

## **Making Ethical Choices: How Educational Leaders Decide \***

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### **Appendix: The Ethical Perspective Instrument<sup>1</sup>**

**The following scenarios deal with dilemmas that school principals face in the course of decision-making. For each story, the principal is at the point where he must choose between two alternatives. In the situations described, there is no other alternative and he must decide between the two. It is clear to us that often there are other considerations and options as well as compromises between the two specified alternatives. Nonetheless and for purposes of the uniformity of the research, we ask that you relate only to the options provided.**

**Please read the following stories and answer the questions at the end of each story. There are no right or wrong answers. What interests us is your opinion.**

1. A special needs student was integrated into one of the regular classrooms of a school. The student has been very happy with the change and his parents are satisfied with his improvement. However, since his integration, the class's average achievement scores have gone down. In light of the situation, the principal faces the dilemma of either leaving the student in the regular class and aiding his improvement or removing him from the classroom and increasing the class scores.

Which of the two options would you choose?

To leave the student in the regular classroom and help him

To remove the student from the classroom and improve the class's scores

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2. A school's policy is to reject all students who apply past the registration deadline. One set of parents has offered to donate computers and equipment to the classroom if the school will accept their son despite the late registration. The school needs computers. The principal is deliberating whether to accept the student and receive the much-needed equipment or to reject the student on the basis of the school's policy.

Which of the two options would you choose?

To reject the student and in this way adhere to the existing policy

To accept the student and receive the much-needed computers

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<sup>1</sup> Permission to use the questionnaire must be obtained from the authors. Please direct any correspondence regarding this questionnaire to Ori Eyal (msori@mscc.huji.ac.il).

3. The high school has several Ethiopian origin students<sup>2</sup>. An important Ethiopian holiday lands on the day before the math matriculation exam. The principal believes that society is ignorant of Ethiopian culture and that this ignorance promotes negative stereotypes. In her opinion, the school has an obligation to work towards eliminating such stereotypes. Therefore the principal is deliberating between devoting the day to math preparation and to improving the matriculation scores, or for promoting social change by acknowledging and honoring the Ethiopian holiday.

Which of the two options would you choose?

To commemorate the Sigad holiday  
and thereby promote social change

To spend the time on math and  
thereby contribute to preparation for  
the matriculation exam

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4. Computers were stolen from the school in a robbery. This has seriously affected the school's curriculum and studies. A non-profit organization (NGO) offered to donate new computers to the school. In exchange, the organization requested that the school teach one specific computer language. The computer teacher has argued that the specific computer language is outdated and not good. The principal is deliberating between accepting the donation and receiving the much-needed computers or rejecting the computers and maintaining high professional standards.

Which of the two options would you choose?

To reject the contribution and  
maintain a high professional  
standard

To accept the much needed  
computers

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<sup>2</sup> Starting in 1948 the Israeli government encouraged Jews from Ethiopia to immigrate to Israel. However, due to cultural differences, race, educational gaps, and immigrant's adjustment difficulties, the Ethiopian population has been poorly integrated and often stigmatized by the Israeli population.

5. The school is located in a secular community<sup>3</sup>. An ultra orthodox non-profit organization has offered to fund and implement an educational program on Jewish Law at the school. The organization has also offered to fund a substantial increase in the weekly math hours allotted per student. The parents committee is opposed to allowing the program into the school due to the concern over conflicting value systems those espoused by the school and those of the NGO. The principal must decide whether or not to accept the program and substantially increase the weekly math hours allotted to each student or to respect the community's position (values) and reject the program.

Which of the two options would you choose?

To be considerate of the communities values and to avoid participating in the program

To participate in the program, next year, and thereby expand the math studies significantly

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6. The Ministry of Education decreed that teachers would work longer days and teach more hours. Therefore, the school needs one less teacher. The most accepted method for removing a teacher is "the last to arrive, is the first to go." The last teacher to be hired is a mother of three who is the sole income provider in her household. The principal has to decide whether to fire the teacher according to the accepted procedures or to hold on to this teacher due to her special circumstances.

Which of the two options would you choose?

To keep on the teacher in view of her special circumstances

To let the teacher go according to accepted procedures

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7. In the school the students are given a week to decide what subject area they will choose as a major. In order to generate some curiosity among the students, the principal suggested that each teacher prepare a poster of some current research in their subject area to present throughout the week. On the evening before the presentations, the principal noticed that one of the teachers made errors in the presentation of the research. Removing the poster would hurt the teacher, since both the teacher and the students would notice the missing poster. However, identifying the error would require deep academic understanding, of which the school does not have a pretense of teaching. The principal is deliberating whether to take down the poster and maintain high professional standards or to leave the poster up out of concern for the teacher<sup>†</sup>.

Which of the two options would you choose?

To keep the poster out of consideration for the teacher

To take the poster down in the interest of professionalism

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<sup>3</sup> The Jewish ultra Orthodox value system and lifestyle are essentially different from that of more Western-liberal world views that persevere within the secular communities.

8. Getting accepted into the computer academic program in a high school requires passing an entrance exam. 80 students applied for 30 spots. The department head has asked to accept three students who ranked below the top 30 (in 36, 42, 53) in their exam. He argued, that according to his professional experience the solutions offered by the students during the exam, demonstrated that they could succeed as well as anybody else in studying the subject. The principal is debating whether to follow the department head's professional judgment, and accept the three students, or to refuse their admission based on the school's policy.

Which of the two options would you choose?

To reject the students in keeping  
with school procedures

To follow the professional opinion  
of the department head and accept  
the three students

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9. Two excellent teachers who work in the religious public school<sup>4</sup> in a small community applied for the position of vice principal. One teacher has been teaching at the school for 10 years. However, recently he was spotted in the community without a head covering. The other teacher has been teaching at the school for five years. The parents in the community prefer that the second candidate be promoted. However, school policy requires that no teacher be promoted to vice principal without seven years of teaching experience. The principal is deliberating whether to follow the school policy and hire the more experienced teacher or whether he should accept the community's preference and hire the second teacher.

Which of the two options would you choose?

To operate according to the values  
of the community which requests  
that members of the teaching staff  
adhere to religious customs

To operate according to existing  
policy and appoint the teacher with  
more years of experience

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<sup>4</sup> Jewish students in Israel attend one of three different educational tracks: Public schools, State affiliated religious public schools, or independent schools run by the ultra Orthodox sector. In the latter two tracks, the students and teachers are expected to uphold a religious lifestyle and to follow the rules of the community. One of the more visible features of a religious man is the obligation to wear a kippa (head covering), and a conservative dress attire (e.g. long skirts, minimal makeup) is mandatory for women. Moreover, it is permissible in such schools to fire teachers that do not uphold the religious values of the school. Furthermore, religious communities employ informal mechanisms for monitoring behavior and ensuring religious coherence between the school and the home.

10. In history class, one of the teachers decided to expand upon some Marxist theories, which encourage the students to think critically regarding society and the social order. This has caused some unrest in the classroom. One of the mothers, who comes from a very wealthy family, reports that the lesson caused her son to feel emotionally strained and under attack. The principal is trying to decide whether she should allow the lessons to continue and encourage the critical thinking or whether she should cancel the program out of concern for the student's emotional well being.

Which of the two options would you choose?

To cancel the program out of consideration for one of the pupils

To continue the program thereby encouraging critical thinking concerning accepted social arrangements

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11. A school's neighborhood and community have recently become more conservative. This year, the parents presented a detailed demand to remove the chapter on evolution, which explains that man evolved from monkeys, out of the science curriculum. In this manner, the curriculum will more accurately reflect the community's beliefs and values. The head of the science department argues, based on his experience in science instruction, that such changes in the curriculum will harm his ability to teach scientific thinking. The principal is deliberating whether to change the curriculum in consideration of the community's request/values and beliefs or to preserve the curriculum as it is and maintain a high quality science program.

Which of the two options would you choose?

To keep the educational program in order to maintain the level of studies in the sciences

To change the program in order to take into consideration the beliefs of the community

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12. In a mixed Jewish-Arab village, there is a small community school, which is known for having a close relationship with its alumni. The first alumni to enroll in a combat unit in the army, was severely injured in a training accident and is facing a long rehabilitation process. His parents asked the school to organize visits from the students to support him. Most of the parents in the school are opposed to military service and argued that supporting someone who was injured during military goes against the spirit of the community. The principal is deliberating whether to organize the visits out of concern for the alumni or to act according to the principles of the majority of the community.

Which of the two options would you choose?

To operate according to the principles of the majority of the members of the community and refrain from organizing visits

To organize the visits out of concern for the alumni

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13. A school principal has an innovative program for teaching reading comprehension. The program was written specifically for students whose main caretaker is illiterate. Since ethnicity and educational level are highly correlated, students would be divided into classrooms largely by ethnic origin. As a result, students will be divided into classrooms in accordance with their parents' country of origin. This type of separation is likely to indirectly reinforce negative stereotypes. The principal is debating whether or not to implement this program, which is professionally proven to help or to reject the program so as to not reinforce societal stigmas.

Which of the two options would you choose?

To cancel the program in order to avoid strengthening stereotypes

To implement the program thereby promoting a program of the highest professional level

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14. A feminist teacher in a religious community school, who serves both as a homeroom teacher and as a subject area teacher, has insisted on discussing religious topics in addition to her own subject area. In discussions, she has brought up the topic of a women's right over her own body and the right to terminate an unwanted pregnancy. The teacher regards this topic as highly important. However, the parents in the community consider it problematic and contradictory to their value system. Therefore, the parent representatives would like the teacher's jurisdiction to be limited to her subject area. The principal is debating whether to leave the teacher in her position as a homeroom teacher and allow discussion in the classroom that raises questions about existing social values or to remove the teacher from that aspect of her job out of consideration for the community.

Which of the two options would you choose?

To remove the teacher from her position as homeroom teacher out of consideration for the values of the community

To keep her as a homeroom teacher in order to promote critical discussion of existing social values

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15. The acceptance requirements for specializing in electronics are very high. Currently, all of the students in the department are boys. The school principal would like to reserve three spots for girls in order to change this pattern. However, there are no girls who meet the entrance criteria. There are two girls who have expressed a desire to study electronics among their first choices. However, their grades aren't high enough. The principal is deliberating whether or not to use affirmative action to accept the girls and make a statement towards changing societal conditions or to reject them since they don't meet the standard.

Which of the two options would you choose?

Not to accept the girls to electronics and thereby maintain a uniform standard for everyone

To apply affirmative action and accept the girls in order to promote social change

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16. A school was offered to participate in an experimental project, which offers an innovative program for teaching English as a supplement to the regular curriculum. However, due to the financial and human resource limitations of the nonprofit organization providing the program, it can only be implemented for a few classes. The principal is in a dilemma whether to offer the program to some classes and have them benefit from the program or to reject the program and avoid any unfairness between the classes.

Which of the two options would you choose?

Reject the program in order to avoid discrimination among the classes

Accept the program so that those in certain classes can benefit from advanced English

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17. An elementary school of the arts accepts students based on entry exams. The parents of one of the students, who did not pass the exams, have asked the school to make an exception. According to them, their son has learning and social disabilities, and art is a source of happiness and learning for him. The principal is deliberating whether to refuse the student because he didn't meet the entry standards and ensure equal treatment to all applicants or to accept him out of concern and interest to help.

Which of the two options would you choose?

Accept the student despite the fact that he did not pass in order to help him advance

Reject the student in order to maintain uniform standards for all

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18. Each year one student in the school is awarded a prize for excellence. One of the teachers has requested to give the prize to a student of immigrant parents, despite the fact that he only partially fulfills the criteria for eligibility. According to the teacher, it is important to empower and offer opportunities to marginalized populations. The principal is deliberating whether or not to offer the prize to a student who does not meet the criteria for excellence and to promote and empower the marginalized populations in society or to refuse the prize to the student and ensure equal treatment of all the students in the school.

Which of the two options would you choose?

Not to give the prize to the student who did not fulfill all of the criteria in order to maintain an equal treatment of all

To award the prize to the student thereby promoting the empowerment of marginalized groups

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19. One of the computer teachers has not completed his B.A. despite his obligation and promise to do so within three years. According to the Department of Education this is cause for dismissal. However, the department head has asked the principal to help smooth over the situation by delaying the report so the teacher will have another year to complete his degree. The department head claims that this teacher is an expert in computers. The principal is debating whether or not to dismiss him and uphold the Department of Education's policies of transparency or try and keep him to maintain high professional standards in the department.

Which of the two options would you choose?

To keep the teacher on because of his high professional level

To dismiss the teacher in accordance with the requirements of the Ministry of Education

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20. A music school accepts students based on entry exams. Lately, the number of girls accepted has been significantly higher than the number of boys. The parents believe that a school ought to reflect normal community life and have a similar number of males and females, even if that means that boys are accepted to the school with lower scores. The principal is deliberating whether to accept more boys and respond to the parents concerns or to continue accepting based on scores and ensure equal treatment for all applicants regardless of their gender.

Which of the two options would you choose?

Continue accepting on the basis of entry exam scores in order to insure equal treatment of all candidates regardless of gender

Accept more boys in keeping with the parents request

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21. Due to several violent incidences in the school, punishments have been intensified. This has led to a sharp decrease in incidences. By accident, a pocketknife was discovered in the backpack of a student. The student, who comes from a family with a criminal history, has recently shown improved motivation in his schoolwork and has even agreed to working with a school guidance counselor. The principal is deliberating whether to remove him from school for a period of time in order to deter future violence in the school or to leave him in the school framework out of concern that an extended suspension would lead him to quit school and adopt criminal activity.

Which of the two options would you choose?

Leave the student in the school out of concern for the fact that if he leaves he may become a juvenile delinquent

Remove the pupil for an extended time as a deterrent to others

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22. A school's prize winning chess team brings it much prestige. The teacher in charge of the team has noticed that the team consists only of players from the upper class population. He suggests that this year they choose players in a manner that would ensure equal representation from all the populations and not be based merely on excellence. The principal is deliberating between changing the criteria for participation in the chess team to allow equal representation of kids from disadvantaged populations or to primarily accept students based on excellence and increase the chances of continuous championships.

Which of the two options would you choose?

Accept students on the basis of excellence in chess in order to insure the teams continued success

To change the criteria for acceptance to the team in order to give fair representation to kids from weaker neighborhoods

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23. A high school offers two programs in history. The first program covers a broad range of topics and goes into depth on topics that are not covered by the matriculation exam. The second program is devoted to only covering topics that are on the matriculation exam. Professionally speaking, the first program is preferable to the second, though the second program seems likely to substantially increase the schools matriculation scores. The principal is deliberating whether to choose the program that is professionally better or to choose the program that will raise the scores.

Which of the two options would you choose?

The program that will increase success on matriculation exams

The program that is preferable from a professional standpoint

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24. A school has been offered a large financial donation to support a very successful geography program that has been run at the school for the last five years and is about to be closed due to financial problems. A philanthropist who is often identified with very left wing politics is offering the donation. The parents committee opposes the donation, since the donor is identified with opposing political views and values to theirs. Most of the community identifies with right wing parties. The principal is deliberating whether to accept the donation and avoid canceling the excellent program or, out of consideration for the community, reject the donation based on the value differences.

Which of the two options would you choose?

To consider the feelings of the community and reject the donation

To accept the donation in order to avoid canceling the successful program

25. A civics teacher offers a program that is quite critical and addresses the problematic relationship between money and politics. The program is meant to encourage students to adopt radical positions and question authority. A number of weeks after the program began, the father of one of the students who was a council member, was indicted for criminal activity. The student shows signs of suffering. The principal is debating whether or not to continue the class, which encourages critical thinking concerning authority, government and various types of power or to stop the program so as to not cause more harm to the student in the class.

Which of the two options would you choose?

To suspend the program in the interest of the student

To continue with the program so as to promote critical thinking regarding the relationship between money and politics

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26. The principal of a junior high school knows that many of the lessons in physical education are being devoted this year to free play. Last year, the teacher was new and very devoted to his students. This year, however, although there haven't been any student complaints, it seems he is preoccupied. The principal has talked to the teacher who explained that he was going through a divorce a rough period in his life. Despite the discussion, the teacher has not improved. The principal is deliberating whether to terminate the teacher's position for professional reasons or to continue employing him out of concern for his well-being and consideration for his personal circumstances.

Which of the two options would you choose?

Continue employing the teacher out of consideration for his personal situation

Terminate his employment towards the start of the next school year for professional reasons

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27. A public religious school in a conservative community has a female student who has been dressing and behaving provocatively. Modesty is one of the most important values to this community. The student has many behavioral problems and the principal is concerned that punishment, such as suspension, will lead her to be even more isolated from the normative framework. Since conversations and punishments haven't helped, the parents committee demands that the student be suspended from school. The principal is deliberating whether to accept the community's wishes and suspend her or not to suspend and act out of concern for the student.

Which of the two options would you choose?

Not to suspend the student out of concern for her well-being

To respond to the wishes of the community to maintain values of modesty and to suspend the student

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28. A spot opened up for a history teacher in a high school. Two teachers applied for the position. One of them is a native born Israeli who completed his M.A. in history. The other is Ethiopian born with a BEd in history from a teachers college. The principal is deliberating between hiring the teacher with the M.A. who has greater professional training, or to hire the teacher who immigrated to Israel in the name of 'affirmative action' and in an effort to change the negative stereotypes among the students.

Which of the two options would you choose?

Accept the teacher from the Ethiopian background in the interests of affirmative action and an effort to overcome stereotypes

To accept the teacher with greater professional training

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29. One of the teachers in a community that considers itself patriotic is encouraging the students to think critically about their society. In order to spark a good conversation she raises the notion that terrorism might be considered legitimate under certain circumstances and that even the early Zionists engaged in some forms of terrorism. Following this class discussion, the community asked the school to stop teaching such subjects because it undermines the very foundations of society. The principal is deliberating between ending the program and respecting the community's values or continuing the program that encourages critical thinking about society.

Which of the two options would you choose?

Continue the program which encourages critical thinking about Israeli society

End the program out of respect for the community

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30. The teachers in a school for special needs students have had an in-service training at the university, which has designed a new program for teaching daily and routine skills to the students. In contrast to the previous program, the new program does not incorporate parental involvement. The community of parents was built around the school and they believe that family involvement is fundamental in education and especially for kids with special needs. Therefore, the community has asked to remain with the old program. The principal is deliberating whether to keep the old program and give in to the community's desires or to bring in the new program and promote the higher professional standards.

Which of the two options would you choose?

Introduce the new program which is at a higher professional level

Keep the old program out of respect for the values of the parents

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**Comments:**

\* The Dilemmas were classified as follows:

- A. The ethic of Utility vs. the ethic of Justice: Dilemma 2 & 16
- B. The ethic of Utility vs. the ethic of Care: Dilemma 1 & 21
- C. The ethic of Utility vs. the ethic of Community: Dilemma 5 & 24
- D. The ethic of Utility vs. the ethic of Critique: Dilemma 3 & 22
- E. The ethic of Utility vs. the ethic of Professionalism: Dilemma 4 & 23
- F. The ethic of Justice vs. the ethic of Care: Dilemma 6 & 17
- G. The ethic of Justice vs. the ethic of Community: Dilemma 9 & 20
- H. The ethic of Justice vs. the ethic of Critique: Dilemma 15 & 18
- I. The ethic of Justice vs. the ethic of Professionalism: Dilemma 8 & 19
- J. The ethic of Care vs. the ethic of Community: Dilemma 12 & 27
- K. The ethic of Care vs. the ethic of Critique: Dilemma 10 & 25
- L. The ethic of Care vs. the ethic of Professionalism: Dilemma 7 & 26
- M. The ethic of Community vs. the ethic of Critique: Dilemma 14 & 29
- N. The ethic of Community versus Ethic of Professionalism: Dilemma 11 & 30
- O. The ethic of Critique vs. the ethic of Professionalism: Dilemma 13 & 28

† Dilemma number 7 (Ethic of care vs. Ethic of Professionalism), 11 (Ethic of Community vs. Ethic of Professionalism), and 15 (Ethic of Justice vs. Ethic of Critique), were not used in the data analysis as their test-retest reliability scores were nonsignificant.