

Collected Papers from the Second Annual Global Virtue Ethics Conference Istanbul, Turkey

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Editorial Observations

In early July, 2002 the e-journal *Global Virtue Ethics Review (GVER)* held its second annual ethics conference in conjunction with the International Association of Schools and Institutes of Administration (IASIA) at the International Conference Center in Istanbul, Turkey. A number of academics, practitioners and interested parties attended the special one day meeting whose theme focused on non traditional approaches to addressing and teaching ethics. In this special issue of *GVER*, the reader will be able to participate in much the same way as those who attended the conference. Following the pattern established at its first meeting in Athens, Greece in 2001, this issue of *GVER* is also available in a Microsoft Producer video download with synchronized PowerPoint slide presentations included. Each of the three papers presented follow this pattern with extended discussion sessions following the author's presentation.

Opening the conference was Thomas D. Lynch, Editor of *GVER* and Professor of Public Administration at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. Lynch, in his paper co-authored with Cynthia E. Lynch of Southern University, discusses teaching ethics online using the problem-based learning (PBL) method. According to Lynch and Lynch, PBL uses something similar to the familiar case study that public administration educators have used with varying degrees of success for many decades. However, in PBL educators must structure and use the case studies with a particular method of learning firmly in mind. The teacher wants the student to first encounter the problem. Next, the student should follow a systematic, student-centered inquiry process. The purpose behind PBL is to create in the student an attitude that induces an approach to problem solving that follows a method which helps the student approach the problem in a fruitful manner.

In PBL, the professor places the students into small groups with a faculty teacher/tutor. The role of the tutor is to facilitate the discussions but more significantly to bring the students

back to a reflection upon their learning that took place in their small group. The role of the tutor is not to provide a direct source of information for the group. The latter point is important because normally students get into the case study and focus their minds on the what-ifs of the case. But what the real purpose of the PBL is learning larger lessons that happen in the small group process but are largely ignored in the process of focusing on the case problem.

In the context of modern teaching technology, PBL can use the tools found in such software platforms as Blackboard that uses a discussion board. The professor can post the case material on the course web site, divide the class into groups of approximately six, set deadlines, and have the students discuss the case problem using the asynchronous discussion board forums. Finally, according to Lynch and Lynch, the advantages of the PBL teaching technique in the context of ethics education are important. Firstly, most students of ethics in public administration have a great deal of difficulty applying the concepts learned about ethics into practical situations they must face. What the PBL technique does is focus them on those connections and searching the theoretical for concepts applicable to the practical. Secondly, ethics tends to be uninteresting to many students easily because they simply cannot see how the topic might make a difference in their lives. PBL brings the subject alive and forces them to think in terms of complex theory. Thirdly, the need to confront various perspectives in considering ethical problems is critical. The PBL experience forces them to learn how to work with a difficult subject as a member of a group. Fourthly, group efforts require people to take on more than one role: leader, reporter, and discussant.

The second presenter was Anne Byrd Garofalo, LMSW-ACP, a psychotherapist in private practice in Austin, Texas. In her conference presentation, "Right Relationship, Right Livelihood and Right Conduct: Ethics for Mental Health Professionals," Garofalo uses a practitioner's perspective in her qualitative research work to develop a set of ethics for mental health professionals. According to the presenter, a number of patient/practitioner agreements common to all therapeutic work form the basis for Garofalo's research. These agreements include such items as the practitioner will do no harm, will keep patient confidentiality, and will get informed patient consent. However, both the practitioner and the patient have shared agreements too. These include items such as both will tell the truth to each other, both will keep agreements with each other, both will not act sexually or romantically with each other, and both will agree clearly on a time, place and duration of their sessions and the associated fees for these services.

From these common agreements, Garofalo developed a set of questions to use as she conducted a series of interviews with mental health practitioners in the Austin, Texas area, asking for their views on common ethical dilemmas they face in their practices, how they work through those dilemmas, and resources they might use in the dilemma solving process. In framing her inquiry, Garofalo developed six questions to guide her practitioner interviews. These questions covered a range of ethics issues, including specifics such as: describe one or two important recurring ethical dilemmas that you experience in your practice; how do you tend to resolve, or at least work through, these dilemmas; does your professional association provide any help with these dilemmas; have you participated in ethics training- and your impressions of its usefulness; how would you conduct such training; and how should such training be designed and delivered.

As a context for her findings, Garofalo introduces Buddhist perspectives, specifically, the Noble Eightfold Path, as a framework for conceptualizing right relationships among individuals, and for the purposes of her research, relationships among practitioners and their patients. From this view, according to Garofalo, common unethical money behaviors, sexual behaviors, and power behaviors between practitioners and patients can be identified and mitigated or hopefully

avoided. From her interviews, Garofalo notes unethical money behaviors include retaining a client who is not benefiting from therapy in order to keep receiving the fee, accepting a payment for a referral, charging excessive fees, and borrowing money from a client. Interviewees reported some unethical practitioner sexual behaviors include physical sexual contact, sexual harassment, and responding to patient romantic fantasies in ways that support, rather than counter, the fantasy. According to Garofalo, certain conditions can be identified in which practitioners may find themselves vulnerable to unethical behaviors. These vulnerabilities include disregard and disrespect for the patient, professional burnout, and a practitioner's unexamined personal issues, also called counter transference. As a counter to these vulnerabilities, Garofalo describes several essential conditions for promoting professional ethical behavior. These include authentic caring by a practitioner for their patients, a willingness for practitioners to examine their own motivations, a willingness to tell the truth, and a willingness to ask for outside help, or consultation, when needed. Based on her research, Garofalo says that many aspects of the Noble Eightfold Path of Buddhism can be integrated with the successful steps practitioners use when confronting and dealing with ethical dilemmas in their practices. Participants in Garofalo's interviews support this view, noting that increased truth telling, more support for developing respectful behavior from practitioners towards patients, and more training in counter transference issues are all important ethical issues for mental health professionals to confront.

Lastly, Peter Cruise of California State University-Chico, discussed an extension of his earlier work on a "deregulated" approach to ethics in the healthcare sector. Currently, according to Cruise, ethics discussions in healthcare focus around issues related to fraud, waste and abuse and applications of the False Claims Act. Individual and organization activities closely follow the latest pronouncements from various Offices of Inspectors General and watch attentively as individuals seek federal whistleblower protections as they "out" alleged illegal activity. As Cruise notes, the current system of ethics in healthcare is a sanctions-based system relying on whistleblowers and increasing regulation to keep everyone "honest." The costs in terms of loss of organization productivity and individual dysfunction have been noted elsewhere (e.g., Lynch, Lynch and Cruise, 2002 and Cruise, 2002).

In his presentation and paper for this conference, Cruise notes that ethics education is an important component in the curricula of many university degree programs, particularly those programs specializing in health care management. In fact, a review of nationally accredited health care management programs reveals that at least seventy percent address the substantive areas of ethics, laws, or regulations. The need is critical for discussion and examination of ethical issues in the health care systems in many countries. For example, the U.S. Medicare program alone lost \$ 20 billion dollars in 1997 just due to fraud upon the system. However Cruise argues that, in both the practice and study of health care management, the particular methods used to promote ethical behavior have been inadequate. These methods overly stress the need for dealing with increasing control of organization actions, corporate compliance, issues related to laws and regulations such as the False Claims Act, *qui tam*, and whistle blowing. Cruise discusses the classic "moral indoctrination" charge that potentially faces any ethics course instructor, he then notes the context and significance of fraud, waste and abuse in the U.S. health care system, highlighting the dysfunction caused by the current practices promoting ethical conduct. Next, he presents and discusses the concept of a "deregulated" approach to promoting ethical behavior in both the study and practice of health care management. Lastly, a vehicle for developing this alternative ethical perspective in both study and practice of health care management through a modified Joint Commission for the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations or JCAHO accreditation process is offered.

After each presentation, an extended discussion took place among the presenters and those discussants in the audience. Discussants were Charles Garofalo of Southwest Texas State University at San Marcos, Cynthia E. Lynch of Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana and Audrey Mathews of California State University-San Bernadino. Christine Cruise of Children's Hospital and Research Center in Oakland, California also attended the session. Extended excerpts of these discussions are found in the Microsoft Producer files for each presenter.

References

Cruise, Peter L. Winter, 2002. "Are There Virtues in Whistleblowing? Perspectives from Health Care Organizations." *Public Administration Quarterly*. Vol. 25 (4): pp. 413-435.

Lynch, Thomas D., Cynthia E. Lynch and Peter L. Cruise. 2002. "Productivity and the Moral Manager." *Administration & Society*. Vol.34 (4): pp. 347-369.