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Striving for Integrity in Educational Policy-Making:

An ethical metaphor

Abstract

This paper is about educational policy-making considerations that engage the emotional and intellectual energies of school administrators. Specifically, this article uses a swimming pool water purification metaphor to discuss how educational leaders may sustain the ethical integrity of their professional policy-making. The metaphor is designed to enhance the reader's appreciation of the ethical considerations undertaken by school leaders as they seek to sharpen the policy justifications that accompany their policy decisions. This metaphor extends beyond the rational-technical limits of most filter metaphors to appreciate some of the more complex cultural variables inherent in school settings.

Résumé

Cet article porte sur les paramètres stratégiques de l'éducation qui engagent les énergies affectives et intellectuelles des administrateurs scolaires. En particulier, l'auteur utilise la métaphore de la purification de l'eau d'une piscine pour analyser la façon dont les dirigeants scolaires peuvent assurer l'intégrité morale de leurs stratégies professionnelles. Cette métaphore cherche à mieux faire comprendre au lecteur les paramètres éthiques dont doivent tenir compte les dirigeants scolaires lorsqu'ils cherchent à aiguiser les justifications stratégiques qui accompagnent leurs décisions. Cette métaphore dépasse les limites rationnelles-techniques de la plupart des métaphores "filtres" pour mieux faire comprendre certaines des variables culturelles plus complexes inhérentes au milieu scolaire.

This article uses the metaphor of a swimming pool water purification process to discuss how educational leaders may ideally ensure that the integrity of their policy-making is maintained. The metaphor is designed to enhance the reader's appreciation of the ethical considerations school leaders may undertake as they seek to sharpen their policy justifications. This is an article that encourages the readers to use their moral imaginations and to be professionally and ethically idealistic as they strive to maintain their administrative integrities.

Policy-making in the 1990s certainly engages the emotional and intellectual energies of school leaders. A number of recent writers have reminded those in the administrative fields of the importance of developing integrity-enhancing frameworks for the outworking of their leadership responsibilities. For example, Sergiovanni (1992) contends that educators have commonly been preoccupied with authority derived from position, psychological manoeuvres, and rational-technical competencies. Perhaps, he suggests, an over-reliance on these sources of authority has mistakenly overlooked the salience of professional and moral authority in school leader deliberations. He says that there is a need to put the heart back into educational judgements. Senge (1990) discusses the need for executives working in learning organizations to master certain sets of personal disciplines in order to deal with the tensions and conflicts of their circumstances. He proposes that leaders focus on their daily incongruities, integrate reason and intuition in their decision-making, and develop compassion and commitment to the whole of their stewardship. Vaill (1989) indicates that in a world that is unstable at every point, leaders need to habituate ways of working collectively, reflectively, and spiritually smarter (p. 29). These authors are representative of those advocating an approach to educational quandaries that is more inclusive of personal, professional, and ethical perspectives than have commonly been suggested.

Pools and Schools: A Metaphor

A few recent adventures to community swimming pools, with his three sons, have convinced the writer that many changes have taken place in these waterscapes during the last few decades. Swimming pools now have family change-rooms, water slides, brightly painted walls, hot tubs, tarzan-like swinging ropes, "zero-depth" water for tots, wave machines, and even kid-friendly climb-on-whales. When the "old lifeguard" imagines herself in the sandals of the teenage lifeguards, she nearly has "anxiety fits" over patron behaviour that would never have been tolerated in "her day." These new swimming pools seem much more suited to fun and recreation than were the "lane swimming," "walk! -don't run!", and "no double-bouncing" versions of yesteryear. Anyone who has been "out of education"

for a few years might return to observe that the educationscape has also experienced some radical changes.

Rescue-buoy carrying lifeguards now seem much more willing than previous generations of lifeguards to let people monitor themselves. They seem more client-sensitive and more accommodating of the chaos that accompanies contemporary fun-making. Lifeguards, it seems, have relinquished their peremptory control and have taken a less conspicuous role in the poolside proceedings. By way of contrast, it may be recalled that, in the past, swimmers were constantly reminded of the lifeguard's central and authoritative presence through their blowing whistles or yelling commands at transgressors from their "high chair" perches. School leadership has experienced some similar role transitions. The domineering leader perched high on the school system hierarchy has been ever more frequently observed to be descending to a place of service with, rather than over, his or her constituents.

Swimming pools with lifeguards and schools with educational leaders have much in common. This writer has chosen just one area of comparison, using the swimming pool metaphor. More specifically the process of water maintenance describes and commends some idealistic ethical angles for educational leaders' use as they seek to sharpen their policy-making within the complex and chaotic environment of schools.

Leaders commonly affirm their commitments to make positive contributions within their scope and sphere of influence. They want to benefit those they have agreed to serve. The challenges that beset, frustrate, and encumber the aspirations of educational leaders go beyond unrealistic community expectations and admissions of leader finitudes. This paper presupposes that in areas where leaders have the political and technical latitude to exercise choice, that such choices should be characterized by a commitment to ethical perspectives as overriding considerations. All policy decisions related to persons are embedded with ethical imperatives and constraints. Where this is so, these ethical values must be consciously held as functionally sovereign. Merely restricting oneself to external and superficial changes in leadership styles, exemplified by the old and new lifeguards, falls short of dealing with what Vaill (1989) calls the "permanent white water" (p. 2) of administrative life. Such minimalistic changes lack internal integrity and are legitimate objects for the imputations of hypocrisy and sententiousness. Virtuous administration requires more than cosmetic redress.

Just like the lifeguard who was observed listening to an irate parent, educational leaders continue to be involved in personal, professional, and ideological conflict resolution. Educational leaders are called upon to deal with competing interests that require them to negotiate and mediate a whole

range of complex issues. Educational leaders daily ask themselves: how do we bring resolution to these conflicts? and how do we do this with integrity? This question couplet has particular import for educational leaders who have been ordained, by some, as society's "managers of virtue" (Tyack & Hansot, 1982). Strictly rational-technical responses seem inadequate and individual intuition or forms of survivalism seem undefendable. The best answers may not be found through sole reliance on political finesse, excellence in public relations, or astute marketing strategies.

The waves of competing values, so often manifest in the educational environment, have resulted in an unusual thirst for integrity on the part of school leaders. Chewning (1984) comments that policy-makers need to realize that they are operating in an ethically schizophrenic society, one having the inability to develop an ethical consensus. In other words, the lack of consensus and, therefore, the strains on leader integrity are due to "newer value systems flooding in on top of an old ethic. The result is an ethical riptide" (pp. 1, 2). In this, educational leadership may be unique amongst the administrative professions. Hodgkinson (1991) argues this point as follows:

> . . .educational administration is a special case within the general profession of administration. Its leaders find themselves in what might be called an arena of ethical excitement—often politicized but always humane, always intimately connected to the evaluation of society.... [i]t embodies a heritage of value, on the one hand, and is a massive industry on the other, in which social, economic, and political forces are locked together in a complex equilibrium of power. All of this calls for extra-ordinary value sensitivity on the part of educational leaders. (p. 164)

The work of an educational leader, as that of the lifeguard, is characterized by constant surveillance and interaction with complex networks of ever-emerging and submerging relations. The authoritative roles of the educational leader have changed in ways similar to the lifeguards, described earlier. Leaders are challenged with the task of fostering divergent activity on the surface while sustaining some deeply held, non-negotiable values and taken-for-granted mandates. This is, in other words, a vocation burdened with the increasingly difficult work of alignment and attunement. How does one hold the retrospective standards and obligations together with the formal and informal prospective "needs" and expectations of those served? People expect, idealistically, that educational executives be consistent, rational, passionate, and innovative in all their decision-making. Sometimes these are conflicting expectations. The educational leaders' ability to get an intellectual and moral grip on ramifications from these notions will, in large measure, define their level of integrity.

When people go swimming they have at least one common expectation: the swimming pool should be full of clean, sparkling and temperate water. The clarity and the integrity of the water provide even the least discriminating patron with the basic criterion for differentiating a "good" swimming pool from a "lousy" one. After all, what is a swimming pool without "good" water? One might even claim that "the better the water—the better the swimming pool." Clarity and purity go together just as vision and virtue are companion attributes essential for sustained success for the excellent school or school system leader.

Put in the negative, the purposes of swimming pools are not primarily related to the storage of clean water any more than the purposes of schools are related to being locations where integrity is to be kept. The pool without clean water and the school without integrity cannot properly fulfill their primary purposes. Integrity is essential and instrumental for school effectiveness and improvement just as clean water is a means to certain aquatic recreation ends.

Assuming Responsibility for Integrity

In the swimming pool, if the turbidity (degree of clarity) hinders a visual inspection of the pool bottom then the facility is shut down—it is deemed unsafe for the patrons. Water clarity is monitored and scrutinized by both professional pool operators and the lay public. If the pool is unfit for swimming, people will obviously not be attracted to the pool's activities and functions. The public trust is, in part, related to the ability and willingness of school leaders to take prior responsibility for the safeguarding of the best interests of their constituents. Educational leadership is to be proactive in this regard.

As educational choices shift to become increasingly market-driven, and increasingly include the patrons' choice of venue, educational leaders will need to pay commensurate attention to the status of their institutional image. It is not only a matter of making right or good judgements but one also must be seen to be making right, good, and virtuous choices. In education, the essence of a school administration relates to the delegated stewardship of students to competent and caring professionals. For this trust to be confirmed and sustained, the "future generation" must be educated according to those values held by the mandating society. As Foster (1988) says, educational leaders have both inherited and chosen the interesting roles of "ensuring that schooling preserves and communicates the values of society and yet also be on the forefront of educational, social and technological change" (p. 68). It is, therefore, important for the educational leader to respond appropriately to the increasing external and public criticism. This phenomenon is exemplified by the growing propensity of the public to both question and inspect. This is in addition to the self-imposed profes-

sional attitude of most educational leaders to maintain and display the integrity of their organizations. Leaders in the 1990s must be more prepared than ever to explain, simply and with consistency, their policy-making content and processes. This is to say nothing of the importance of inviting authentic constituent participation in the development of policy decisions. At a minimum, educational stakeholders want to know the thoughts and intents that underlie educative policy decisions and acts of implementation. It is no longer sufficient to be merely satisfied, personally, with a policy decision because it "sits well" with one's conscience or creates no immediate political waves. Times are changing! The public trust is no longer to be passively assumed.

Quality Feedback as Integrity Sustained

It is useful to be reminded of the three obtainable kinds of information with respect to the quality of the water in swimming pools. The first is normative information. This consists of the preferential or prescriptive feedback received from patrons. This information is subjective and entertains both non-neutral evaluations and sets of "ought tos." For example, a patron may indicate that "the water is too cold" and so the "temperature ought to be adjusted upward" or the water "stings my eyes—you should do something about it." These types of assessments reflect patron's concerns and present remedial prescriptions based on personal opinion(s). A second type of information is descriptive or factual. For example, throughout the day the pool temperature is taken and the water is chemically tested to determine the "pH" and chlorine levels. In addition, regular visual checks of the water, monitoring of pressure gauges and other such empirically-based aids are used to guide the necessary adjustments. The third kind of information considered is more analytic in nature. This type might, for example, include sending a water sample to a lab for analysis in order to develop answers as to why the water does or does not have the integrity desired. These are three sources of information that help ensure the quality of water and are likened to the three kinds of consideration used by leaders to sustain their integrity.

First, educational leaders often sense the expectation to "turn out" quick, normative decisions for every circumstance and problem. Much of the policy problem-setting in education today finds its source in preferential or prescriptive feedback from concerned or discontented stakeholders and from the professional literature. For example, Sergiovanni and Carver (1980) indicate that "[q]uestions of philosophy, ethics, and values have not been examined formally in educational administration with much intensity. Yet a vast normative literature does exist which tells administrators what they ought to do" (p. 312). Maintaining integrity is dependent, in part, on leaders facilitating, receiving and weighing this normative input. Next, with respect to the second kind of information necessary to sustain integrity, Bird and

Water (1989) have observed the "reluctance [of leaders] to describe their actions in moral terms even when they are acting for moral reasons" (p. 79). This indicates that leader integrity would be better sustained if policies were actually identified as ethical in nature. Leader vocabulary and administrative cultures would be benefited with the conscious and articulated inclusion of ethical assumptions and moral perspectives. Bird and Water provide a litany of symptoms accompanying the common "moral muteness" phenomenon: the aspersions of amorality from others, internal moral stress, the repression or neglect of moral issues, and a diminishing authority given to the persuasion of common moral sense and critical thinking. Integrity requires the willingness and competency of leaders to describe their policy-decision content and processes in ethical terms. Third, the swimming pool water purification process also illustrates how ethical considerations may be analyzed. To safeguard professional and organizational integrity leaders need, on occasion, to initiate consultation with others. Like the water sent to the lab, some policy challenges need the objective perspective of others. This analysis may be garnered through specific technical expertise or from the common sense consideration of those for whom the policy is highly relevant. Integrity is best sustained when leaders appreciate their own limitations and are willing to risk and respond to the analysis of others, from both within and beyond their immediate executive caucus.

How a Pool Filter Works

Beyond the lay person's immediate purview and underlying the apparent surface chaos of swimming pool activities is a room full of pipes, machinery, and gauges called the "filtration room." The quality of a pool's water is directly attributable to the sustained effectiveness of this room. The leader's analogous "filtration room" engages in the task of collecting and

Pool (a)⟶ Hair Catcher (b)

Coarse Gravel (c)
Fine Gravel & Coarse Sand (d)
Fine Sand (e)

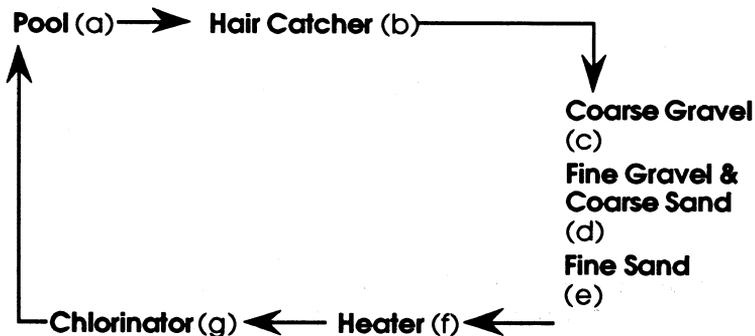**Chlorinator (g) ⟵ Heater (f) ⟵**

Figure 1. Swimming Pool Filter System

screening data from the turbid events and problematic situations of everyday school activities. The integrity of the policy-decision process is dictated by the leader's attention to sustaining the processes taking place in his/her "personal filtration room."

The filter system used to depict a view of the leader's deliberative processes is that of the sand and gravel variety. Simply stated, water is drawn from the pool into the filter room, impurities are screened out, and the sanitized clean water is then directed back into the pool. The basic pathway of such a swimming pool filtration process is depicted in Figure 1.

The water is pumped out of the pool (a), then strained by a hair catcher (b). Next, the water proceeds through the media screens of the filter (c-e). The water first encounters the most porous filtration material (gravel) (c), then progresses, by gravity or by pump pressure, through the finer screens of sand (e). The further the water goes in the filtrating process, the more carefully are the unwanted materials held back and "good water" conveyed ahead. After the water exits from the filter, it is heated (f), chlorinated, (g) and then propelled back into the swimming pool. This process is analogous to a process of policy-making that draws from the pool of human situations and events. The analogy is admittedly limited by the lineal sequence of the above description as compared to the nonlineal processes of everyday policy-making. Nevertheless, the following heuristic may clarify the reflective components that help sustain integrity in policy-making deliberations.
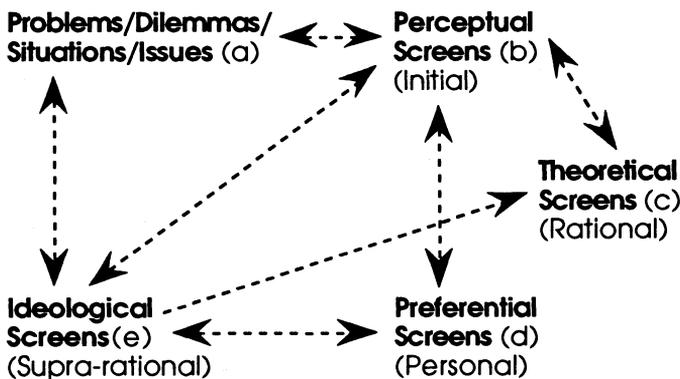

Figure 2. Framework for Reflective Screens

Framework for Reflective Integrity Screens

Conscious deliberations that lead to policy decisions, which are characterized by integrity, take the form of perceptual, theoretical, preferential, and ideological reflections and occur in the context of the "private life-space" of the administrator. "Pure water" is not simply attained by adding more water but rather the designation of "pure" describes the water after impurities are removed or the water is sanitized. Integrity in policy-making is more likely to be ensured if comprehensive, reflective deliberation takes place. The "elements" or screens used in this reflective process are displayed in Figure 2.

First, there are the initial screening processes (b) which are categorized under the perceptual screens. Nash (1981) lists three problem-setting questions for the initial examination of a policy decision: has the problem been properly defined? how would the problem be defined from the "other side of the fence"? and how did the problem occur in the first place? (p. 43). One might also ask: who should take ownership of the problem? and is the "problem" really the problem? Beyond these questions school leaders are well-advised to determine the level and nature of problems: is this problem societal, organizational, professional, educational, and personal in nature? These problems, in turn, insist that one ask: what does the larger community think and feel about this? what are the policies, the cultural values, and the taken-for-granted assumptions of my organization? as a professional and leader, what ethical, legal, or procedural considerations should be considered? Some problems may need to be reframed or eliminated at this stage. This initial stage also holds back certain problems. This is the point at which leaders will rationalize, divert, or minimize certain problems to avoid the energy depleting rigours of continuing the deliberative process. An educational executive's task, in any decision-process, is to differentiate items that are, from those that aren't, suitable for exposure to the subsequent screening. Physical, economic, or technical restraints; the scope of responsibility; stakeholder priorities; preset plans; and other limiters will, in large part, control what can be considered legitimate subjects of further deliberation. Decisions may also be screened, at this point, based on their ease of resolution: by virtue of previous decisions, the dictates of time, the limits of one's mandate, or by their low priority ranking. Such problems are not generally "allowed" to progress to other discriminatory screens in the filtration process.

Rational Screens Derived from Philosophy

There are four theoretical screens (c) used to judge the ethical quality of decision alternatives and to comfort leaders with respect to the integrity

of their policy decisions. Administrators will be more likely to sustain their
integrity if they deliberately use these sorts of ethical screens. No particular
sequence is prescribed for these theoretical screens. The order of contact is
likely to vary with particular problems, circumstances, and leaders. Prob-
lems will occasionally flow quickly through certain rational screens and
more slowly through other parts of the filtration process. Each policy
decision and context will be unique. As leaders habituate the practice of
using reflective templates and repeatedly confront similar policy challenges
the processes will tend to move more quickly, perhaps more intuitively.

Simply stated, problems and possible solutions are best screened
through four grades of filter material: the character of the person making the
decision or the virtue of the particular action; the retrospective obligations
and legalities impinging on the problem; the prospective short and long-
term consequences of the alternatives for action; and the relevant circum-
stances that contextualize the particular event or situation.

The virtue screen

When faced with several conflicting choices, an administrator might
attempt to filter out the inferior alternatives by asking the following types
of questions: is this action inherently virtuous? what is the most virtuous act
one could do in these circumstances? does this behaviour present a conflict
with some personal, professional, or organizational "nontransgressables"?
within the bounds of what is virtuous, what are my options? This virtue
orientation advocates the position that the ethical demands placed on edu-
cational leaders ought to be grounded on positive character achievement,
not merely on the avoidance of harmful acts. It might be held, for example,
that acts of violence are wrong or not virtuous. The leader might then ask,
do the solutions proposed, directly or indirectly, perpetrate a violence
toward any person(s)? If yes, then such options are filtered out from one's
set of ethical choices. But the leader would also ask, what act or policy
decision would be beneficent? This screen represents an **ethics of charac-
ter**. A reputation of moral excellence, as exemplified by such virtues as
justice, temperance, prudence, courage, faith, hope, and love are to be
expressed, cultivated, and habituated while nonvirtuous choices are to be
avoided.

The duty screen

One might attempt to eliminate those options that are against one's
concept of duty to society, the organization, the profession, one's educa-
tional mandate, or personal vocation. Leaders might ask the "Kantian ques-
tion": would one act in this way with the knowledge that by doing so one

would be universally and unreservedly recommending this course of action to all people? Kant (1983), as early as 1785, articulated this "categorical imperative" in a number of ways. Perhaps one of the most striking of these is contained in his formula that states that one "should act in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of another, never simply as a means, but always as an end." Kant's notions of universality and respect for persons provide filter material with which to eliminate much that would be undesirable in policy decisions. One also might ask legal and contractual type questions such as: would this policy decision withstand the scrutiny of the accepted social norms, institutional policies, professional codes of ethics, and the private moral standards of those involved, or has the leader or the organization any form of agreement that would obligate them to a particular course of action (Rawls, 1971; Nozick, 1974; Gauthier, 1986)? The leader may also ask: what is the **right** thing to do? Ross (1930) challenged his readers to act in a fashion consistent with *prima facie* or self-evident obligations derived from principles such as promise-keeping, truth-telling, reparation, gratitude, justice, beneficence, self-improvement, and non-maleficence. When any of these principles are in conflict then the right thing to do will be rationally apparent as one endeavours to choose the right "actual duty." This screen represents an **ethics of obligation**. It seeks to do what is right according to social agreement, norms, or universal principles that are independent of consequences. This ethic is the "deontological" screen, because of its attention to duty (*deontos*), and is retrospective in the sense that its force originates from historically or autonomously reasoned obligations.

The consequence screen

It is useful to project the immediate and long-term ends that follow a particular course of action by asking—what are the direct and indirect impacts resulting from this policy decision? are these the desired consequences? One might then compare the various alternatives using the same teleological criterion—what are the relative merits of one alternative's consequences over and against another? what is the best choice (for the most people and for leader)? The 19th century utilitarian, John Stuart Mill, would have the administrator ask—what action will promote the greatest happiness for the greatest number? The estimate of consequences often concerns the relative balancing of individual and common goods as well as the benefits and liabilities incurred by a particular action. This screen represents an **ethic of aspiration and responsibility**. The screen is an aspirational one when the leaders consider the impact of certain choices on their professional or educative aspirations. The screen is one of responsibility when the leader reflects on the outcomes of various choices on stakeholder interests.

The circumstances screen

Administrators need to be situation-sensitive. They must be able to read the contingencies built into each unique and complex policy decision. Just as the pool operator must know the particular demands of a swimming pool activity-calendar and the actual water conditions before intervening, similarly educational leaders will ask, do the circumstances of this event, situation, or problem merit special consideration? does the time, context, personage, or any other set of variables bear on the policy decision to be made? how do the relative weights and ratios of these considerations impinge on my alternatives? This screen represents an **ethics of contingency**.

These four screens, taken together and appropriately ordered by the administrator, will function to eliminate the less-than-desirable decision alternatives. The notion that policy alternatives need to pass through all four areas is similar to Aquinas' concept of a four-way test for ethical behaviour. In his view, the decision must be ethically fit with respect to the act itself, the agent's intention, the effect of the act, and the particular circumstances. Such screens provide strong rational guidance for clarifying and determining what are the best courses of action as well as justifying policy decisions.

It has been shown that pool water needs to be continually revitalized and renewed. All the impurities are either "screened out" or "sanitized" to produce clear and healthy water. In educational administration the best policy decisions are those that purge the ethically unacceptable alternatives and embrace right, good, virtuous, and well-intended alternatives. As Josephson (1991) says, "[w]e don't need to change our personalities and values to be more ethical more often, we merely have to choose to be more diligent about living up to our present values and highest aspirations" (p. 11). Such conscious choices, using personally developed but professionally defendable ethical templates, constitute a major challenge for educational leaders as they strive to sustain their integrity. In a recent study of senior educational leaders, Walker (1991) observed a high degree of consensus amongst educational leaders with respect to a set of common ethical values. The professional group's core ethical values related to concepts such as caring/respect, fairness, professional conduct, resource stewardship, integrity, loyalty, honesty, and citizenship. It was considered an ethical misdeed to transgress in any one of these theme areas. Such misdeeds are usually self-evident at the very early stages of deliberation and may be eliminated, at these points, as decision-alternatives. However, pressures come to leaders when such core concepts are in conflict or where various interests are in competition. On these occasions leaders must be cognizant that they are now dealing with important quandaries or dilemmas that require something more than may be found in these four rational screens derived from moral philosophy.

Personal and Suprarational Screens

Given the fragility of our times and the high degree of trust delegated to educational professionals, it is imperative for us to engage not only in superficial rule-making (as in the days of the "old lifeguard/leader") and rational analysis but to also extend ethical deliberation into other domains of consideration. Leadership with sustaining integrity considers both rational and suprarational reflections. The heater ("f" in Figure 1) and the chlorinator ("g" in Figure 1) in a swimming pool purification process are akin to the "heart" functions of a leader's deliberative process. Whereas earlier screening encompassed the rational aspects of policy decisions, policies of integrity are those made with both head and heart. There are two parts of the leader's anatomy concerned, figuratively, with policy-making once the problem(s) and question(s) have been identified and selected: the head and the heart. We have already considered the rational or head-oriented activity (Figure 2, theoretical screens). At this point, we will review the personal and supra-rational or heart-oriented aspects of the process. These are characterized by the preferential (d) and ideological (e) screens (in Figure 2).

The heater is within the adjustive control of the pool operator just as the disposition of a leader's attitude is only a choice away. There are many contending factors controlling the water temperature in the pool. The temperature of several hundred thousand litres of water changes very slowly, yet the process of change begins with the momentary decision and a flick of a switch. Water temperature is an example of a normatively relative condition. If the air is cool, the water will feel warm and vice versa. Some like it hot, some like it cold. "Hot" to some is "cold" to others. When making tough choices, leaders must figure out the most appropriate "temperature level" based on feedback received from the stakeholders, and adjust according to their professional, but subjective, weighing of the situation. The use of this metaphor illustrates the difference between nonmoral values and moral values. Water temperature is a nonmoral value. While the temperature may be tested, there will be varying views concerning the "best", the "right", or the "good" temperature. One would have a difficult time objectively defending any particular dictate with respect to the "perfect" temperature. This is an issue of preference. A leader will find it helpful to adopt an attitude that differentiates between moral and nonmoral values, that recognizes that nonmoral values may be compromised, and that diversity of opinion on such values ought to be tolerated, perhaps even encouraged. These nonmoral issues should not be allowed to become moral issues nor should they degenerate into sources of dogmatism. The leaders' attitudes toward particular persons, programs, or personal values should be subject to self-appraisal. The leaders might examine their own heart for bias, guile, ethnocentricity, or distortion. Preferences are important, and

even valuable, in the deliberative process but they should be given only their due weight.

The chlorination aspect of the swimming pool purification process has received a lot of bad press. For example, when ones' eyes hurt or when one smells the pungent odour of ammonia in the pool air, the common explanation is that "there is too much chlorine in the water!" This is not so. In fact, such complaints are more likely to be indicative of just the opposite explanation. The writer would liken the chlorine in the swimming pools to the invisible dynamic that deliberately operates within and through administrators during their professional policy-development processes. This is an ideological phenomenon. Many refer to this dynamic in terms of intuition, some relate to the notion of conscience, and others profess to the experience of a Divine resource or relationship as their sources of ideological consideration. This mysterious and inconspicuous element is beyond rational explanation but is, nonetheless, integral to our handling of the complexities of educational leadership. In educational leadership, one may have the best "caretakers", the finest "hair strainers", and most sophisticated analytic abilities in the most congenial setting but unless this supernatural or suprarational dynamic is present in one's deliberations then the process is not complete. Without chlorine the process simply recirculates dangerous and infectious material. Unless a leader's policy-making is permeated by, and consistent with, an ideological dynamic then true integrity will never be sustained by that leader. Neither the preferential nor the ideological screens are easily justified to others, but they are present and compelling factors in one's policy-making.

Participation and Timing

In addition to reviewing the elements of a reflective framework, it is important that integrity-sustaining templates consider participation by others, timing, the reality of conflict, and the necessity of renewal. Each day the swimming pool system recirculates the entire volume of pool water between six and eight times. These multiple cycles of the filtration process are analogous to a leader building internal and external consensus and to "talking oneself into confidence" (as the water moves through the filter system and back into the swimming pool, an opportunity is provided to "try" the water's treatment). The educational leader may, after the described screening(s), choose to test the decision. The purpose of testing is to receive critical input, evaluation, and exposure. The leader does this by inviting participation in the policy-decision processes. It is understood that the "wise" or prudent leader considers the input of others through the entire policy-making process but here a conscious effort to solicit feedback is suggested. This tentative exposure of decisions, for response, is instrumental to the sustained integrity of leaders and their organizations.

Administrators become more confident as options are weighed and scrutinized by others and as they test their justifications. Knowing when and where to send problems for testing is an important ability for an educational administrator. This ability requires that the leader be in touch with the perspectives, norms, and reactions of her constituents. The more thorough the process, the more diffuse is the risk of dissent, and the more legitimate is a particular course of action in the view of others. Time, however, is a luxury rare to many "real world" policy-decision contexts. Experienced leaders will know when to move from reflection to inviting participation to making final decisions and undertaking action. Leaders commonly must decide and act with what seems to be less-than-perfect grounds. This is where courage, in times of uncertainty, is so often manifest.

Conflict Tolerance

A word about the open dynamics of a filter may be instructive. Filtration usually takes place under pressure. Gravity, suction pumps, and centrifugal force all contribute to the movement of water through the filter. The human propensity that desires quick resolution to conflict and values-reductivist simplicity, with respect to policy issues, is often professionally and organizationally dysfunctional. Failure to impel policy decisions through reflective screens tends to trivialize and subvert integrity. One might easily appreciate how the sheer weight and gravity of problem situations drive one to "handle" issues in a reactive mode. Such a mode seeks immediate order but the preferred orientation indicated here is that practitioners are, more ideally, to be reflective and contemplative in their responses to policy challenges. One must also take into account the predetermined and engineered pressure within the school culture that tends to draw problems artificially and inappropriately through the process. This centrifugal pressure reminds us to recognize the political dynamics of personal agenda, common-good goals, and periodic self-centeredness in policy-making. Each of these notions is well considered under the large meta-ethical constructs of accountability and responsibility.

At the microscopic level, impurities are carried by the water through the filter system in entirely unique pathways. Former filter metaphors have advocated a single passage or highly structured "systems approach" to policy-making. If the patterns of flow for all the particles of dirt were predetermined, via well-worn passageways, then the essential dynamics of filtration would be frustrated. A condition of nonresistance or nonscrutiny in any filtration process betrays the basic, functional principles of a filter. Likewise, the human propensity to hyper-functionalize, codify, and "streamline" policy-making is often inappropriate as one deals with the complexities of everyday school administration. Some leaders attempt to avoid conflict by means of over-engineering their deliberations; however, values-

oriented policies are not easily subjected to concrete, sequential analysis. The presence and importance of conflict must be acknowledged. This does not imply that the leader's position should be characterized by ethical relativism. Neither complexity nor diversity automatically equate to relativism. Ethical relativism presupposes that one decision is ultimately as good as the next. Such positions require our more critical and substantive analyses. Administrators must discover and maintain filter systems that serve them, and in turn their stewardship, in a manner both independent from but considerate of the complexities of the educational context and various ethical conflicts. The diversity of world views and rationalities that generate these ethical conflicts will continue to come and go as they contest for preeminence (MacIntyre, 1988). Leaders need to embrace, and then internalize, dynamic and flexible deliberative processes that are sustained by universal principles. Only then will leaders consistently engage in educational judgements with a realistic sense of external and internal confidence.

The Necessity of Renewal

From time to time the swimming pool operators will engage in a procedure they call "backwashing." The usual direction of water flow is reversed so that all the sediment collected by the filter screens is washed down the drain. This procedure is undertaken when the ability of the filter system to pass water through the screens is impeded. The pressure inside the filter builds to the point that the system must be refreshed. This process gets rid of the sludge accumulated from past filtering efforts—it provides for a new start. Fresh water replaces water lost to the drain. The turn-over of water adds to a revitalizing of the process and prevents stagnation. So, too, the school administrator must know when to jettison the residual problems and perceptions that tend to impede the progress of day-to-day policy-making efforts.

The restoration of professional and vocational passion that values making a positive difference has the prerequisite of righting imbalances by off-loading bedraggling influences and garnering new resources to one's situation. Besides these periodic backwashes, most swimming pools shut down for seasonal maintenance—providing a time to recuperate from the wear and tear of the past season of use. The filter system and those who operate it need periodic rest and times for major repair and reflection. While operators recommend that the continuous, twenty-four hours-a-day approach to water filtration is the key to its success, the system does need periodic and extended breaks. So it is with the leader. There is much that might be affirmed in the leader's giving priority to times of rest and reflection. Just as swimming pools have daily and seasonal "peak" and "slack" times so also do educational settings and so should administrators. It is during these less demanding times, that one can catch up, reorient

attention, and recreate. Unfortunately, the phenomenon of "less demanding times" is becoming a rare commodity. This makes occasional separation from the day to day pressures of educational leadership responsibilities all the more important.

At the other extreme, if a pool operator were to turn the filtration process off until the weekend and then try to work all the dirty waters through the system in a forty-eight hour period, the potential effect would be both inferior water and a system overload. The "saved-up impurities" would soon clog up the system and overtax the energy-giving pumps. Leaders may occasionally benefit from the reminder that they should work to habituate a pattern of reflection in continuous, everyday work-life instead of storing up, through procrastination or denial, all their integrity sustaining policy decisions.

Conclusion

Swimming pools have responded to the changing social expectations. They have not merely added more rule signage, increased the lifeguard to patron ratios, or restricted the swimmers to more uniform behaviour patterns. Instead, they have relied on the well-considered attributes of their filtration processes to ensure the maintenance of the basic water quality. Pool operators have established the simple virtues of water clarity and purity as their most highly sustained priorities. Educational leaders face some enormously complex issues and dilemmas. Chewning (1984) argues that leaders "must grasp the significance of the fact that their decisions make them *de facto* "professors of moral philosophy". That their impact-laden decisions and actions automatically embody a set of ethical values which may come into conflict with those held by many other people" (p. 2). School leaders require particular ethical cognitions, skills, and attitudes. They need vision and virtue to sustain the confidence of the public and to proceed with personal and professional confidence in their policy-making. The traditional linear, value-free, and incremental policy-making models are inadequate for some of the issues and dilemmas confronting educational leaders in the 1990s.

This filter system metaphor serves as a reminder to practitioners that they need to become increasingly more ethically reflective and comprehensive in their policy-making. Policy-making characterized by integrity is both a rational and supra-rational process consisting of moment-by-moment choices. There are two broad aspects of this process: one must first discern and eliminate unethical alternatives and then, secondly, develop and select the best of ethical options. Striving for integrity in policy-making consists of both the avoidance of wrongdoing and the activity of embracing right-doing. The renewed educational leader who habituates the practices of

multiple-screening and who appreciates the necessities of suprarational considerations, participation, timing, and conflict will ultimately be in the best position to sustain the public trust. Such educational administrators have a greater likelihood of being imputed with a reputation of possessing authentic integrity. This article encourages a combining of critical, common sense, intuitive, and idealistic kinds of considerations into the policy-making templates of leaders. It has been contended that well-considered policy decisions are amongst the most important contributions educational leaders can ever make to the ongoing integrity of their professional and educational communities.

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