate for responding to the is-

sue of teaching business ethics. Although only one study has examined DPE within undergraduate business ethics education (with promising results), its suitability is projected given its empirically proven effectiveness in a number of other fields. To illustrate, Table 2 outlines the delivery of one lesson, "A Stakeholder Analysis," in a DPE-based business ethics classroom.

Implementing DPE Conditions

Table 3 highlights the critical instructional components related to each of these DPE conditions. Entrance into undergraduate study, or specifically into an upper level business program and the new experiences inherent in it, can partially fulfill the role-taking experience necessary for this type of intervention. As noted in Table 3, student involvement in teams for presentations, reflective activities, and competitive business simulations can also satisfy this new role-taking experience. The combination of the acts of deliberating within a small group, finalizing and delivering a presentation of the group's work, and the guided reflection meetings that follow will likely suffice as experiences beyond student's present zone of comfort. Because research shows that involvement in a service-learning experience, or peer helping relationship, that students can participate and reflect upon can additionally enhance moral reasoning capabilities (Comunian & Gielen, 2006), such activities could also be considered for inclusion.

Students can receive different levels of support and challenge during their coursework through multiple means:

TABLE 2
Deliberate Psychological Education (DPE) Lesson Plan

	A stakeholder analysis (incorporating perspective-taking)	DPE condition utilized
Assignments	<p>Prior to class</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reading: "A Stakeholders Approach to Business Ethics" (Weiss, 2003) 2. Case study: "An Education on Prescription Drugs" (Virginia Foundation for Independent Colleges, 2005) 	
Review	<p>In class</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Verbally summarize themes from the students' written reflections, which have been responded to and returned electronically by instructor or assistant 2. Opportunity for student comments 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Guided reflection 2. Support and challenge
Didactic	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review major points from reading 2. Use the case study from reading (Exxon Valdez) to emphasize topics from reading 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Balance
Team presentation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Brief review of dilemma 2. Stakeholders considered 3. Decision-making model utilized 4. Ethical principles utilized and emphasized 5. Three options for action 6. Reasoning behind final action choice 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Role-taking 2. Balance
Discussion	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Class questions and discusses team's reasoning, option analysis, and offers suggestions 2. Socratic dialogue 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support and challenge 2. Role-taking
All students	<p>Postclass</p> <p>Reflection assignment: How important is it to acknowledge and incorporate multiple points of view when practicing moral deliberation? Why?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Guided reflection 2. Support and challenge 3. Balance
Presentation team	<p>Guided reflection team meeting immediately following the class</p> <p>Additional journal question: What unique viewpoint did you bring to your group's processing of your assigned ethical case in preparing for your presentation?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Guided reflection 2. Support and challenge 3. Balance

TABLE 3
Integrating Deliberate Psychological Education (DPE) Conditions Into an Undergraduate Course

DPE condition	Suggestions for faculty integrating DPE approach
Role-taking experience	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. New student role: entrance into undergraduate business program (exposure to new educational challenges and professional contexts) 2. Involvement in the guided team reflective groups 3. Case presentations (in teams) and critical feedback from peers and faculty
Support and challenge	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Instructor(s) feedback on journals both encourages and challenges students' level of reflection 2. Reflective group (team) discussion of ethical cases (exposure to contrasting viewpoints while seeking consensus) 3. Instructor(s) challenges students to practice perspective-taking in class discussions
Reflection	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Require students to keep journals throughout course; provide reflective prompts for each journal entry 2. Instructor(s) meets with guided reflective group to facilitate group reflection and perspective-taking 3. Class discussion of case studies and consideration of various ethical principles
Balance of reflection and role-taking	<p>Evaluation of the balance can be accomplished through:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review of journal responses and researcher/instructor discussion concerning major themes 2. Immediate reflection exercise upon completion of major role-taking activity (presentations) 3. Continual evaluation of experimental group progress through researcher-instructor meetings
Continuity	Semester-long course, with regular journal entries and opportunities to meet with instructor

in-class instructor feedback, reflective dialogue through journal feedback, and in-person team guided-reflective groups. Within the stakeholder lesson (Table 2), students are challenged through course content discussion, ethical dilemma (case study) decision making, and more precisely within the guided reflection team meetings as well as the developing dialogue taking place within their reflective journals. The instructor(s) can provide support for students' understanding and processing of the content or case study and their willingness to engage themselves in the learning process, encourage their struggles with the dilemma, and provide empathetic responses to any challenges experienced with the material (i.e., prioritizing stakeholders, in-depth perspective taking). As the most complex pedagogical requirement of DPE, the instructor encourages a knowledge perturbation by differentiating the amounts of support, structure, and challenge offered to individual students; hence, the more intrapersonal reflective activities provide the greatest opportunities for this condition.

Over the course of the semester the students should be increasingly confronted with more difficult content, more challenging case studies, and more complex dilemma discussions (Sims & Felton, 2006). Thus, students must consider a greater number of variables and consequently, the classroom discussions begin to highlight multiple ethical principles. As students gain comfort writing responses to reflective prompts, this DPE condition enables opportunities for more personalized in depth responses to their journal entries and more complex questions about their reasoning process. For instance, if a student begins to explore concepts of fairness or equity when considering stakeholders, challenging personalized responses might include facilitating further inquiry into the principles the student tends to utilize when defining fairness or equity and the evolution of those principles. While many ethics courses intentionally provide increasingly challenging content, within DPE, the instructor(s) must consistently monitor and balance the supportive elements with the delivery of personalized challenges necessary to promote growth (Faubert, Locke, Sprinthall, & Howland, 1996; Wilhelm, 2008).

A critical component of DPE entails the inclusion of purposeful *reflective* activities (guided inquiry). Business students in particular are rarely given sufficient opportunities to reflect on the content of their studies (Macfarlane, 1998; Poff, 2007). Students should be asked to write thoughtful and comprehensive reflective journals over the course of the semester, which are reviewed and extensively commented on by the instructor or an assistant. Instructors' written responses should entail an understanding of the typical thought processes taking place at each of the stages of moral development and an evaluation of what stage their responses evidence, and then encourage them to try and process the situation using reasoning skills from one level above their present one. If a student prioritizes three stakeholders in their reasoning (self, stockholders, customers) and evidences conventional reasoning

in the explanation, the instructor's responses might include questions regarding the impact of a decision on other stakeholders (coworkers, general public, subordinates) and ask how considering the perspective of these others might impact the decision on the dilemma. Students may also be asked to evaluate their reasoning utilizing a standard moral development schema such as Kohlberg's. Consistent and thoughtful responses using deliberate differentiation and questioning are not an effort to guide student understandings toward a particular end, but rather an effort to encourage deeper reflections on the individual process experienced by the student.

Students should also be asked to discuss and reflect on dilemmas as a class and in small groups with the instructor providing encouragement and challenge to promote further reflection. As seen in Table 2, it is suggested that students participate in a postpresentation, reflective group in which they can share their individual experiences with the project as well as reflect on their particular group process. These meetings provide opportunities to support both their achievements and their struggles while integrating their understandings of how higher-level ethical reasoning impacts such a process. Because the presentation teams engage in a more in-depth exercise regarding the particular case study, multiple opportunities for reflective dialogue on the process (not necessarily the content) are available: differing ethical principles, means and methods of reasoning, stage of reasoning, dominant perspectives, and emotions experienced.

A DPE course design should be continuous in that students engage in the material and activities steadily over at least one semester. The DPE conditions are effective when students are given the time necessary to move through periods of disequilibrium and equilibrium within an action-inquiry framework.

SUMMARY

Despite the body of ethics education literature, very few studies have shown effectiveness in changing an individual's ethical reasoning development through programmatic ethics training. Many interventions have succeeded in assisting students to identify certain ethical scenarios, but a change in the student's moral reasoning did not occur (Halbesleben et al., 2005). Presently it should be clear, research based pedagogy or *best practice* is essential for business ethics education (Traiser & Eighmy, 2011). Initial results suggest that a DPE curriculum can impact business students as it has those in other fields of study; further evidence could provide the grounds for altering the way ethics is taught in business schools and provide a needed and established pedagogy (Cagle et al., 2008).

It should be noted that the DPE model as a whole could present some obstacles for consideration. For instance, faculty may be reluctant to emphasize the psychological over the philosophical and organizational perspectives within their

classroom. Also, faculty may not feel they qualify as the more capable other (with elevated moral reasoning capacities; Reiman & Johnson, 2003) necessary to foster moral development. Finding a significant role-taking experience within or outside of the curriculum may prove difficult and would likely require additional coordination. Providing the detailed and continuous feedback, through journals or personal meetings, requires time and attention from faculty that only some may be willing or able to contribute. Moreover, the requirement of a continuous intervention (e.g., one lasting long enough for the treatment effects to be seen), suggests that a full semester course is the minimum length (Schlaefli et al., 1985; Wilhelm, 2008). These obstacles, however, are surmountable; critical elements of the DPE and pre- and postassessment measures can be infused into the design and implementation of a present business ethics course with minimal additional instructor effort or assistance.

In developing theoretical and practical responses to ethical misconduct in business, there exist a number of empirically supported factors at play. First, those students of business who believe that their moral compass becomes firmly set at an early age, and is thus relatively unchangeable, have made false assumptions (Poff, 2007; Rest et al., 1999). Second, there are theoretically congruent, research based methods for encouraging moral development within educational programs (Faubert et al., 1996; Mayhew & Engberg, 2010).

As scrutiny of businesses increases and the understanding that ethical practice is beneficial for the organization's bottom line proliferates, a theoretically and empirically-based educational intervention must be considered (Halbesleben et al., 2005; Swanson, 2004). DPE's success in enhancing moral reasoning cannot be overlooked. If individuals are to reorganize their thinking, they must be more actively involved in the process (Kohlberg, 1986) and their higher order reasoning skills must be stimulated (King, 2009). At the junior and senior levels, when students are about to enter a less constricted environment, encouraging and facilitating the personal growth necessary to most ethically problem solve seems even more appropriate. The DPE model offers such an opportunity and given the present state of affairs, this could be a vital time to integrate the latest psychological research with a population in need.

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