MORAL PLURALISM IN BUSINESS ETHICS EDUCATION: IT IS ABOUT TIME

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The teaching of business ethics is almost inherently pluralistic, but little evidence of explicitly pluralistic approaches exists in teaching materials besides the available decision-making frameworks. In this article, it is argued that the field needs to acknowledge and adopt pluralism as the standard pedagogical approach, whether the individual teacher uses a philosophical approach or a more applied approach, to best serve students and society. Examples of teaching approaches are offered, including attempts instructors have made to teach ethics in a pluralistic manner.

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The call for teaching ethics in business schools has become clarion (e.g., see "MBAs Need More," 2003). This call is not new (see Porter & McKibben, 1988), but the 21st century has opened with a series of corporate scandals bringing the behavior of executives into sharp focus. Current and prospective students, alumni, and employers have asked of business schools, "Are you even teaching people ethics?"

As teachers in the field of business ethics, we find this new call for ethics in the business curriculum exciting, even if we might be a bit cynical about its prompts. Indeed, unless one subscribes to what has been called the myth of the amoral business (DeGeorge, 1999), one must acknowledge the moral dimension in every business decision. Based on our experiences in the class-

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room and as students of moral theory ourselves, we argue for a point of view that represents the reality of morality in a business context—and at the same time provides a much-needed corrective to the traditional shareholder-privileging view put forth by many in business education. Yet, the view must also be grounded in theory so that students may understand why it is they can sleep at night and look themselves in the mirror the next morning without shame. We argue for an explicit discussion of moral pluralism and the use of a well-grounded pluralistic framework in the teaching of business ethics. We believe this approach provides students with a well-filled moral tool kit to take with them in their careers alongside the business tool kit they receive from their business education.

Pluralism

Pluralism can be defined as the view that more than one basic principle operates equally in an area of human endeavor. Within moral philosophy (Becker, 1992; Timmons, 2002), pluralism is considered a middle ground between monism (the view that one principle or good is basic) and relativism (the view that no principle or good is basic across individuals or societies). In moral pluralism, a certain finite number of principles or intrinsic goods are identified as basic. All are examined in the course of making a decision, and moral judgment is called upon in judging which principle or good gains the highest priority while still fulfilling other principles or attaining other goods as far as is practical. It has been argued that all moral theories are pluralistic to some extent (Becker, 1992). For example, John Rawls's (1971) theory of justice has two principles, one pertaining to liberty and the other, split into two parts, pertaining to equality of opportunity and outcomes. The theory seems pluralistic, but there is an order of control assigned to them. The liberty principle takes priority in decision making. Such a theory is not what Becker (1992) called "genuinely pluralistic." To become genuinely pluralistic, Becker said, a theory must not assign an absolute order or give a single unifying scheme to the multiple principles found therein.

Resnik (2003) gave one negative argument and two positive arguments in favor of moral pluralism. The negative argument is that neither monism nor relativism provides a correct account of morality in a complex world, thereby leaving some form of pluralism as the only reasonable option. The positive arguments, meaning that pluralism does provide an adequate account of morality in a complex world, are as follows: (a) Pluralism accounts well for complexity without losing universal principles, and (b) it reflects the pluralism of modern society and so is acceptable to such a society. Timmons (2002)

advanced two additional arguments following Williams (1995). First, our nature is to form ethical ideas from many sources to create what Williams called a "complex historical deposit," which will push us toward a pluralistic view. Second, moral judgment seems ubiquitous in both practical thinking and more general moral reflection, and no single principle can capture the whole of moral judgment.

Two important objections often are made against pluralism. Some argue that pluralism is inconsistent because it privileges different principles in different situations. Defenders of pluralism say different principles should be used in different situations for good reasons, and in similar cases, people will come to similar judgments regarding the relative importance of principles within the specific context.

Others believe that pluralism is indeterminate because it gives no easily identifiable decision rule to use (e.g., Hill, 1992). Pluralists typically admit this indeterminacy but argue that, in fact, such indeterminacy is a reason to embrace pluralism in a complex world, because moral judgment is necessary in all realistic moral decisions (e.g., Timmons, 2002).

It is very difficult to avoid engaging in a certain level of moral pluralism when practicing our craft. This has been acknowledged in the literature (e.g., Gonzalez, 2003; Resnik, 2003). However, only Cavanagh (1998), Collins and O'Rourke (1994), Deinhart (2000), and Trevino and Nelson (2004) offer much discussion of pluralism or take an explicitly pluralistic approach. In Cavanagh, Collins and O'Rourke, and Trevino and Nelson, that approach seems without theory—on the order of, "These theories all have good points and bad points. We can't pick one, so we need to use all of them." These efforts to include pluralism in the conversation about business ethics are laudable, although the discussions of pluralism could be more explicit. Most others (e.g., to cite three, Boatright, 2003; DeGeorge, 1999; Donaldson, Werhane, & Cording, 2002) have either cursory or no coverage of pluralism and no framework to help us answer the question posed by Buchholz and Rosenthal (1996) of how we are to use theories based on different foundations to help us make ethical decisions in the business world.

The Teaching of Business Ethics

Most business ethicists would agree on the importance of teaching the usual moral theories—some combination of Kantian deontology, utilitarianism, virtue, justice, rights, caring, natural law, social contract, and perhaps others (to accept this, one need only look at the standard texts in the field). They all contain important perspectives, mostly differing, that seem to

enhance our understanding of the nature of morality and perhaps the difficulty of making moral decisions.

The problem in teaching theories is that instructors must put questions in students' minds about the worth of the very theories they teach if they give adequate coverage to those theories, including their flaws. This problem becomes even clearer when discussions turn from the conceptual level to discussions of issues or case analyses. At a conceptual level, following Kant's categorical imperative might be clear. In specific situations, however, the right action according to Kantian theory may not be so clear. Consider a case we will revisit later in the article, a case in which a customer makes a false claim for defective merchandise from a recent shipment and asks the salesperson to submit the claim so that the customer can get what is in effect a discounted price. The salesperson's supervisor supports the submission of the false claim, thereby implying that the salesperson's job is on the line. Submitting a false claim violates Kant's prohibition against lying. Not submitting the claim seemingly treats the salesperson's family as means to an end—that of personal integrity. Once a discussion reaches that conclusion, the limitations of Kant's theory become obvious to students, and they may well wonder why that theory (or any other) is worth discussing.

Often in such discussions and analyses we will find one theory helping us find an answer better than another. The problem results when, as is usually the case, different theories work well in some situations but not in others. In the classes we have taught, the more perceptive students recognize the pluralistic nature of business ethics. They then ask whether the fact that no theory fits all situations better than any other theory justifies any sort of moral relativism. In the past, we have said that one must choose for oneself the theory or combination of theories that makes sense to them, whereas the moral notion of respect for persons overrides all the differences to provide something of a common outlook. Honestly, however, we must say that respect for persons can be defined differently. This answer thus has come to be unsatisfactory to us.

In essence, then, we have done what Buchholz and Rosenthal (1996) criticized as presenting "an ethical smorgasbord" without providing any reasonable way of organizing people's thoughts to help them choose what to do at any given meal. We have become convinced this does little for the student. Pluralism remains hidden except for students perceptive and brave enough to confront the issue. For those still in the dark, the business ethics class becomes confusing and perhaps adds to the perception that business and moral theory have little to say to one another.

Good students understand that relativism is not a morally acceptable option, as Rachels (2003) explained, because it allows neither for criticism of

a society or an individual nor improvement within a society. Such students also realize, as they proceed through a business ethics course, that any single monistic theory does not provide a satisfactory solution to all problems. They hear the criticisms of each moral theory presented, and they understand that some of those criticisms cannot be answered. This leaves them with pluralism as the only acceptable option.

Without an explicit discussion of pluralism, however, students will only understand the pluralistic nature of morality by reflecting on the nature of morality. Students who do not engage in that reflection will not gain the understanding. We believe that the insights good students gain on reflection must be made available to all students. This means that teachers of business ethics must embrace the idea of teaching in an explicitly pluralistic framework.

TEACHING BUSINESS ETHICS PLURALISTICALLY

By approaching ethical decision making pluralistically, we gain the advantages of a general pluralistic approach—advantages that are magnified in business situations. The mere fact that business ethics researchers and philosophers still argue about applying monistic moral theories to business situations leads us to believe that those theories do not give us an adequate account of morality in a business context. Most business situations are complex, with multiple stakeholders and multiple perspectives, and Timmons (2002), in his conclusion to a critical survey of moral theories, argued that pluralistic approaches handle complexity better than other types of moral theory for the reasons noted above. In essence, then, we clarify the subject of business ethics by approaching it pluralistically by allowing students to appreciate what morality brings to business decisions and matching what students perceive in the real world.

A separate advantage of explicitly adopting a pluralistic approach in teaching is that the instructor can worry less about conflicts among moral theories. Instead, the instructor can focus more on a framework incorporating the complementary nature of moral considerations—those elements of a situation to be taken into account when making a decision. Examples of moral considerations can be found in Table 1. Discussions of considerations, such as net benefits to society and individual character, tend to focus on how one emphasizes a particular aspect of morality whereas another emphasizes a different aspect of morality. By examining what is unique in each moral consideration and at the same time noting the complementarity of all considerations, we bring meaningfulness to discussions that might otherwise seem pointless.

For example, one consideration, benefits to society (i.e., the principle underlying utilitarianism), views nonmoral good as basic, whereas another consideration, personal integrity (i.e., the moral act is that which a virtuous person would do), views moral worth as basic. At times, one consideration will be more important than the other; at other times, the importance will be reversed. In a case where an individual making a decision sees nonmoral good as the most important issue, perhaps in a case such as the Exxon Valdez oil spill, then it makes sense in that case to emphasize a principle dealing with benefits to society, such as that underlying utilitarianism or that underlying the land ethic. However, if the individual making the decision sees his or her moral worth as the most important issue, perhaps in a whistle-blowing case such as Sherron Watkins of Enron, then a character-based principle might become more important. Therefore, we can see that situational factors might privilege certain ethical considerations above others.

Basing discussion in theories rather than considerations might be seen as giving similar choices. The nature of the conversation will be different, however. In a theory-based discussion, the concentration will be on the relative merits of the theories in the specific situation, difficulties in applying one or the other, and what the analysis means in terms of their general applicability. It will lead students to question whether any theory is worth discussing and also push them more toward a relativistic view of morality. If the discussion is based on considerations, the concentration will be on which consideration is more important in the specific situation, the reasons for this, and the implications for future situations. This approach seems to us to be more helpful for students who are getting ready to make decisions about moral elements in their work environments.

Organizing a Pluralistic Business Ethics Course

If we are to set out to teach ethics pluralistically, there are at least two possible approaches: using a philosophical framework or a practical, decision-based framework.

PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH

Buchholz and Rosenthal (1996) offered philosophical pragmatism as a possible philosophical framework. Pragmatism can be defined philosophically as the idea that what works most effectively in societies provides a standard for the judgment of right actions. They admitted this is a radical approach, as they rejected any synthesis of moral principles and moved to a rejection of a rule-based framework.

TABLE 1
Moral Considerations Emphasized in Monistic Moral Theories

Theory	*Consideration*
Kantian deontology	Duty to follow principles
Utilitarianism	Net benefits to society
Rights based	Duty to protect others' rights
Virtue	Individual character
Justice	Fairness
Caring	Desire to strengthen relationships
Social contract	Peace in society/fulfilling promise to society

An alternative approach is Rossian moral pluralism (Ross, 1930). This approach offers seven prima facie duties: fidelity (keeping promises), reparation (repaying others for wrongs done to them), gratitude (repaying others for previous favors), justice (being fair), beneficence (helping others), self-improvement (gaining knowledge or virtue), and nonmaleficence (doing no harm). A prima facie duty is not absolute; one uses moral judgment to determine which duty is the most stringent, or important, in any situation. Ross's (1930) approach can be pointed to as a stereotypical pluralistic approach, and it shares much with the teaching approach based on considerations described above.

An approach properly characterized as pluralistic arising from within business ethics itself is integrative social contracts theory (Donaldson & Dunfee, 1999). This approach discusses macrosocial contracts, to which all people engaged in economic exchange agree, and microsocial contracts, to which members of specific local economic communities may agree. Differences in microsocial contracts can arise across communities, but macrosocial contracts are universal. Hypernorms, which might be analogous to moral considerations, are used to judge whether microsocial contracts are morally valid. Hypernorms and their application could be used as a framework for a business ethics course.

Any of these approaches (pragmatism, Rossian pluralism, or integrative social contracts theory) will provide a philosophical framework for the class. Particularly in a course that is taught from a philosophical basis, the use of such a framework is natural and may be preferred over the use of a more decision-oriented framework.

As an example of the use of such a framework, consider the case mentioned above in which a customer asks a salesperson to submit a false claim for defective merchandise so that the customer can get what is in effect a dis-

counted price. For the framework in this example, we will use Rossian pluralism (Ross, 1930). In this case, we might see a duty of fidelity (keeping a promise to the organization), one of nonmaleficence (if not submitting the claim would lead to harm to organization members), one of justice (is it fair that others do not receive the de facto discount), and perhaps others. Given the full facts of the case, one or more of these duties might not be relevant. It is then up to the actor (or here, the student) to decide which of the duties must be fulfilled; not fulfilling some duties may lead to duties of reparation.

In using such an approach, the instructor helps the students work through whether and how each duty is relevant in the case after he or she helps them identify the facts as known. The instructor then facilitates a discussion about which duty is most stringent. In doing so, the instructor prompts the students to exercise their moral judgment and must stand ready to point out flaws in judgment if necessary. Once the most stringent duty is found, the instructor asks what the final decision is and then discusses with the students the implications of this decision for future decisions.

Such a course could be organized in one of several ways. In one approach, individual class sessions can focus on one specific duty (in the case of Rossian theory) or hypernorm (in the case of integrative social contracts theory) and use that duty or hypernorm exclusively in a case analysis to highlight when it is and is not relevant. At the end of such a course, the instructor will conduct some general case analyses using all duties or hypernorms. Alternatively, one can discuss all duties or hypernorms conceptually at the beginning of the course without individual case analysis and then later use a series of cases to conduct general analyses.

PRACTICAL APPROACH

If one is not comfortable teaching from a pluralist philosophical perspective, or if one teaches a more applied course in which most discussion centers around case situations, it still is possible to teach business ethics pluralistically. This choice would involve using a decision framework not unlike those used by Cavanagh (1998), Collins and O'Rourke (1994), or Trevino and Nelson (2004). Instead of specifically using moral theories in such a framework, however, one makes the framework out of moral considerations. Here we are talking about the elements that make an action right. For example, an action might lead to net benefits for society (however those net benefits have been determined). Such an action could be considered right. An action also might conform to the duty we have in a particular situation. That fact also would allow us to judge an action as right.

A framework built around such moral considerations would not have the philosophical coherence of pragmatism or Rossian pluralism. However, it would give students something on which to focus when making a decision, either in a case analysis or in real life, while at the same time taking the focus away from conflicts in theories or rules and directing it more toward the complementary nature of considerations, as previously discussed. A decision-based approach using considerations eliminates a layer of complexity and possible confusion thereby allowing the instructor and students to reach the important issues without being concerned about what a particular answer says about the overall relevance of a particular theory. It also likely mirrors the approach students use in their personal lives and will be called upon to use when they are in business situations.

In the case used above concerning the submission of a false claim, students could weigh the various considerations in Table 1 to decide which one had more moral importance in such a case. For example, the false claim could be the key to retaining a major customer. In such a case, does the duty not to lie to one's employer outweigh the consequences of losing the account? Is such an approach fair to all customers? Is this a case in which character is served by telling the truth, or does some other character trait besides honesty become important?

In a course using a practical approach, the instructor prompts students to look at the elements of the case and try to find a solution that allows all considerations to be met. If such a solution is not found, the instructor asks the students which consideration was most important (or, conversely, least important) in the specific situation. After that discussion, the instructor will start a conversation regarding the proper decision based on the relevant considerations and their moral judgment about what such considerations mandate.

The major question to be answered in forming such a framework concerns the considerations to be included. Moral theories can be of use here. Monistic moral theories emphasize one aspect of morality—essentially one consideration that always has priority under that theory (see Table 1). For example, Kantian ethics emphasizes duties we have toward ourselves and each other—duties we find through rational exploration of the different formulations of the categorical imperative. Therefore, one moral consideration is the duties we find ourselves confronted with in a situation. Utilitarianism would emphasize a net benefit to society. Rights-based theories would emphasize our obligation to uphold others' rights. Virtue theory would emphasize individual character. Different versions of justice theory would emphasize different versions of fairness of outcomes, depending on the definition used. Caring theory would emphasize the strengthening of relationships. Social

contract theory might emphasize keeping the peace or fulfilling a promise, depending on the version to which one refers. All of these emphases are moral considerations and can be included in a decision-based framework—not as theories but as important elements to consider in the decision process.

To augment discussions of moral considerations, an instructor could use professional standards or codes of ethics. Accountants, financial planners, human resource professionals, engineers, marketing executives, and many other professionals subscribe to such standards and codes through their professional societies. Depending on the type of course, students could select codes or standards in their majors, or the instructor could choose one example. In either case, the instructor and students would work to identify the specific considerations represented by the code's or standard's elements. In the case of the filing of the false claim for defective merchandise, students might consult a code of ethics for sales professionals. Using such a code, the students can determine which statements in the code would be most applicable to the situation and make a decision based on that determination and their moral judgment.

Some codes of ethics might have an order of control in which one statement in the code is more important than others. Such a code is pluralistic to some extent, but not to the extent that a theory such as pragmatism or prima facie duties is, or to the extent that a practical decision framework is. It still might be useful in a business ethics course, however. One assignment using such codes could be to have students analyze the extent to which they are pluralistic in nature. Such an assignment could help students better understand the nature of morality in the specific context as well as help them to be able to link concepts and practice.

As is the case with a philosophical approach, with a practical approach, the instructor can use one of at least two methods. One is to focus conceptually on each consideration and then use a series of case analyses to examine how they work in concert. The other is to use cases to examine each consideration individually and then conduct a few general case analyses at the end of the course.

PLURALISM AND MORAL JUDGMENT

One possible instructor worry in using either approach—philosophical or practical—is the importance each places on moral judgment. Reliance on moral judgment can be worrisome because decisions can seem arbitrary in the sense that morally thoughtful people can differ in their decisions. This may seem to point toward moral relativism. But in reality, all moral theories rely on moral judgment. For example, Kantian deontology relies on reason to

determine whether a maxim is universalizable, or whether the act in question treats people as ends and not as means only, or whether it gives people autonomy of the will. Utilitarianism relies on judgment as to the consequences of an action, as well as the value to be placed on benefits and costs of the alternative courses of action. Virtue theory relies on judgment of what the virtuous level of a character trait is in a specific situation. Caring theory relies on judgment of the caring act in a given situation. Professional standards and codes, if there is no order of control, rely on judgment to determine the most relevant statements in a specific situation. Therefore, these examples show that the use of judgment in ethics cannot be denied. Also, morally thoughtful people can differ in their decisions under multiple monistic theories as well. A Kantian might differ from a utilitarian in deciding which action is moral in a particular situation.

REFOCUSING THE EMPHASIS

In either the philosophical approach or the practical approach, adopting a pluralistic approach is essentially changing the question asked in a business ethics course. The traditional approach asks the question, "Is a certain behavior ethical?" To answer the question examines the behavior, or a case that exemplifies the behavior, in light of one or more moral theories. In a pluralistic philosophical approach, the question is what a pluralistic theory says about the ethical nature of business. This is because a pluralistic theory looks at the entirety of the situation and brings moral judgment explicitly into play instead of focusing on one or two principles that might be presented as mutually exclusive. In a practical approach, the question might be why a particular set of moral considerations is important in a business context or why a specific set of professional standards makes sense. Again, cases are examined from a more holistic point of view, and moral judgment must be called upon explicitly. In either case, students are more likely to see what it means to be ethical in business or their chosen fields than they will in a traditional approach, because they are examining situations from a more realistic perspective than that given by the traditional approach.

Our Experiences

As teachers of business ethics, we have used the ethical smorgasbord approach of discussing individual theories without having a pluralistic framework to tie them together, the practical approach of eschewing theory and concentrating on the elements emphasized in different theories such as duties and benefits, and an approach that combines Rossian pluralism and

other moral theories in a sort of hybrid. It was experience with the first approach that led us to search for other alternatives.

One author's experience with the smorgasbord approach is instructive. The course was structured with discussions of moral theories alternating with case discussions for which only one theory was used for the analysis for each. This approach clearly was not successful in getting most students to understand the complexity of moral decision making. Although most students enjoyed the case discussions, they came away from each discussion (in which the theory's advantages and flaws were fully examined) questioning the relevance of each theory.

At the end of the course, some case discussions were more general, and students were asked which theory they might apply to the specific case. This helped the students, by their own admission, understand that different theories could be more or less useful in different situations. Even with a decision framework with which to guide them, however, they said it was difficult to understand the pluralistic approach to morality. This was shown in the students' final papers. The assignment included a section in which the students were to identify the moral theory with which they agreed. Most students wound up identifying at least two moral theories, some of which were contradictory. They found it difficult to explain why this was the case. From a pluralistic standpoint, explaining this is easy. Different situations highlight different moral considerations. But the students had not understood that perspective, likely, in part, because the smorgasbord of theories hid it from them.

Two authors, tired of experiencing similar frustration, independently tried a version of the practical approach without calling it such. One urged students to ask seven questions (see Table 2) about each alternative action in a case situation. The students' objective was to find an alternative in which they could see that the alternative would allow them to answer "yes" to each of the seven questions. Each question aimed at a particular moral consideration, such as principles or duties, benefits, fairness, relationships, freedom, character, or sustainability. Table 3 shows the matrix students used in the analysis. In some cases, students were able to find such alternatives. In many cases, however, such an alternative was not easily found.

In those cases where no alternative allowed a "yes" answer to each question, students needed to use their moral judgment to determine the best alternative, which might not simply be the alternative with the most "yes" answers. In such a case, a consideration deemed most important, such as violating a deontological principle, might not receive a "yes" answer under that alternative but, in fact, might be the consideration most appropriately used in making a decision. If that were to happen, students understood that the alter-

TABLE 2
Questions Used in a Pluralistic Business Ethics Course

Does the contemplated action:	conform to moral principles?
	create more good than harm?
	lead to fair outcomes?
	promote caring relationships?
	advance personal liberty?
	contribute to sustainability?
	stimulate personal ideals?

TABLE 3
A Table Used in a Pluralistic Business Ethics Course

	Alternative 1	*Alternative 2*	*Alternative 3*	*Alternative 4*	*Alternative 5*	*Alternative 6*
Principles						
Outcomes						
Fairness						
Caring						
Liberty						
Character						
Sustainability						

native in question needed to be eliminated. They would look for the alternative under which the question concerning the most appropriate consideration was answered “yes” and which also contained the highest number of “yes” answers to other questions.

The other author also used seven considerations: consequences, principles, rights, duties, character, agreement, and relationships. Each consideration was discussed conceptually and then used as the only relevant consideration in a case analysis. At the end of the course, several days were devoted to general case analyses using all considerations. In these analyses, considerations not considered relevant were eliminated from the discussion so that the students could focus on considerations that were relevant in their decision processes. Students identified the most important considerations in the case and analyzed alternatives in basically the same way as did the students discussed in the previous paragraph.

Students understood the pluralistic nature of business ethics much more easily under both of these practical approaches than with the smorgasbord

approach and were able to articulate their decisions in a pluralistic manner by discussing the various considerations and how they applied to the alternative actions possible in a case situation. The decision framework helped students organize their thinking in generating and evaluating the alternative actions rather than simply choosing from what seemed to be equally useful ethical perspectives in evaluation. The course was thus more successful in its primary aim of helping students understand the nature of moral decisions in a business context as judged by the quality of class discussions and papers and evidenced by improved final grades. Students particularly noted that they were comfortable in understanding and applying the ethical context under this approach. One student reported, "I feel like I exit the class with a much better understanding of ethics and, most importantly, a *useable framework* from which to make decisions."

Finally, an author tried to introduce Rossian pluralism in a more traditional business ethics course. This was an attempt to give the ethical smorgasbord a unifying theme while still giving extensive coverage to the monistic theories and thus was a hybrid of the philosophical approach and the smorgasbord approach. This author identified certain moral theories with rough counterparts in the Rossian list of prima facie duties. For example, Ross's (1930) duty of beneficence roughly corresponds to consequentialist moral considerations and thus to utilitarianism as the major consequentialist theory. Once the correspondence was demonstrated, the students investigated the individual moral theories, both conceptually and through case analyses, to see examples of their usefulness in different situations, much as in the first approach explained above. At the end of the course, general case discussions brought the theories into the Rossian framework, as case discussions focused on the Rossian duties.

The students understood the pluralistic perspective under this approach, but they seemed somewhat confused by the place of the various moral theories in the Rossian framework, as was shown in their assignments and discussions. Final grades with this approach were little better than with the smorgasbord approach. A better approach in this case seemingly would be to concentrate on the duties themselves in a true philosophical approach as outlined above. Monistic moral theories could be introduced as references as appropriate in the discussions of the duties without spending extensive amounts of time defining and explaining the theories themselves. For example, a class session could focus on the duty of beneficence. Within the conceptual discussion, it could be pointed out that this duty is examining consequences of behavior for others, and the duty entails that the actor seeks good consequences for others. It then could be pointed out that utilitarianism is a monistic theory that also emphasizes consequences, and it can be used as a

method for examining consequences. This approach could be modified for use with pragmatism or integrative social contracts theory as well.

LESSONS LEARNED

We have learned several lessons in our experiments with teaching business ethics in a more pluralistic way. First, mixing approaches does not seem to be a good idea. The more purely practical approach seemed to be more successful in helping students understand and apply the pluralistic nature of business ethics than did the hybrid approach. Second, the use of a framework, whether philosophical or practical, seems to be important. It seems to help the students organize their thoughts. Third, and most important from our perspective, the students seemed to be able to conduct a more contextual and nuanced analysis of cases under the pluralistic approach in both oral and written form. Finally, it is important for people to work together to bring off such an approach. As teachers of business ethics, we have benefited from conversations with philosophers about moral theory and pluralism and other business faculty about practical issues, both of which we can bring into our courses. The philosophers we have talked with have benefited from our sharing of issues specific to business ethics and from business faculty's sharing of codes of ethics and professional standards. Business faculty members seeking to incorporate ethics into their courses have benefited from discussions with business ethics faculty and philosophers, as they have gained more understanding of moral theory, pluralism, and issues in business ethics. All instructors benefit, and that most likely leads to benefits gained by students as well.

Conclusion

In a subject as vital to society as is business ethics, it is important that we as its teachers get it right. It is our conviction, based on our experiences, that getting it right means not merely acknowledging the inherently pluralistic nature of the subject but embracing it, engaging students in discussions and debates that help hone their moral judgment, so that when they leave our care and emerge as managers and leaders, they have the moral tool kit alongside the business tool kit so that they can make decisions that are morally sound as well as economically sound. It is here that the refocusing of emphasis discussed above becomes really important, for the moral tool kit is well rounded and grounded more in reality than if it is populated with monistic moral theories. Students feel more comfortable with the decision framework that emerges, for they understand the decision process not as a sorting out of con-

flicts among theories but as a sifting of context to understand the important considerations.

The importance of moral judgment in any pluralistic approach means we must teach moral judgment to students (perhaps a better way of saying this is that we must develop our students' moral judgment). We must ensure that students understand the theories, their uses, and their limitations. We then must give them practice, real-world practice if possible and simulated if necessary, in making and analyzing decisions so that they may learn from themselves and from others. We also must model moral judgment in our actions, both in class and in out-of-class situations. In essence, this is what we must do as teachers of business ethics, no matter how we teach it.

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