

CREATING “GOOD” LEADERS:  
EXPLORING THE INTEGRATION OF LEADERSHIP AND ETHICS  
IN CANADIAN POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

A Thesis Submitted to the College of Graduate Studies and Research  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Master of Continuing Education  
in the Department of Educational Foundations  
University of Saskatchewan  
Saskatoon

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## ABSTRACT

An examination of leadership and ethics literature demonstrates that, given the theoretical and practical links between the two subjects, they should also be linked within the context of adult post-secondary education. However, very little documented information exists with regard to the ways in which such integration of subject areas is achieved, and there is scant documentation indicating the kinds of pedagogical approaches that are employed for such a purpose.

This study examined how the subject areas of leadership and ethics are conceptualized and integrated within the context of undergraduate credit courses at the University of Saskatchewan. The methods used to collect original data for this study were content analysis and qualitative interviews.

The data collected in this study demonstrated that the integration of leadership and ethics subject areas is occurring, both implicitly and explicitly, in a variety of undergraduate courses offered through professional colleges at the University of Saskatchewan. The subjects of leadership and ethics are conceptualized in many different ways by course instructors; however, instructors perceive links between the two subject areas and expect their students to demonstrate an understanding of those links.

The findings of this study will serve as a program planning resource for instructors who practice, or who wish to practice, the integration of leadership and ethics subject areas in their post-secondary classroom settings. In addition, the researcher concluded with some broad-based recommendations for further study, and suggestions regarding approaches to integration of leadership and ethics education at the University of Saskatchewan.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the thoughtful direction and support of my thesis committee: Scott McLean (supervisor), Lillas Hatala, and Don Cochrane. Also, many thanks to Bob Cram, who served as the external examiner for my thesis defense. You have all contributed to my meaningful and insightful academic journey over the past year.

Many individuals have helped to smooth this journey. Thanks to: Lois Dumbovic for her optimism and clerical support; Susan Bens for her willing and critical ear; Brenda Rutherford for her ever-present, calming influence; and Heather Kuttai for teaching me that each obstacle I encountered along the way was simply a drop in the bucket.

Thanks to Mom, Dad, and Jen – for knowing I could do it, and telling me so.

Most of all, thank you to my husband Danny and my daughter Amara. You have both encouraged my heart.

## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to Doreen Dignan – a leader in her own right.

Gran, I have been inspired throughout this process by your tenacity and persistence.

Thanks for teaching me, through example, how to say precisely what I want to say.

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## Chapter One

### THE RESEARCH QUESTION

#### Introduction

When I initially proposed the idea of researching and writing about leadership ethics education, I was met with many questions, some enthusiasm, and an equal measure of healthy scepticism. This was expected; I had worked in the area of leadership education for some time, and had previously observed similar reactions to proposals for leadership development initiatives in the academic arena. The subjects of leadership and ethics are both intensely controversial, and, in my experience, are often not an entirely comfortable fit in the context of academic environments. However, my personal journey over the past several years has repeatedly led me back to the subjects of leadership and ethics. In my roles as facilitator, student services employee, and student, these subjects continue to emerge as foundational aspects of my academic life.

My interest in leadership development was sparked when, as an undergraduate student, I was hired to design and implement a non-credit leadership development program at the University of Saskatchewan. At that time I had very little background in leadership theory, pedagogical strategies, and program planning. Consequently, most of the curriculum development and planning in which I engaged was done intuitively. I compiled what I thought were the most important components of leadership, and arranged them in a curriculum that I believed would be meaningful and palatable for undergraduate students.

As a part of this process I conducted a small-scale investigation of what other universities were doing to provide leadership development opportunities for

undergraduate students. I explored the curricula of leadership initiatives from several North American colleges and universities, including non-credit leadership development programs that were offered in conjunction with community groups, and leadership classes that were offered for credit at post-secondary institutions. As a result of this investigation I realized that some of the elements I intuitively considered essential to the process of leadership development seemed to be missing from many of the leadership development curricula. One of those elements was ethics. At the outset of the investigation I expected that “ethics” or “morality” or “values” would be identified in these programs as one of the foundational building blocks of leadership education. The literature I had encountered on the topic of leadership identified the development of ethical awareness as an essential component of such an education. So, where were the “ethics” in the programs and classes I was examining?

The subject of ethics, of course, could have been addressed in these curricula indirectly, perhaps in ways that were not overtly evident in the course descriptions. For example, ethics in leadership may have been addressed as a part of the “personal development” of young leaders. Or, ethical decision making may have been discussed in the context of “leadership competencies”. However, the subject of ethics was rarely afforded an explicit place in the curricula of the undergraduate leadership development programs and classes I encountered.

Some time after my work on the leadership development program ended, I began the process of fulfilling my course requirements for a Masters of Continuing Education at the University of Saskatchewan. One of the courses I participated in was entitled “Case Studies in Educational Leadership” (EDADM 834.3) instructed by Dr. Keith Walker. In

this course, we spent a significant amount of time learning about ethical frameworks, examining ethical dilemmas, and brainstorming possible solutions for those dilemmas; we participated in this work from the perspective of individuals engaged in various types of leadership practice. My participation in this course made me realize why the absence of “ethics” in leadership development curricula had previously made me so uncomfortable. I learned that, like leadership practice, ethical reasoning and decision making are intentional, explicit processes; they cannot be effectively practiced through the use of intuition or gut instinct alone. Ethical reasoning and decision making, then, should be taught and learned in intentional, explicit ways. My intuition told me that the explicit, intentional teaching and learning of leadership and ethics should be integrated, as they seem to be integral elements of one another. This led me to ask the questions, “What is happening in leadership and ethics education right now? Are they being taught together? If they are, then how?”.

An inquiry into the literature that addresses leadership and ethics acknowledges many theoretical and practical links between the two subject areas. It also acknowledges the strategic benefit of exploring the concepts of leadership and ethics in post-secondary environments, stressing that both subjects should be part of undergraduate curricula. A clear rationale exists for integrating leadership and ethics in an effort to provide comprehensive leadership ethics educational opportunities.

A distinct gap, however, exists within this literature. An area that has not been adequately explored is the pedagogy involved in integrating leadership and ethics within the context of post-secondary education. This integration appears to be pivotal, yet very few pedagogical strategies are offered for educators who teach ethics as a part of post-

secondary leadership programming, or who incorporate elements of leadership development into their ethics curricula. Descriptions of current pedagogical practice regarding the effective integration of these two topics are even more rare.

### Purpose of the Study

In light of the scarcity of documented pedagogical strategies for integrating leadership and ethics in adult learning environments, this study explores how these concepts are integrated in the context of undergraduate credit courses offered at the University of Saskatchewan. In this study, I seek to understand:

1. How “leadership” and “ethics” are conceptualized in undergraduate courses at the University of Saskatchewan;
2. The scope of ethical education (and the espoused moral position) that is incorporated into credit leadership courses at the University of Saskatchewan;
3. The scope of leadership education that is incorporated into credit ethics courses at the University of Saskatchewan; and
4. How the subjects of leadership and ethics are practically integrated in the context of undergraduate classrooms.

I seek to identify how the subjects of ethics and leadership “cross over” in the curricula of classes that are offered by a cross-section of departments and colleges.

### Research Question

My central research question was: *Are the subjects of ethics and leadership—however conceptualized—integrated within the curricula of undergraduate classes that are offered for credit at the University of Saskatchewan?* This question is complex and multifaceted, and, as a result, several related questions served to guide and focus my

research: How do instructors at the University of Saskatchewan conceive of the concepts of leadership and ethics? Have leadership development course instructors incorporated ethics into their curricula? Have ethics instructors incorporated leadership development into their curricula? What is the scope of leadership and ethics education offered at the University of Saskatchewan? How, specifically, are ethics and leadership taught? What pedagogical tools are used? It was my goal, through the process of addressing these questions, to formulate a comprehensive response to my central research question.

#### Limitations

This study was limited to an examination of undergraduate credit courses in professional colleges at one post-secondary institution—the University of Saskatchewan. Although the results are not necessarily indicative of provincial or national trends in leadership and ethics education, it is safe to assume, given a relatively consistent national context, that other Canadian post-secondary institutions face similar demands and challenges with regard to implementing leadership and ethics educational opportunities. The data, then, can only be used to develop tentative propositions with regard to other Canadian institutions of higher learning.

The study generated data from roughly half of the professional colleges and programs at the University of Saskatchewan. Since the research sample was chosen purposively, it is not statistically representative of all courses at the University of Saskatchewan that offer leadership or ethics content. In addition, the courses in the research sample yielded varying amounts of documentary material; for this reason, the content analysis of documents was more intensive and detailed for some courses than it was for others.

### Significance of the Study

The results of this study will be helpful for adult educators in a wide range of post-secondary institutions. The data will serve as both a rationale and a resource with regard to the program planning and implementation of leadership development initiatives, professional ethics modules, and integrated leadership/ethics course offerings. The study results will also begin to fill the gap that currently exists in adult education, leadership, and ethics literature by documenting the practical strategies used for implementing leadership ethics education, consequently offering adult educators a valuable resource for use in the development of their teaching practice.

### Outline of the Thesis

Chapter Two, the literature review, summarizes the leadership, ethics, and adult education literature that pertains to the research question. Chapter Three, the research method outline, describes the processes used to produce original data for this research study. Chapter Four presents the results of the research. Chapter Five, the conclusion, offers possibilities for further research in this area, as well as suggestions regarding current post-secondary practice.



## Chapter Two

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Introduction

This chapter consists of an overview of selected literature pertaining to leadership and ethics for the purpose of providing background information related to the research question: *Are the subjects of ethics and leadership—however conceptualized—integrated within the curricula of undergraduate classes that are offered for credit at the University of Saskatchewan?* Context is extremely important to this study and its interpretation. For this reason, this chapter begins by addressing the current societal context for post-secondary leadership and ethics education. Following this is a short survey of past and current conceptions of leadership and ethics, and a discussion regarding how the two concepts are linked theoretically and practically. Next, information regarding the characteristics of adult learners, the nature of adult learning, adult learning styles, and approaches to adult education is outlined. This includes a consideration of leadership and ethics as subject areas in the context of adult education. The pedagogical strategies currently used in leadership and ethics education are also explored. This is followed by a rationale for leadership and ethics education in post-secondary institutions, and an examination of the ways in which the concepts of leadership and ethics can be linked in the context of higher-education.

#### A Context for Post-Secondary Leadership and Ethics Education

Current national trends are signalling a leadership crisis in Canadian society. Canadian young adults are part of a national context that is characterized by increasing political apathy, decreasing volunteer rates, increasing doubt regarding the business

ethics of local and global corporations, and public doubt regarding the post-secondary education system's relevance to society. According to Statistics Canada, Canadian voter turnout has decreased by approximately 15 percent over the last 15 years (<http://www.statcan.ca/english/Pgdb/govt09c.htm>). The Canadian National Survey of Giving, Volunteering, and Participating (2000) revealed that volunteer rates in Canada have witnessed a similar drop, with individuals between 15 and 24 years of age being amongst the least likely to volunteer within their communities (<http://www.givingandvolunteering.ca>). Corporate scandals, such as those sustained by Enron and Martha Stewart Inc., have generated a public mistrust in the ability of corporations to practice effective, sound business ethics. This mistrust has grown out of increasing media attention on leaders, and the media's assertion that "some of the most admired organizations in our society have been tarnished by leadership problems; some were badly mismanaged by individuals incapable of dealing with changing external circumstances, and others were sullied terribly by those who betrayed the public's trust after abusing the responsibilities of their posts" (Connaughton, Lawrence & Ruben, 2003, "Leadership Education: A Necessity" section, ¶ 2). The people that the public expect will generate solutions to this perceived problem are "suffering from diminished trust and increasing challenges to their legitimacy" (Piper, 1993, p.1). In addition, public mistrust regarding the worth of post-secondary education is growing; the public is witnessing the behaviour of graduates who are technically competent, but unable to respond to modern societal problems such as racial tensions, drug abuse, and the escalating effects of materialism (Cress, 2001).

The need for effective, ethical leadership has also been fuelled by an increasing sense of chaos in contemporary society. North Americans currently live in an environment that is colored by rapid technological change, the effects of globalization, a plethora of environmental issues, changing paradigms in educational and health systems, and culturally diverse societies (Komives, Lucas & McMahon, 1998; Piper, 1993). Individuals of all ages currently experience a profound sense of being overwhelmed: “we gasp for air as we navigate our fast-paced days with our many responsibilities” (Komives et al., 1998, p. 6). Responsible leadership, then, is a growing necessity; our communities are in need of individuals who can effectively assist groups in traversing through confusion and times of uncertainty.

In addition to these political and social forces, “thousands of aging baby boomers will be approaching retirement” within the next ten years (Statistics Canada, <http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/030221/d030221f.htm>). Many of these baby boomers currently occupy formal leadership positions in a variety of professional fields. Canadian post-secondary institutions, then, need to prepare emerging young professionals for the leadership demands that will be made of them, particularly with regard to ethical, responsible practice.

Leadership and ethics education is paramount for post-secondary students in order to effectively replace the individuals who will be leaving titled leadership positions over the next ten years, and also to help students learn the skills necessary to live up to their social responsibilities. As Komives, Lucas, and McMahon state in *Exploring Leadership*:

Leadership is a concern to all of us. As individuals and groups, we have a responsibility to contribute effectively as members of organizations, local

communities, nations, and in the world community. Members of communities (work, learning, living, and ideological communities) are citizens of those various groups and have a responsibility to develop shared leadership and participatory governance. (1998, p. 4)

Universities and colleges should share this responsibility, and should consequently become more proactive in their efforts to provide leadership and ethics education (Connaughton et al., 2003).

#### The Problematic Concepts of Leadership and Ethics: An Historical Context

The concepts of “leadership” and “ethics” are both contested. Ideas about effective leadership, what leadership practice actually looks like, what the scope of ethics in an educational context should be, and how these two terms are practically defined vary from person to person. Any library search using these terms will result in hundreds, even thousands, of “hits”, revealing that the topics of leadership and ethics have been re-conceptualized many times over the years. A brief survey of the theories and philosophies of leadership and ethics sheds light on current struggles with the multi-faceted interpretations that exist with regard to both concepts; this will be followed by an identification of the theoretical links that exist between leadership and ethics.

#### *Leadership*

Over two hundred definitions of the word “leadership” exist in contemporary leadership literature, making it impossible to arrive at a universally acceptable conception of the term (Komives et al., 1998). This array of definitions highlights the complexity of the concept of leadership and points to the large variety of factors that can affect or shape the process of leading (Hughes, Ginnet, & Curphy, 1999). Some insight into the

processes of leadership and leadership development can be gained by systematically examining the recent history of leadership theory.

*“Great Man” Approaches*

An interest in the study of leadership from the perspective of the social and behavioural sciences emerged in the late nineteenth century, led by Max Weber, one of the “founding fathers” (Heilbrunn, 1996, p. 3) of sociology. At that time, scientific assumptions about leadership viewed the process of leading as simple, predictable, and uncomplicated (Komives et al., 1998). This approach is evident in Darwinistic views of leadership, which assume that the ability to become an effective leader is determined solely by hereditary factors. This “Great Man” approach to leadership advocates intermarriage within the upper classes in order to produce individuals who have “natural abilities of power and influence” (Komives et al., 1998, p.35).

*Trait Approaches*

Trait approaches to leadership assumed primacy over “Great Man” approaches in the 1920s. According to trait theories, leaders have a set of rare and unique personality and physiological traits which provide them with natural leadership abilities (Bass, 1990; Heilbrunn, 1996; Komives et al., 1998). Psychologists and social scientists who researched trait theories during this time used tools such as tests, checklists, and rating scales to assess leadership ability (Pellicer, 2003). Advocates of trait theories felt that leaders rate higher than most people on the following traits: drive or desire for achievement, self-confidence, creativity, leadership motivation or desire to be in charge, and flexibility (Pellicer, 2003). Trait researchers have also identified talkativeness, superior physique, athletic prowess, insight, excitability, and sense of humor as qualities

that good leaders possess (Bass, 1990). Trait approach researchers, however, “failed to produce a list of traits to ensure which characteristics leaders must possess to be effective; this paved the way for the behavioral approach of leadership research” (in Komives et al., 1998, p. 38).

### *Behavioural Approaches*

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the emphasis in leadership studies shifted away from leadership traits, and focused instead on leadership behaviour (Komives et al., 1998). Proponents of behavioural approaches to leadership sought to discover how the behaviours of effective leaders differed from those of ineffective leaders. Their goal was to determine the one best way to lead (Komives et al., 1998). Behaviourists generally considered two types of behaviour as essential to effective leadership: task-oriented behaviour and relationship-oriented behaviour (Heilbrunn, 1996; Hughes et al., 1999). Behaviourists did not take the overall context in which behaviour occurred into account, nor did they consider specific circumstances or the dynamics of group behaviour. This gap in leadership research led to the emergence of situational leadership approaches (Komives et al., 1998).

### *Situational Approaches*

Situational approaches to leadership emphasize the importance of context with regard to the process of leading, and advocate that leaders should vary their approaches based on the environment and the situation (Bass, 1990; Komives et al., 1998). Leadership, then, is meaningless without consideration of the context. Researchers of situational approaches investigated the premise that no one leadership style is likely to be effective in all situations (Pellicer, 2003). Situational theory was based on the

assumption that “there is an optimum way for leaders to adjust their behavior with different followers and thereby increase their likelihood of success” (Hughes et al., 1999, p. 58). This approach to leadership was appealing because of its ease of application and understanding. Despite the fact that situational approaches were the primary focus of leadership and development initiatives well into the 1980s (Komives et al., 1998), little evidence was found to support the predictions of various situational leadership theories (Hughes et al., 1999).

### *Charismatic Leadership*

Throughout the history of leadership theory, considerable interest has been generated regarding influence, or charismatic, theories of leadership (Komives et al., 1998). The idea of “charisma” surfaced in the early twentieth century in Weber’s examination of leadership. His fondest hope was that a charismatic leader, “endowed with extraordinary, even superhuman, qualities, might be able to instill in his followers a sense of mission and moral purpose that a thoroughly demystified society no longer provides” (Heilbrunn, 1996, p. 4). Interest in charismatic leadership continued to grow as a result of a variety of social and political movements where one visionary leader would emerge to solve the problem (Bass, 1990; Komives et al., 1998). Leaders are usually described by their constituents as being charismatic when they inspire the following: devotion and loyalty, enthusiasm for the leader and the leader’s ideas, a willingness to sacrifice their personal interests for the sake of the group, and exceptional levels of performance (Delaney, October 8, 2002). Charismatic leaders are highly effective role models; they have high self-confidence, strong personal convictions, and enhanced skills with regard to articulating a vision of the ideal (Yukl, 1981). A charismatic leader’s

strength lies in his or her ability to appeal to the hopes and dreams of followers, and to communicate high expectations in the pursuit of those dreams (Yukl, 1981). The concept of charismatic leadership is one that is still under investigation, due to the negative influence of charismatic leaders who have abused power throughout human history (Komives et al., 1998).

### *Reciprocal Approaches*

From the late 1970s onward, reciprocal leadership theories gained precedence in both research and leadership practice, and continue to be of great interest to leadership practitioners today (Komives et al., 1998). Reciprocal leadership theories focus on “the relational and reciprocal nature of the leader-follower interaction” (Komives et al., 1998, p. 42). The process of leadership becomes paramount; this includes a focus on the values of empowerment, power sharing, and collectivity. Two significant leadership theories that have grown from this perspective are transformational leadership theory and servant leadership theory.

In 1978, Burns’ *Leadership* described “transforming leadership” as a process that “raises the level of human conduct and ethical aspiration of both leader and led, and thus it has a transforming effect on both” (p. 20). Transforming leadership features relationships where leaders and constituents interact to pursue common or joint purposes, and where mutual stimulation can lead to the transformation of followers into leaders and vice versa (Burns, 1978). The concept of transformational leadership is based on ideals of morality, such as justice, humanitarianism, and equality (Burns, 1978). This moral element is a unique feature of transformational leadership theory (Komives et al., 1998).



The concept of servant leadership was introduced by Greenleaf in the late 1970s. He posited that a servant leader is an individual who is concerned, first and foremost, with serving others—in other words, putting the needs of others before his or her own (Covey, 1998). Servant leadership is not motivated by financial gain or personal power; it focuses on facilitating a “sense of community, of togetherness, of connection” (Covey, 1998, p. xv). Servant leaders emphasize the power of making a difference through service within communities, social movements, or organizations (Komives et al., 1998). The reciprocal nature of servant leadership lies in the cyclical relationships and interactions between leaders, followers, and the greater society (Komives et al., 1998). The goals of servant leadership are not product or results oriented; they are “for those who are served to grow, to become more knowledgeable and empowered, to gain interdependence or independence, and to become servant leaders themselves” (Komives et al., 1998, p. 45).

#### *Current Conceptions of Leadership*

Current conceptions of leadership contain aspects of many of the leadership theories that have dominated the last one hundred years of leadership research. These conceptions are backed by contemporary research; Kouzes and Posner, for example, have compiled the results of surveys and case studies collected from thousands of leaders, and have conducted many in-depth interviews regarding “personal best leadership experiences” (1995). They have combined the results of this research and developed their own model of leadership development that integrates aspects of trait, charismatic, behavioural, situational, and reciprocal leadership theories (1995). This model is fairly representative of current trends in leadership development, as it addresses both the hard

or competency-based aspects of leadership practice and the soft or intuitive aspects of leadership practice (1995). In Kouzes and Posner's model, leadership competencies such as professional knowledge and management skills are balanced with the subjective concepts of empowerment and vision (1995).

Leadership practitioners and researchers still persist in the quest to discover the "true" nature of leadership, and "the one constant running through the field's history has been the urge to fashion typologies" (Heilbrunn, 1996, p. 4). The range of current publications on the topic suggests that the perception of need for definitive answers about the leadership process is pressing. The range of current leadership philosophy is staggering; current leadership literature conceives of the process of leading in a myriad of ways. For example, Gardner conceptualizes the leader as an influential individual within an overriding system who takes responsibility for certain essential functions within that system (1990); Hatch, Kostera, and Kozminski perceive leadership to be an aesthetic, artistic, spiritual process which includes the essential elements of creativity, ethical consideration, and inspiration (2005); Heider adapts the traditional Chinese teachings of Lao Tzu to fashion a philosophical guide to leadership (Komives et al., 1998); and Ciulla characterizes good leadership in two senses of the word "good": ethical and effective (2004, Introduction). These are just a few examples of contemporary leadership theory and philosophy that characterize the rapidly expanding field of leadership study.

### *Ethics*

The history of Western ethical theory stretches back over two thousand years to the writings of Plato and Aristotle. Answers to ethical inquiries have been sought through time periods characterized by the dominance of many religions, political figures,

and social upheavals. Due to a long history of ethical debate that has been fraught with complexity, as well as a complicated present that is informed by a number of competing contextual factors, contemporary consideration of ethical issues is extraordinarily challenging. Even in academia, the terms “ethics”, “morals”, and “values” are often used interchangeably, and people (including students, faculty, and administration) in post-secondary institutions do not have a common vision about what the word “ethical” means with regard to both theory and practice.

In order to create a context for the discussion of ethics education that takes place within this thesis, I will provide a brief summary of some general ethical perspectives: (1) ethics of insight and contingency, (2) ethics of character, (3) Kant’s categorical imperative, (4) utilitarian ethics, (5) communitarianism, and (6) altruism. These perspectives, as with leadership theory, continue to influence and shape contemporary discourse regarding ethical issues and ethics education.

#### *Ethics of Insight and Contingency*

Ethics of insight and contingency include “common sense” approaches to ethical inquiry (Walker, 1991). These approaches are characterized by the use of uncritical personal or group preferences, and individual emotions or moral opinions (Walker, 1991). Cultural relativism, or the belief that “right and wrong are dependent on particular temporal settings” (Walker, 1991, p. 75), also fits into the category of ethics of insight and contingency. In other words, “right” ethical decision making is dependent on cultural context and location, and what is right in one culture may be wrong in another. Insight and contingency doctrines of ethics include ethical insights that are generally pre-rational; these insights can provide individuals with some alternatives when considering

ethical issues, but are “usually more concerned with describing the process(es) and definition of ethics than with prescribing or evaluating particular conduct” (Walker, 1991, p. 77).

### *Virtue Ethics*

Concepts regarding virtue ethics, or ethics of character, originate in classical literature by Plato, Aristotle, and Confucius (Johnson, 2001). A number of doctrines fit into the realm of ethics of character, but they all focus on identifying the kinds of virtues a good person should embody (Walker, 1991). Johnson summarizes the doctrines of character ethics: “Proponents of virtue ethics start with the end in mind. They develop a description or portrait of the ideal person... and identify the admirable qualities or tendencies that make up the character of this ethical role model. They then suggest ways that others can acquire these virtues” (2001, p. 50). A key tenet of the ethics of character is that individuals must consistently and perpetually live in a certain kind of way to be considered virtuous; by exercising moderation and by habituating virtuous behaviour through practice, one can become a virtuous person (Starr, 1991). The premise behind doctrines of ethics of character is that “good” people will behave in “good” ways and make “good” ethical decisions (Johnson, 2001).

### *Kant’s Categorical Imperative*

The categorical imperative formulated by Immanuel Kant has had a distinctive and powerful influence on ethical philosophy over the last two hundred years. The categorical imperative was developed as follows:

Kant believes that humans would always act in a moral manner if they lacked any competing desires. He calls these competing desires ‘inclinations’. These

inclinations are contrasted with the concept of 'duty'. The term 'duty' has a special status in Kant's moral philosophy. Our duty turns out to be precisely what we are morally obligated to do. It is the categorical imperative which represents our moral obligation. (Starr, 1991, p. 27)

One basis of Kant's ethical doctrine is consistency; he believed that moral principles should be of the nature that they could be applied equally to all people, including oneself (Walker, 1991). This is an ethical doctrine that Kant felt should be applied without exception. Kant's is an ethic of obligation, which asserts that people should do the right thing regardless of what the resulting consequences may be (Johnson, 2001). One purpose of such an emphasis on duty, regardless of cost, is to inspire persistent and consistent behaviour (Johnson, 2001).

#### *Utilitarian Ethics*

In opposition to Kant's categorical imperative, proponents of utilitarian ethics assert that consideration of consequences should be the cornerstone of ethical decision making (Johnson, 2001). The goal of the utilitarian principle is general happiness, or the greatest good for the greatest number of people (Johnson, 2001; Starr, 1991; Walker, 1991). There are two approaches to utilitarian decision making: "Utility can be based on what is best in a specific case (act utilitarianism) or on what is generally best in most contexts (rule utilitarianism)" (Johnson, 2001, p. 100). There is a social emphasis in utilitarianism, where the assessment of the moral worth of behaviour is guided by the level to which it promotes the welfare of society (Starr, 1991). The purpose inherent in utilitarian ethics is the maintenance of responsibility for everyone affected by the consequences of moral decisions (Walker, 1991).

### *Communitarian Ethics*

Modern communitarianism was spearheaded by Amitai Etzioni, who led an appeal to shift societal focus from the rights of individuals to communal responsibilities (Johnson, 2001). Etzioni asserted that a society characterized by individualism and a prescribed social order is unstable, and that Americans should make a conscious shift towards identifying themselves as part of a social context where core societal morals and values dominate (Etzioni, 1996). The primary concern of the communitarian movement is the common good, or the long-term stability of a society (Johnson, 2001).

Communitarian principles have been identified as providing a “promising approach to moral reasoning” (Johnson, 2001, p. 109) because they promote a collective approach to ethical decision making and communal discussion of ethical issues.

### *Altruism*

Altruism, or the ethics of love and justice, is based on the universal ethic of care (Johnson, 2001; Walker, 1991). When employing an altruistic approach to ethical decision making, an individual chooses the course of action that will be the most compassionate, empathic, and generous (Johnson, 2001). People who are proponents of altruism are other-centered, and maintain that ethical standards should be characterized by love of people. The ultimate purpose of altruistic behaviour is to promote healthy, trusting social relationships based on care and justice (Johnson, 2001).

### *Current Conceptions of Ethics*

This survey of ethical philosophy and doctrine may make it seem like ethical theories are distinct and independent from one another. However, it is possible and often necessary for an individual to practice ethical pluralism, which is the use of a

combination of ethical theories in order to approach ethical decision making and behaviour (Johnson, 2001). In fact, a number of the theories are interrelated; altruism and communitarianism, for example, share many commonalities with concepts of virtue ethics (Johnson, 2001).

The past century of ethical research and philosophical development has focused primarily on addressing two broad areas of inquiry (Rachels, 1998). The first area involves the objectivity of ethics, and the struggle to separate moral truth from individual feeling or convention. The second area involves addressing the content of ethical theory, or determining the way(s) of summarizing how to live and behave in a moral manner. These two areas of inquiry are not independent of one another; in fact, philosophers such as Rawls and Gauthier have developed theory over the past forty years that clearly integrates the two areas, and addresses ethics from an interdisciplinary perspective (Rachels, 1998).

In the area of ethical research and theoretical development, as in the area of leadership, “the closer one comes to the present... the messier and more confusing things become” (Rachels, 1998, p. 459). Contemporary discourse regarding ethical philosophy and moral issues is generally associated with previous theories, but many philosophers are also creating contemporary theory that is based on original points of view (Rachels, 1998). Many philosophers now argue that it is impossible to generate a systematic or universal moral theory, making the field of ethical inquiry often seem chaotic. However, the area of secular ethics is relatively new and is experiencing rigorous attention (Rachels, 1998).

## Leadership and Ethics—Linked in Theory and Practice

Although researchers and practitioners in the areas of leadership and ethics have not established universally accepted theory, the histories of research, postulation, and theoretical development in these areas can serve as a solid foundation for continued inquiry. The possibilities for interdisciplinary research and practice are compelling; in fact, links between leadership and ethics theory and practice provide a basis for a growing interest in the academic integration of these two concepts.

A tendency is emerging, in contemporary leadership and ethics discourse, to link the two concepts in both theory and practice. In the 1970s, Greenleaf noted that “connections between leadership and ethics have been cited by professionals and philosophers for thousands of years; he acknowledged these connections in his call for a new “business ethic” that would shift corporate focus onto the workers, and allow for the realization of reciprocity and empowerment within organizations (Greenleaf, 1998). Burns became a frontrunner in the theoretical integration of leadership and ethics when he published his theories regarding transformational leadership in 1978. Burns identified leadership as an ultimately moral process, in that it “raises the level of human conduct and ethical aspiration of both leader and led” (1978, p. 20). He maintained that leadership is moral because it is, in essence, a relationship based on the ethical principles of respect, care, justice, and empathy (1978).

Another approach to linking the concepts of leadership and ethics is to examine how they are intertwined in the context of leadership practice. Ciulla articulates this idea:

The study of ethics generally consists of the examination of right, wrong, good, evil, virtue, duty, obligation, rights, justice, fairness, etc. in human relationships



with each other and other living things. Leadership studies, either directly or indirectly, try to understand what leadership is and how and why the leader-follower relationship works... leadership entails distinctive kinds of human relationships with distinctive sets of moral problems. (2004, "Leadership ethics: Mapping the territory", p. 4)

In other words, leaders, like all individuals, experience relationships with others in which ethical decisions must be made and ethical considerations must be weighed. Ethical practice, however, is an overriding and pervasive necessity for leaders; because of the nature of power and influence, leaders have different and greater moral obligations than their constituents (Ciulla, 2003). An integrated leadership/ethics approach to theory and practice, then, better enables individuals to consider the unique ethical responsibilities that are a part of leadership practice holistically.

Another link between leadership and ethics is identifiable in the kinds of tasks and roles in which leaders engage. Part of a leader's role is to identify or facilitate the development of a collective vision, which is "an ideal and unique image of the future" (Kouzes & Posner, 1995, p. 95). Burns identifies an ethical aspect of vision, describing it as a "moralizing force" (2004, p. xi). Since leadership vision is transformational in nature, and since it advocates for real and perceived change, it inherently contains a value statement about the current state of affairs and, thus, has ethical implications in its realization (Burns, 2004). That leaders are charged with shaping the realization of vision means they are also charged with managing the ethical ramifications of that realization.

Ethical issues tie into the lives and practice of leaders in several ways. Ethical and moral considerations play a significant role in the methods leaders use to gather and

motivate followers (Ciulla, “Introduction”, 2004). There is a fine line between coercion and maintaining a willing followership, and this is a moral issue that leaders explore and negotiate on an ongoing basis. Another practical element of leadership ethics relates to the “ethics of the ends” (Ciulla, 2004, “Introduction”, p. xvi), or the inherent moral value of the results of leadership efforts. This ties specifically into philosophies of utilitarian ethics, and whether or not the practice of leadership in any given context is truly serving the greater good of the community (Ciulla, “Introduction”, 2004). Finally, issues regarding the private morality of leaders are both relevant to and pervasive in the practice of leadership. Again, there is a fine line between self-interest and altruism, and distinguishing this is particularly important when considering the significant power that leaders yield (Ciulla, “Introduction”, 2004). The personal morality of leaders has publicly come into question throughout history; Martin Luther King and Bill Clinton are just two examples of highly regarded leaders whose infidelities ultimately tainted their leadership legacy (Johnson 2001). As exemplars, leaders have a greater responsibility than their constituents to model sound ethical principles in their personal lives.

Leadership and ethics are clearly linked on both theoretical and practical levels: the ethical responsibilities of leaders are unique, significant, and compelling. Since leadership and ethics are fundamentally correlated, it is vital to determine how this relationship between subject areas can be conveyed within the context of adult post-secondary education.

#### Elements of Adult Learning

When considering current practice in post-secondary institutions with regard to the instruction of leadership and ethics, it is essential to address the characteristics of

adult learners, the ways in which adults learn, and approaches to adult education.

Without adequate consideration of these important contextual elements, any evaluation of adult education endeavours runs the risk of being inaccurate and inconsequential.

Therefore, these elements must be taken into account prior to analyzing current pedagogical practice in post-secondary leadership and ethics education.

### *Characteristics of Adult Learners*

As with any group of learners, the characteristics of adult learners vary greatly depending on their cultural background, social/political/religious affiliations, family history, social status, gender, and age. Most groups of adult learners will contain members at different stages of personal development, who will have a wide range of abilities, and who will respond uniquely to the changes occurring in their lives (Rogers, 1996).

However, certain characteristics are frequently and consistently exhibited amongst adult learners. As such, they “have attained the legal and chronological status of adulthood” (Brookfield, 1986, p. 2) and their participation in learning activities is voluntary. When individuals begin to see themselves as adults in Western culture, they perceive themselves as self-directed and autonomous (Knowles, 1970). An adult learner has a history of experiences on which they base their attitudes and values, and this will influence how they receive new ideas: “The student participants see all new material they encounter through the lens of their existing experience and knowledge” (Rogers, 1996, p. 63). The adult learner generally approaches the learning process with specific intentions or goals, and has pre-conceived expectations about what the learning process will be like (Rogers, 1996). Adults have also come to exhibit certain patterns of learning; they have

acquired learning styles that help them cope with the challenge of receiving new information (Pettifor & Paquet, 2002). Due to necessity, the time frame between learning and practical application for adults in a learning environment is generally quite short. For this reason, adult learning efforts tend to focus on practical and applied knowledge (Knowles, 1970). Finally, perhaps one of the most significant characteristics of adult learners, particularly when considering pedagogical approaches, is the fact that they have competing interests. The educational pursuits of adults must be considered in the context of their “complete social environments” (Rogers, 1996, p. 69); adults have a variety of relationships, professional obligations, financial obligations and other social factors to balance with their learning enterprises.

#### *The Nature of Adult Learning*

Regardless of the approach taken to adult education, several assumptions exist within the field about adult learning in Western culture. First and foremost, we assume and believe that adults are capable of significant, meaningful learning. In fact, research indicates that an individual’s ability to learn is not impaired by the aging process (Knowles, 1970). Learning occurs throughout the lifespan by virtue of experience, and “since experience is continuous, so too learning is continuous” (Rogers, 1996, p. 80).

Second, we assume that learning is an individual, internal process. Although learning is influenced by outside forces including group dynamics and societal pressures, adults process information in unique, individual ways—and they process that information for personal use (Rogers, 1996). In addition, this internal process of individual learning is not merely intellectual in nature; it is a holistic process that involves interactions

between the intellectual, emotional, relational, physiological, intuitive, and spiritual facets of human functioning (Griffin, 2001; Knowles, 1970).

Third, we assume that adults learn more effectively under certain conditions (Knowles, 1970). “Learning conditions” refer to both the physical environment in which learning takes place, as well as the motivational state of the adult learner. With respect to the physical environment, adults learn better when they are physically comfortable (in terms of seating, lighting, temperature, etc.), and when the physical environment is conducive to interaction between everyone in the room (Knowles, 1970). The physical environment must convey a spirit of respect, cooperation, and mutual trust (Knowles, 1970). The motivational state of the adult learner is determined in large part by whether or not the learner has set and accepted personal goals (Rogers, 1996). Adult learners are most highly motivated to learn when they identify goals that they believe are achievable, when they can see that progress towards achieving their goals is occurring, and when they are confident that they can cope with adapting their goals if need be (Rogers, 1996).

#### *Adult Cognitive (Learning) Styles*

The concept of cognitive styles has significantly influenced the practice of adult education. Cognitive style refers to “an individual’s way of processing information” (Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2001, p. 2). The concept of cognitive style emerged in the field of education in the 1970s in order to help practitioners understand individual differences in learning achievements, and to create new frameworks for instruction that would capitalize on the cognitive styles of individual students (Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2001). Many theories of cognitive, or learning, styles have been proposed by a variety of educational practitioners; for the purposes of this document, it is enough to note that

adults think, process information, and learn in a variety of different ways, and that it is important for adult education strategies to address those differences.

### *Adult Learning Strategies*

Learning is an active process; adults actively use several different kinds of strategies to assist them in the acquisition of new knowledge. Adults utilize their past experiences in the process of learning by making analogies and creating links between past experiences and new knowledge, creating relationships between them and adapting new knowledge to fit into existing knowledge frameworks (Rogers, 1996). Trial and error is a strategy frequently used by adult learners; in other words, “trying on” a number of different solutions to a current issue in order to find the best fit (Rogers, 1996). Adults tend to be holistic learners, and often create “meaningful wholes” in order to learn new material or skills; this is achieved by creating patterns and relationships between newly learned materials in order to synthesize those materials (Rogers, 1996). In addition, adults learn well through imitation and repeated application; they often grasp demonstrated skills quickly, and reinforce those skills by engaging in repetition (Rogers, 1996).

### *Methods in Adult Education*

The field of adult education has been influenced by the theories and philosophies of many practitioners, including Paulo Freire, Robert Gagne, Malcolm Knowles, Jack Mezirow, and Carl Rogers (Jarvis, 2004). Consequently, adult educators utilize a wide variety of approaches, from didactic models to facilitative teaching (Jarvis, 2004). The focus in this study centers on teaching methods in adult education; for this reason, teacher-centered and student-centered methods are highlighted here.

In teacher-centered methods, the teacher plays a dominant role in the learning process. Teacher-centered methods include: lecture, demonstration, tutorial, mentorship, and controlled discussion (Jarvis, 2004, Rogers, 1996). These methods are often the most effective for communicating specific technical knowledge or theory (Jarvis, 2004). There is a high level of teacher control over learning outcomes when teacher-centered methods are utilized (Jarvis, 2004).

In student-centered methods, the instructor assumes the role of facilitator, and “whilst responsible for creating the learning situation, teachers do not control the learning outcomes” (Jarvis, 2004, p. 165). Student centered methods are process-oriented, participatory methods that often include elements of discovery. These methods involve a high level of interaction, between the facilitator and learner, and between the learners themselves (Rogers, 1996). Participatory methods include group discussions or brainstorming sessions, interviews, projects, work-based activities, debates, games, collaborative analysis, and role plays (Brookfield, 1986; Jarvis, 2004). Many of these methods can also be characterized as discovery methods, which are approaches “in which the learners on their own or in groups work on tasks, exploring and discovering knowledge for themselves through practice, experiments, reading, writing” (Rogers, 1996, p. 188). Discovery methods can be employed in the classroom or alternative settings, such as on field trips or workplace internships.

There are many theories about the most effective ways to facilitate adult learning. However, there is agreement that traditional methods involving strictly teacher-centered practice are no longer considered to be effective, particularly with regard to adult education in the areas of leadership and ethics (Pettifor & Paquet, 2002). Instead, “adult

learning is facilitated with the flexible use of learning strategies and the integration of cognitive, emotional, and personal components” (Pettifor & Paquet, 2002, “Literature on Adult Learning” section, ¶7). Teacher-centered methods can be used to communicate theory-based information, but the instructor should assume a primarily facilitative role.

Effective adult education, then, consists of a unique combination of variables. The characteristics of adult learners and the ways in which adults engage in learning play an instrumental role in selecting the most appropriate methods for facilitating the learning process. This holds true for all subject areas in adult education, including leadership and ethics.

#### Leadership and Ethics in Adult Education

A fundamental tenet of leadership education is that leadership can be taught, that “leadership qualities and skills can be learned and developed” (Komives et al., 1998, p. 5). People are not born effective leaders; leadership capacities can be learned through a combination of education and experience (Gardner, 1990). If adults can learn, and leadership can be taught, then it stands to reason that adults can learn to lead. Leadership education for adults cannot be reduced to concrete theory or a definitive framework of steps. However, through a combination of acquiring theoretical knowledge and engaging in leadership practice, adults are capable of learning self awareness, developing personal leadership philosophies, and working with others to develop leadership capacity.

Adults also have the capacity to engage in learning that facilitates moral development. In fact, “education that takes place in adulthood can be directly related to [moral reasoning] development during the same era” (Armon & Dawson, 1997, p. 448). Adult learning in many areas, including that of ethics education, has an impact on self-



development, self-awareness, and the development of personal moral insight (Leicester & Pearce, 1997). Young adults in their twenties to early thirties have been identified as being at a prime developmental level for learning about moral vision, ethical reflection, and ethical decision making (Parks, 1993). Although factors such as genetics, family history, lifestyle, individual interest, competence, access to resources, and general health can affect the development of moral reasoning in adulthood, it is clear that adults can continue to develop their moral reasoning skills throughout middle age (Armon & Dawson, 1997).

Adults, then, are capable of learning about leadership and ethics. However, some instructional approaches and pedagogical methods are more effective for facilitating adult learning in leadership and ethics than others. These methods can be used in combination with one another to facilitate meaningful, comprehensive leadership ethics education opportunities for adult learners.

#### Pedagogical Strategies in Leadership and Ethics Education for Adults

The word pedagogical refers to “the work or occupation of teaching” (OED2, s.v. “pedagogy”). Pedagogical tools, then, are specific approaches taken to facilitate the teaching/learning process in adult education environments. Although the word “pedagogical” has been construed as referring to teaching processes related specifically to children, it is used in this document also in the context of adult education.

Debate exists with regard to identifying and utilizing the most effective teaching methods and pedagogical tools in leadership and ethics education. It is clear that no one tool is universally the most appropriate; in fact, it has been argued that leadership and ethics educators have “an obligation to draw from a broad spectrum of pedagogical tools

to align theory with application” (Morrison, Rha, & Helfman, 2003, ¶4). Several pedagogical tools have been identified in adult education, leadership, and ethics literature as being effective with regard to facilitating adult learning. They include, but are not limited to, case studies, stories, role play, experiential learning, and mentorship.

### *Case Studies*

Case studies, or case methods, are methods of “instruction based on real-life examples” (Marsick, 1990, p. 226). Cases can take the form of stories, scenarios, or news articles, and they can be factual or hypothetical (Kunselman & Johnson, 2004). According to Marsick, when case methods are used in adult learning classrooms, they generally have three components: case report, case analysis, and case discussion (1990). The case report is based on an actual or fictional situation, and uses written materials, audio-visuals, and video in order to describe a complex problem (Marsick, 1990). The case analysis can be described as a search process, where students analyze the case report in order to determine what the underlying context, principles, and problems of the case are (Marsick, 1990). The case discussion is a group discussion that focuses on addressing alternative perspectives within the case and identifying possible solutions. Research has demonstrated that the case study method actively engages adults in the learning process through analysis, critical thought, conceptualization, and application (Kunselman & Johnson, 2004). The use of case studies can help students to “understand complex and complicated issues and describe interrelated processes” (Kunselman & Johnson, 2004, “Active Learning Using Case Studies” section, ¶ 8), which makes them ideally suited for the instruction of leadership ethics. In addition, they have a broad capacity for application to a wide variety of disciplines (Kunselman & Johnson, 2004).

### *Stories*

A story is a re-telling of human experience, framed by a narrative that details the interactions between people, events, actions, and responses (Duffey, 1991). It is different from a case study in that cases present students “with scenarios waiting for meaning to be imposed upon them” (Duffey, 1991, p. 135), while a story is a narrative that is already imbued with multiple levels of meaning. Story has been identified as a pedagogical tool that can, through the processes of identification and empathy, help students to critically approach events in their own life and make sense of their own experiences (Duffey, 1991). This is based on the premise that “we gain insight into human intentionality by observing the actions of human beings in their particularity” (Duffey, 1991, p. 130). Stories are used in post-secondary classrooms to inspire students to practice active, critical observation, and to apply the interpretation of that observation to their own lives and behaviour (Duffey, 1991). The appeal of story as a teaching tool for leadership and ethics lies in its complexity; like the complex ethical situations that leaders often face, stories present problematic situations that have no easy solutions (Duffey, 1991).

### *Role Play*

Role play is “a learning activity in which participants act out a set of defined role behaviours or positions with a view to acquiring desired experiences. A role-playing scenario could be mimicking, demonstrative, or illustrative of specific concepts, problems, or situations” (Olusegun, 2004, “Introduction” section, ¶ 8). When role play is used responsibly within adult learning environments, it is followed by a period of debriefing and critical reflection, so as to provide the student with maximum benefits (Jarvis, 2004). The benefits of this pedagogical tool include its ability to facilitate the

following: active participation in the classroom setting, connections between the cognitive and emotional elements of human behaviour, and the smooth introduction of technique (Jarvis, 2004). Role playing is particularly useful in leadership education, where it can be used to develop individual capacity for interpersonal interaction, conflict management, change management, active listening, and ethical communication (Olusegun, 2004).

### *Experiential Learning*

Experiential learning encompasses a wide range of activities, and can be conceptualized as a teaching technique in which students engage in “an episodic experience of what they have been learning in the classroom or what they are about to experience when they enter the world of work” (Jarvis, 2004, p. 181); this can be a simulated or “real-life” experience. Experiential learning, then, includes activities such as service learning, work placements, and participation in virtual professional settings. It is often used as a counter-balance to lecture and other traditional forms of classroom teaching (Jarvis, 2004). There are many benefits associated with using experiential techniques; service learning researchers, for example, have cited improvement of interpersonal skills, increased personal reflection, an increased sense of civic responsibility, and increased levels of moral development as results of experiential activity (Wells & Grabert, 2004). This pedagogical strategy is particularly applicable with regard to leadership and ethics course content, as ethical leadership is best learned through processes involving direct experience (Komives et al, 1998).

### *Mentoring*

A mentor is an individual who acts as a support and resource for an adult learner (Jarvis, 2004). A mentoring relationship can be established through a facilitated process, or simply through unstructured proximity that is fuelled by interpersonal chemistry (Jarvis, 2004). The purpose of structured mentorship, as would take place in a post-secondary learning environment, is to promote the learner's "ability to perceive and hold complexity, to tolerate ambiguity, to experience one's own and others' feelings more richly, to see oneself and others in a broader context, and to make wholehearted commitments in a complex, tentative, and interdependent world" (Daloz, 1990, p. 206). Effective mentoring relationships are extremely helpful for adult learners because the mentor is able to provide support as an active listener, can challenge the learner by engaging them in critical discussion, and can assist practical learning by modeling behaviour (Jarvis, 2004). Mentorship has clear links to leadership ethics education, as "there is much about leadership that is best learned from living examples" (Gardner, 1990, p. 169), including ethical behaviour.

### *Summary*

Adult educators have several pedagogical tools to draw from when implementing leadership and ethics education in post-secondary classrooms. In addition to those described here, leadership and ethics educators use tools such as group discussion, journal writing, and structured questioning (Burbach, Matkin, & Fritz, 2004). Using a combination of tools and techniques is recommended in order to achieve maximum learning; in addition, strategic sequencing of content delivery and active student

engagement results in high levels of learning as well as a “greater student awareness of what is being learned” (Morrison et al., 2003, ¶ 5).

#### Assessing the Worth of Post-Secondary Leadership and Ethics Education

Much research and literature points to the importance of offering leadership and ethics education to post-secondary students. The necessity for such education can be likened to the necessity for education in a variety of professional fields. In law, for example, “talent and basic predispositions are not enough to enable a person to function effectively as a lawyer in a courtroom. Likewise, neither is good early-childhood habituation in the moral realm, nor a capacity for empathy, nor ‘good personal character’ sufficient for guiding the decision making of the professional business manager” (Parks, 1993, p. 14). Post-secondary students are “the future leaders of every sector... Here is a key leverage point for the moral quality of our or any modern society” (in Berkowitz, 1991, p. 107). As the developmental environments of future citizens and leaders, universities and colleges have an obligation to provide some form of leadership and ethics education for their students.

#### *Leadership Education*

A recent profusion of leadership classes in universities and professional colleges throughout North America suggests that post-secondary institutions believe that “preparation for leadership can be improved with intentional process” (D. Berg, 2003, p. 70). With respect to justifying leadership development activity and education, universities and colleges can choose from any number of compelling reasons. First, individuals engaging in post-secondary education need to learn about citizenship—about their basic role in society that requires the assumption of a certain level of social

responsibility. This view is shared by the public: “The general public’s pervasive sense is that higher education graduates should care about applying their education to their communities” (Cress, 2001, p. 227). Part of this is the practice of leadership, which is the responsibility not just of titled leaders, but of all participants in a community (Komives et al., 1998). As Kouzes and Posner state, “leadership isn’t the private reserve of a few charismatic men and women. It’s a process ordinary people use when they’re bringing forth the best from themselves and others” (1995, p. xx). Leadership, then, is everyone’s business, including administration, faculty, staff, and students at post-secondary institutions.

Second, leadership skills are widely applicable, so universities and colleges would be increasing the worth of the educational opportunities that they offer students by including leadership development and education as part of those opportunities. Leadership abilities emerge as useful in all areas of life; they “can be applied to personal relationships, as well as to work and organizational responsibilities” (Komives et al., 1998, p. 19). In a post-secondary learning environment, leadership skills can be studied and practiced in any academic area, including: anthropology, history, sociology, psychology, commerce, business, education, political science, health sciences, international studies, physical education, literature, and fine arts (Komives et al., 1998). Additional incentive for offering leadership development to students is cited in research that has found that student participation in leadership education also leads to higher grades across the board, increased abilities in the application of theoretical knowledge to unique situations, and improved critical thinking skills (Cress, 2001).

Third, and perhaps most importantly, leadership education helps post-secondary students learn to deal with and manage change and chaos (Gardner, 1990; Komives et al., 1998; Kouzes & Posner, 1995). The process of change is both inevitable and essential in a world that is seemingly characterized by disorder (Komives et al., 1998). Leadership education helps “to produce responsible citizens, who have an understanding of the world they live in and possess the will and ability to take on leadership roles” (Ciulla, 1996, p. 199). This understanding involves an awareness of human connections and relationships, as trusting relationships provide stability and grounding when processes of change are occurring (Komives et al., 1998). The ability to forge and nurture relationships is an integral part of the leadership process, as it provides groups of people the ability to make cooperative goals, operate under a shared vision, and to work together towards achieving a common goal (Kouzes & Posner, 1995). It fits, then, that leadership education will help post-secondary students to develop strategies for coping with chaos and change by facilitating an understanding of society and fostering the ability to create meaningful relationships in the face of change processes.

### *Ethics Education*

The reasons for offering ethics education to post-secondary students are as equally compelling as those for offering leadership education. Ethics curriculum in post-secondary programs has been established across North America, and an increased dialogue regarding ethics education in all disciplines has been encouraged by many professional groups (Carlson & Burke, 1998). However, questions are still raised regarding the validity and effectiveness of ethics education for adult students in post-secondary educational institutions; critics have even remarked that it is pointless to try



and teach ethics to young adults whose moral characters have, for the most part, already been established (Carlson & Burke, 1998). This challenge can be rendered moot by the consideration of the aforementioned studies on the moral development of adults; adults are capable of learning about ethics and developing their moral capacity throughout adulthood.

Again, as with leadership education, there are a number of reasons for universities and colleges to offer ethics education to their students. The perceived decline in civility, good citizenship, and moral conduct in our society has been blamed on schools and universities; critics maintain that post-secondary institutions have failed with regard to preparing students for informed and effective citizenship (Branson, 2003).

Universities and colleges can respond to this by citing that post-secondary ethics education can help enhance an individual's level of moral reasoning. As Cheryl Armon states, "there is little doubt that abstract moral reasoning stage places limitations on individuals' capacities to act morally with others" (Armon, 1998, "Discussion" section, ¶ 3). Consequently, if a post-secondary institution's goal is to enhance the ability of its graduates to act as responsible, honest citizens (as the public is currently demanding it should), then a logical choice would be to offer ethics education to the student body with the goal of developing their capacities for moral reasoning and ethical behaviour (Cress, 2001).

Another good reason to offer ethics education to university students relates to the personal integrity and confidence of students. As noted previously, we live in an age where cynicism is on the rise. Young adults are becoming more and more disillusioned with societal structures, and personal efforts to affect change are often perceived as

ineffective (Branson, 2003). Life in this context can lead to despair, or conversely, the adoption of egoist ethical doctrines in the effort to get ahead. Starr summarizes the importance of ethics education:

In the absence of theory, all ethical decision making becomes situational. There is no systematic way for a person to make moral decisions over a long span of time. This will lead to an *ad hoc* nonsystematic way of doing ethics which is likely to result in inconsistent moral behavior. From here, it is a short step to ethical relativism (There are no moral standards.), and for some, another step to moral cynicism and despair. (1991, p. 35)

Educational institutions have the opportunity, then, to empower their students through ethical education, providing them with the opportunity to become explicit, confident, and consistent in their ethical decision making processes.

Inspiring the pursuit of life-long learning is another reason to offer ethics education to post-secondary students. It is easy for students in colleges and universities to perceive education as being finite; after all, they graduate and leave the setting of formal education to pursue jobs, family lives, and creative endeavors. However, the requirements and demands that will be placed on graduates in the future are unknown. If graduates are to respond flexibly to the demands of the unknown, both in terms of emerging ethical dilemmas and otherwise, they must be open to the concepts of life-long learning and development. Walker summarizes this premise in relation to ethics education as follows:

Through experience and wisdom, there are some who have come to a state of what might be called ‘authentic ethical humility’—knowing that there is always

room to grow in the ethical realm and wanting to be better today than yesterday, and better still tomorrow than you are today. When at their best, these people realize that they don't have to be ethically sick or corrupt to get ethically better. Experience teaches us a great deal. We often get our ethical consciousness or moral sensitivity through events or circumstances along life's way. Displacement of 'ethical muteness', moral complacency, or even ethical mediocrity, is best done in a proactive fashion rather than in response to difficult circumstances. (2004)

The "proactive fashion" of lifelong learning that Walker mentions here is effectively modeled by universities and colleges that incorporate components of ethical education throughout the duration of undergraduate and graduate programs, thus encouraging students to continue engaging in ethical development after graduation and beyond.

#### Linking Leadership and Ethics: Integrating Concepts in Adult Education

As previously illustrated, leadership practice and ethical conduct are inextricably linked; the lives of leaders are colored by ethical considerations on both professional and personal levels. Since the concepts of leadership and ethics are linked both theoretically and practically, they should also be linked, or integrated, within an educational context. This is particularly significant for establishments of higher learning, as the students that post-secondary institutions are educating today are the very same individuals who will, eventually, become the nation's leaders in politics, social movements, businesses, non-profit sectors, and the colleges and universities that are currently providing opportunities for higher education. Post-secondary institutions, then, have a vested interest in graduating students who have the knowledge, skill, and capacity to make sound ethical

decisions, and to guide their personal and professional conduct in an ethical manner (Connaughton et al., 2003).

If the integration of leadership and ethics in post-secondary education is to be achieved, the two subjects must be considered collectively instead of independently of one another. Ciulla makes the case that “ethics is located in the heart of leadership studies and not in an appendage” (2004, “Leadership ethics: Mapping the territory”, p. 4). Leadership and ethics can be linked and integrated historically, theoretically, and practically. Since ethical analysis usually requires a holistic perspective on practice (Ciulla, “Leadership ethics: Mapping the territory”, 2004), an integrated approach that considers all of these links is ideally suited to leadership ethics education. The key is to move beyond a reliance on “common sense” approaches (Ciulla, “Leadership ethics: Mapping the territory”, 2004) and to consider instead an explicit, comprehensive approach to leadership ethics education that affords both subject areas their individual due, but also integrates them in meaningful, practical ways. Ethical conduct in leadership practice is conscious and reflective (Gini, 2004); therefore, it is essential to become explicit about ethicality if instructors of leadership ethics education “are to provide suitable ethical models and lead by example” (Walker, 2004).

### Summary

An examination of leadership and ethics literature demonstrates that, given the fundamental theoretical and practical links between the two subjects, they should also be linked within the context of adult post-secondary education. Adults are capable of learning about leadership and ethics, and many effective pedagogical tools exist to facilitate that learning. Further, it is important to offer such leadership ethics education in

order to produce graduates who are capable of contributing to their families, places of employment, and communities in productive, meaningful, ethically responsible ways.

The literature, then, demonstrates: that leadership and ethics are problematic and compelling subject areas; that leadership and ethics are linked theoretically and practically; that although adults have unique characteristics and styles of learning, they can learn about effective leadership practice and ethical behaviour; that the reasons for offering leadership and ethics education are compelling; and that an integrated approach to teaching leadership and ethics is most effective in adult learning environments.

However, a gap in this literature exists with regard to descriptions of current pedagogical practice in integrated leadership ethics education; the research described in this document attempts to address this deficit.

## Chapter Three

### METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

To enable the reader to understand how I arrived at the claims and conclusions presented in the subsequent two chapters, I here identify the choices I made regarding sampling, data collection, and data analysis. Since my particular, individual position as a researcher influenced the way in which I conducted this study and interpreted the data, I also address the importance of the way in which I approached this work.

I used content analysis and qualitative interviewing to gather original data for this study. Initially, the process of qualitative interviewing intuitively seemed the most likely to generate meaningful data with regard to the research question: *Are the subjects of ethics and leadership—however conceptualized—integrated within the curricula of undergraduate classes that are offered for credit at the University of Saskatchewan?* However, I agree with Patton’s claim that “borrowing and combining distinct elements from pure or coherent methodological strategies can generate creative mixed inquiry strategies that illustrate variations on the theme of triangulation” (2002, p. 248).

Triangulation, or using mixed sources of data (Merriam, 1998), helps to illuminate both consistencies and inconsistencies in data, and helps to generate deeper insights regarding the topic of inquiry (Patton, 2002). My choice to implement a two-pronged approach, then, was made in the effort to collect as much varied qualitative and quantitative data as possible in order to accurately describe current pedagogical practices in the areas of leadership and ethics education at the University of Saskatchewan.

Content analysis is an unobtrusive form of social research which enables the researcher to study human behaviour by examining and analyzing recorded communication. Recorded communication contains both manifest and latent content that can be analyzed through the use of a conceptual framework (Babbie, 2002). Manifest content includes elements of recorded discourse such as words and phrases that can be physically counted, while latent content contains the symbolic or deeper meaning of the physical data (B. Berg, 2004). In this study, content analysis provided information about course content that was communicated to students through documents such as outlines, assignments, and exams. Content analysis allowed me to explore both manifest and latent topics of study, goals, and core principles in each course.

A qualitative interview is “essentially a conversation in which the interviewer establishes a general direction for the conversation and pursues specific topics raised by the respondent” (Babbie, 2002). A strength of the interview process is its flexibility, which made this method of research an ideal counterpart to content analysis. The structured and quantitative nature of the content analysis was balanced by the flexibility and qualitative nature of the interviews. The interviews allowed me to delve into the instructors’ thoughts and perceptions regarding course material, themes, and learning outcomes. The interview process also provided the instructors with the opportunity to elaborate on the information provided in their course materials, and to amend or provide further detail about course content and pedagogical strategies.

This study focused on undergraduate leadership and ethics education in a variety of professional colleges at the University of Saskatchewan. “Professional colleges” include colleges, programs, or schools at the University of Saskatchewan that educate and

train students for specialized professional practice. As defined in one of the courses in this study, a profession is “work that requires sophisticated skills, the use of judgment, and the exercise of discretion. The work is not routine and not capable of being mechanized” (DM #2, 09). In order to practice as a professional, an individual first requires extensive formal education, often accompanied by, but not limited to, a period of practical training or apprenticeship. The courses in this study all focus primarily on the practical, applied elements of professional practice, and are oriented toward students in the final year of their undergraduate programs. This is an important contextual element in the study, as the students participating in the courses that constitute the research sample were generally older than most undergraduate students, and averaged four to six years of prior undergraduate experience.

#### Research Sample and Participants

The purpose of this research study was to examine and analyze courses at the University of Saskatchewan from a variety of undergraduate professional colleges or programs that included a focus on either leadership or ethics. The sample of classes was chosen purposively on the basis of the following criteria:

1. The course had a pronounced emphasis on influencing the future practice of professionals;
2. The course had been offered to undergraduate students within the last year or was currently being offered to undergraduate students;
3. The course included substantive leadership or ethics content; and
4. Documentary material for the course (course outline, reading list, assignments, and exams) was readily accessible.



Initially, I searched the online University of Saskatchewan course calendar for course descriptions that included the words “leadership”, “management”, “ethics” or “ethical”. I grouped the results into two separate categories: “leadership courses” and “ethics courses”. This initial search yielded several dozen courses that offered some course content on either leadership or ethics.

From this initial search, I identified approximately fifteen courses from eight different professional colleges that seemed to have substantial leadership or ethics content. I then contacted the instructors of these courses to inform them about the study, to evaluate the applicability of their course(s), and to gauge the instructors’ interest in participating. My goal was to secure a sample that included a roughly even number of “leadership” and “ethics” courses. Eight instructors from six different colleges expressed interest in being involved in the study. These instructors were actively teaching or had recently taught a total of five “leadership” courses and four “ethics” courses.

I met briefly with each of the instructors in order to provide more detailed information about the study and to collect the documentary course material for each class. After I completed the content analysis portion of the research, I contacted each instructor to schedule a follow-up interview. I interviewed seven of the eight instructors who had initially expressed interest in participating in the study. The final research sample, then, consisted of four undergraduate “leadership” courses and four undergraduate “ethics” courses offered at the University of Saskatchewan. These courses were taught by seven instructors in a total of five professional colleges.

## Research Procedures and Data Collection

### *Content Analysis*

Content analysis constituted the first step in my collection of original data. I assigned each course in the research sample a number, and then numbered the documents corresponding to each course. I analyzed a total of seventy-two documents from nine courses; the number of documents per course varied from three to twenty six. The documents included University of Saskatchewan calendar course descriptions, course outlines, course schedules, supplementary course materials, samples from course text books or required readings, assignments, student writing samples, quizzes, instructor evaluation frameworks, peer evaluation frameworks, lecture notes, in-class exercises, information about related classes, course rationales, old final exams, and recent final exams. These documents ranged in length from one page to one hundred twenty six pages.

I took a three-step approach when examining each document that was part of the content analysis:

1. I read through the document and highlighted specific words or phrases related to the concepts of leadership and ethics (see the highlighting key in Appendix B);
2. I counted the number of specific and non-specific words related to leadership and ethics that were present in the document (see the highlighting key in Appendix B for definitions of “specific” and “non-specific”); and,
3. I answered a number of questions related to the manifest and latent leadership and ethics content of the document (see the content analysis framework for this study in Appendix B). I also noted any miscellaneous information that seemed

significant within the content of the document, but that did not fit into any of the specific questions that were raised within the content analysis framework.

Throughout the content analysis process, I was periodically in contact with the course instructors to seek clarification and to identify further contextual information regarding the classes in the sample. The content analysis was completed during the weeks between November 25, 2004 and January 15, 2005.

### *Qualitative Interviews*

Prior to conducting the content analysis, I had developed two frameworks of draft interview questions to be used for qualitative interviews; one framework was developed for the leadership courses, and another was developed for the ethics courses. I used the specific content from course materials as well as overall themes that emerged from the content analysis to customize and add to the standard interview questions. The final interview question frameworks (see the interview question frameworks in Appendix C) were designed by incorporating the data from the content analysis in order to elicit as much information regarding the integration of leadership and ethics subject areas as possible. At the outset of the interview process, then, I had a standard set of questions for each interview, as well as a number of course and instructor specific questions that were customized for each individual class.

I scheduled interviews with the instructors of each course in the research sample. At the outset of each interview, I gave a comprehensive oral review of the interview consent forms (see the consent form in Appendix A) with the interviewees, providing them with an opportunity to ask questions and address concerns, as well as an opportunity to sign the consent form. Each interview was recorded in full with a digital

recorder. I used the pre-determined interview questions as a guide to structure the interview process, but also addressed additional issues and questions as they arose throughout the course of the interviews. The interviews ranged from forty minutes to one and a half hours in length. The interviews were completed over a two week period, from January 21, 2005 to February 4, 2005.

### Data Analysis

I organized, synthesized, analyzed, and reported the data collected throughout this study using a variety of strategies identified by Babbie (2002), Merriam (1998), and Patton (2002). These strategies included: cross-case analysis, or reflecting on frequencies, magnitudes, structures, processes, causes, and consequences within the data (Babbie, 2002); category construction, or creating a narrative in order to reflect on and outline the findings from the study (Merriam, 1998); and open coding, or combing the data for themes and patterns (Patton, 2002). Periods of data synthesis occurred after each step of the research. Upon conclusion of the document analysis portion of the research, I created a reflective narrative to synthesize the data collected, and when the qualitative interviews were complete I conducted a holistic, comprehensive review and analysis.

When the content analysis was complete, I needed to reduce the data to a manageable size, so I engaged in a process of “category construction” (Merriam, 1998). This process was roughly equivalent to Merriam’s practice of creating data categories and subcategories through a continuous comparison of data from various sources (1998). I constructed a narrative by grouping related content items and themes from the all of the documents in the research sample under nine separate headings: (1) Conceptions of Leadership, (2) Scope of Leadership Education, (3) Conceptions of Ethics, (4) Scope of

Ethics Education, (5) Specific Frameworks for Ethical Behaviour, (6) Specific Frameworks for Leadership Behaviour, (7) Pedagogical Strategies Used, (8) Integration of Leadership and Ethics, and (9) Miscellaneous Content. In this narrative, I noted emerging manifest and latent themes, and recorded outstanding questions regarding course content or documentary materials. I used the narrative as a vehicle to inform the questions and approaches for the qualitative interviews.

When the interviews were completed, the audio recordings were transcribed and coded by course number (previously assigned during the content analysis portion of the research) and the date on which the interview took place. I mailed a copy of each interview to each respective instructor in order to provide the opportunity for the instructor to validate the documented discourse, and to supplement or change any information within the transcript. The interview data was then cross-referenced with the content analysis narrative, and the narrative was expanded to include elements from the qualitative interviews. This system of cross-referencing and narrative writing allowed me to assimilate specific details that occurred within the data, and to critically reflect on the data as a whole.

#### Data Referencing System

References made to excerpts from documentary course materials in this thesis use the following format: (DM #1 / 07). “DM” represents documentary material from an assigned course number followed by the assigned document number. References made to excerpts from the interview transcripts use the following format: (IN #1 – 28/02/05). “IN” denotes the interview excerpt, followed by the assigned course number, followed by the day, month, and year that the interview was conducted.

## Ethical Considerations

An application for approval of this research study was submitted to the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board, and approved by the Board on November 25, 2005 on the condition that any master list linking data to identifiable information would be destroyed on completion of the data collection.

Measures were put in place to safeguard the confidentiality of the research participants to the fullest extent possible. Some instructors were justifiably concerned about releasing their course outlines and final exams. For this reason, participants in the research study were assured that all documentary material collected would be destroyed at the conclusion of the study. All interviewees were also provided the opportunity to review and validate the interview transcription, and were guaranteed that no identifying information (names, course names, program names, etc.) would be used in the reporting of the research data unless express written permission was given by the instructor to do so. After the completion of the study, the data recordings of the qualitative interviews would be stored confidentially under lock and key at the Extension Division, University of Saskatchewan for five years. At the conclusion of that period, they, in addition to all notes and transcripts from this study, would be destroyed in accordance with University regulations. Copies of the ethics approval and consent form can be found in Appendix A.

## Researcher's Background

This research study has been intrinsically affected by my own reality, history, and acuity. As outlined in Chapter One, my own personal exploration of leadership development programming has informed my perceptions about the importance of integrating leadership and ethics in post-secondary contexts. However, I came to this

study without any preconceptions about the “right” definitions of leadership and ethics. These are things I am still exploring myself, and it is for this reason that I designed this particular research study. A description of what is currently happening in leadership education, and an exploration of how instructors at a post-secondary level conceptualize leadership and ethics, seemed like an ideal place to begin my own journey in learning about leadership development. My goal with this study is not to criticize the state of leadership and ethics education at the University of Saskatchewan, but to observe current pedagogical practice in order to come to an understanding of where we are, and to articulate an informed vision of where we could be.

## Chapter Four

### RESEARCH DATA

#### Introduction

The research methods described in the previous chapter were employed in order to explore the question: *Are the subjects of ethics and leadership—however conceptualized—integrated within the curricula of undergraduate classes that are offered for credit at the University of Saskatchewan?* The content analysis and qualitative interviews yielded a wealth of data in the area of leadership and ethics education for post-secondary students. This data clearly demonstrates the following with regard to undergraduate teaching practice at the University of Saskatchewan: how leadership and ethics are conceptualized by instructors, what the scope of leadership and ethics education is within credit courses, the levels to which leadership and ethics are integrated within course content, and the kinds of pedagogical tools that are currently used by instructors of leadership and ethics in professional colleges.

#### Overview of the Courses

Many of the qualities that characterize the courses in this sample are significant and consequently influence the analysis of the data. The characteristic details of each course provide an essential context that is necessary for interpreting the delivery of leadership and ethics education at the University of Saskatchewan. As such, I provide contextual background regarding each course in the research sample. The University of Saskatchewan calendar descriptions for each course are replicated minus any identifying information that would compromise the anonymity of the course instructors. Any words



or phrases in the course descriptions that have been altered to protect anonymity are noted in italics, and if any text is removed completely, it is noted by [...].

#### *Course One*

Course One is a fourth-year course required for students in the final year of their program. Prior to participating in this course, students are, through prior classes in their program, exposed to the concepts of leadership and ethics. This course is preceded by one or more periods of work placement. The course description reads: “Study of the legal, ethical, social and economic factors which affect the role of the *professional* and the principles of departmental organization and management” (*University Course Calendar, 2005*). This class was grouped as an ethics course.

#### *Course Two*

Course Two is a fourth-year course required for students in the final year of their program. The course description reads: “Designed to create an awareness of the diverse and often-contradictory impacts of science and technology on society. The consequences of current technological changes and those of the recent past are explored from a professional ethics point of view to illustrate the complexities of technological-societal interrelationships” (*University Course Calendar, 2005*). This class was grouped as an ethics course.

#### *Course Three*

Course Three is a fourth-year elective for students in the final year of their program. The class can be taken before or after the student engages in a period of work placement. The course description reads: “Provides a comprehensive understanding of concepts of leadership by integrating theory, research, philosophy, and practice. Students

will discuss the history and nature of leadership; the tasks, contexts, attributes, and powers associated with leadership; and the related roles of the professional as leader” (*University Course Calendar*, 2005). This class was grouped as a leadership course.

#### *Course Four*

The documentary materials from this course were collected for content analysis, but a follow-up interview was not performed. Thus, this course was removed from the research sample.

#### *Course Five*

Course Five is an elective fourth-year course in which the majority of fourth year students in this program participate. Students who engage in this course are required to have completed one or more work placement experiences. The course description reads: “Explores the normative dimensions of *professional practice* including the [...], the capacities of an educated person, the scope of moral *practice*, the valued characteristics of good *professionals*, and value issues related to different kinds of *professional practice*” (*University Course Calendar*, 2005). This class was categorized as an ethics course.

#### *Course Six*

Course Six is an elective fourth-year course; it is not required for graduation from a professional program, but it is required if the student wishes to achieve a professional designation. The course description reads: “Based primarily on the case method of instruction, this course provides students with a conceptual framework, an exposure to the component parts and a systematic procedure so that they can begin to evaluate, design

and implement *practical systems*. Specific topics include: [...]” (*University Course Calendar*, 2005). This course was designated as a leadership course.

#### *Course Seven*

Course Seven is a required course for students in the fourth year of their program. Prior to participating in this course, students in the program are exposed through prior course work to the concepts of ethics and leadership. The course description reads: “Focuses on the skills managers require to effectively ‘get things done’ in organizations. The course concentrates on ten skills that research identifies as those most frequently associated with effective managers: verbal communication, managing time and stress, motivating and influencing others, delegating, setting goals and articulating vision, self-awareness and empathy, team building, managing conflict, problem recognition, and problem solving and managing individual decisions. Skill learning will involve some lectures, but will focus primarily on student involvement through cases, exercises and role playing” (*University Course Calendar*, 2005). This class was categorized as a leadership course.

#### *Course Eight*

Course Eight is a required course for students in the fourth year of their program. Prior to engaging in this course, students in the program participate in other course work that introduces them to the concepts of leadership and ethics. This course is also situated in the program curriculum after the student has participated in one or more periods of work placement. The course description reads: “Emphasizes the study of management concepts as they relate to the context of *professional practice*” (*University Course Calendar*, 2005). This class was designated a leadership course.

### *Course Nine*

Course Nine is a required course for students in the fourth year of their program. Students who participate in this class receive prior background information regarding the concepts of leadership and ethics. This class is taken by students after they have engaged in one or more periods of work placement. The course description reads: “An opportunity for all participants to reflect upon the roles and competencies of the professional [...] within the context of their own evolving *professional* experience. Legal, moral, and ethical principles will be applied to the analysis of current issues that have implications for caring in *professional* practice” (*University Course Calendar*, 2005). This class was categorized as an ethics course.

### *Characteristics of the Courses*

Many of the characteristics that define and shape the undergraduate classes in this research sample are noteworthy. The course characteristics that emerged as being significant enough to affect the data gathered include: the instructor’s approach to teaching and learning; the ways in which required courses are sequenced within colleges or programs (or how courses are strategically sequenced in order to build on certain elements of core curriculum); and whether or not the course is linked to a practicum or clinical learning experience.

#### *Approaches to Teaching and Learning*

The approach taken to teaching and learning within six of the courses was described by the instructors as “process oriented”; the term “competency based” was also used to describe a very similar approach in one of these six courses. A process-oriented approach requires that both the instructor and the students take responsibility for the

course material that is taught and learned. The instructor is considered more of a facilitator than a teacher, and the students play a significant role in choosing, defining, and facilitating the course content. According to the instructors I interviewed, lecture is used infrequently in process-oriented courses, and then only to convey information regarding a specific theory or skill that is used as a base for further development and exploration. Through the use of pedagogical tools such as case studies, small group projects, in-class discussion, virtual clinical settings, debate, and structured controversy, the participants in the course then actively engage in, and facilitate the acquisition of, knowledge and practical skill. The students teach themselves, their classmates, and the instructor, and vice versa. Learning in this kind of setting is reciprocal and interactive. The fact that the majority of the classes in the research sample employ this style of teaching and learning is significant because course content is often and consequentially improvisational. The course outline acts as a guide, and the specific content is then determined by things such as the particular interest of a student or students, current events, and issues or questions that emerge through discussion. Perceptions of learning by all involved change as the course progresses, and the specific course content is different each time the course is offered. The data that have been collected for this study, then, are representative of one participant's perspective (the course instructor) with regard to only one time that the course was offered.

#### *Sequencing of Courses Within Professional Programs*

The ways in which these courses are sequenced within their respective programs are also significant with regard to interpreting the research data; this includes a consideration of whether the courses are required or elective. Five of the eight courses

are required for all students within a specific program or college. The instructors of four out of these five classes indicated that prior course work in the students' program or college had introduced some of the course content that was also part of the course(s) within the sample. One of the course instructors considered the prior courses in the program so significant to her own course curriculum that she insisted one of the instructors of the prior courses also be included in the research interview. In this particular circumstance, the two course instructors work in tandem to streamline the course content regarding leadership and ethics that students encounter throughout their program. In another program, faculty and stakeholders had worked together to establish a curriculum framework; this framework contains a number of content items and philosophies that must be present in all courses the program offers. The content, then, of many of the courses in the research sample is, to some extent, pre-determined by the overarching philosophies and requirements of the program and by the content that has been offered to students earlier in their program.

#### *Work Placement Experience*

Five of the eight courses are preceded by, in their respective programs, an internship, practicum, or clinical experience that is required for all students in the program. The curricula in the courses that are preceded by a period(s) of practical experience are different from those that are not; they are more focused on critical reflection and the practical transfer of classroom learning to different kinds of work environments. Course content in these classes is received in a manner that is more personalized than other courses; the content is interpreted by students in ways that reflect their own personal experiences with a practicum or internship. One course instructor

expressed the importance of the students' internship experiences in the following manner: "Our dream is that we really integrate practice, theory, practice, theory – and I think we do, and I think it's very powerful" (IN #1 – 26/01/05). This is important for the interpretation of the data in this study because the students who participate in courses that are preceded by periods of practical experience engage with the course content in a way that is informed by knowledge of what their future work environment will be like. This difference in the students' life experience changes the way professors approach the instruction of course material and influences the content of the curriculum.

### *Summary*

The data collected in this study, then, do not stand alone. The characteristics of the courses and their respective programs or colleges do much to influence what material is taught in post-secondary leadership and ethics courses; they also influence the kinds of pedagogical strategies used by course instructors within the classroom. These contextual factors must be considered in the interpretation of the data in order to arrive at a holistic understanding of how the subjects of leadership and ethics are taught at post-secondary institutions.

### Conceptions of Leadership and Ethics

The concepts of leadership and ethics are not easily defined or agreed upon. For this reason, one of the core foci of this study was to explore how "leadership" and "ethics" are conceptualized by a number of instructors who teach relevant undergraduate courses at the University of Saskatchewan. This exploration was approached in the following manner:

1. By identifying latent and manifest conceptions of leadership and ethics within course materials;
2. By asking instructors in personal interviews how they conceptualized and defined leadership and ethics; and
3. By asking instructors in personal interviews to provide specific details regarding the scope of leadership and ethics education within the courses they taught. Scope of education refers to the range of theory and practical application provided within undergraduate credit courses with regard to a particular topic of study. For example, the “scope of leadership education” refers to the range of leadership history, theory, and practical application provided within the context of a particular course.

Through content analysis, I examined course materials for explicit and implicit conceptions of leadership and ethics, and for indicators of the scope of leadership and ethics education presented in each class. These indicators included theoretical and practical frameworks which the instructors used to guide the students’ understanding of “leadership” and “ethics”. Through interviews, I asked the instructors to elaborate on how the subjects of leadership and ethics manifested within the delivery of the course. I asked them to describe how themes relating to leadership and ethics were addressed, and whether or not any specific theories or points of view regarding leadership and ethics informed their pedagogical practice. I also asked them to elaborate on the conceptions and definitions of leadership and ethics that they presented to students.



### *Teaching Leadership*

In the leadership courses, “leadership” was explicitly defined and conceptualized. For example, the documentary material in one leadership course clearly characterized a leader as a person who influences “process within an organization” and who simultaneously fosters “moral development among organizational members” (DM #3, 03). In another leadership course, a leader was defined as a person who contributes “to the success of others in the field” (DM #7, 04). In all of these courses, leadership was most often portrayed as a skill-based practice that requires a minimum proficiency in certain learned skills such as communication, time management, supervision, strategic planning, delegating, goal setting, team building, allocating resources, problem solving, and managing conflict. In most of the courses, leadership was conceived of in two ways: (1) as skill-based behaviour that is specifically linked with titled positions of leadership (leaders in organizational governance, for example), and (2) as skill-based behaviour that is specifically linked to the process of working within a peer group (for example, leading the success of a project within a team environment). In over half of the leadership courses, leadership was also associated with facilitating positive change, primarily in the context of organizations. This could include pro-actively moving an organization in a strategic direction, collaborating on challenging project work, or positively affecting the moral development of others in an organization. One leadership course instructor conceived of leadership as having components other than those related to positional and situational leadership; this instructor focused on the concept of “followership”, or a model of leadership where leaders and followers engage in equally important but different activities, and where following is a role that all people assume at some point of

the leadership process (Komives et al., 1998). This instructor perceived followership as being an instrumental and vital aspect of the leadership processes.

The scope of leadership education in the four leadership courses was fairly consistent. All of the courses, directly or indirectly, included leadership practice in their respective definitions and discussions of professional practice. In all of the courses, leadership was clearly articulated as being integral to effective professional practice, and the elements of leadership education in each class were discussed within the framework of professionalism. Three of the four leadership courses focused the scope of leadership education primarily on learned leadership skills; curricula regarding communication skills, problem solving skills, and team building skills were common to all three of these courses. Half of the leadership courses explicitly addressed a range of different management or leadership theories within their curricula, providing students with details regarding several theories that apply to different aspects of professional practice. Instructors of three of the courses identified specific leadership or management theories that informed their delivery of the course, but all of the instructors cited their own personal amalgam of practical experience as their primary guide for delivering the leadership content of the course. This approach was effectively summarized by one of the instructors: "... theories inform what I do; but, also my practice...my knowledge of the profession, my knowledge in actually working in institutions" is what guides the delivery of the leadership content in the course curriculum (IN #8-9, 28/01/05).

In the ethics courses, "leadership" was conceptualized primarily in an implicit manner; the course materials and instructors implied conceptions of leadership, but these conceptions were not explicitly articulated. In these classes, leadership was clearly

associated with ethical practice, which included an emphasis on the following types of behaviour: ensuring public safety, making environmental commitments central to business practice, cooperating with other professionals in a variety of fields in order to ensure public good, forging partnerships based on trust, and being aware of the rights of all individuals. The concept of community was linked to leadership practice in most of the ethics courses; meeting the needs of the community through leadership practice was paramount. The practices of mentoring and modeling behaviour, or acting as “moral exemplars”, came up frequently in the ethics courses as examples of specific methods of demonstrating personal leadership (IN #5, 25/01/05). In half of the ethics courses, leadership was also defined in positional terms; a leader was conceptualized as a person who, due to their titled position of leadership, was responsible for duties such as quality management, human resource management, and financial management. In one ethics course, leadership was associated with political activism, or advocating on behalf of the profession in the political arena. One of the ethics courses also included “followership” as an integral part of the concept of leadership.

The scope of leadership education within the ethics courses varied from course to course. In all of the ethics courses, instructors were straightforward with their admission that the leadership content in their courses was primarily latent in nature. None of the ethics course instructors used a particular leadership theory to guide their instruction of leadership course content; in fact, most of the ethics course instructors had little knowledge of leadership or management theory. However, all of the ethics course instructors identified “leadership” as a topic that was integrated in some way into their course curriculum. In these courses, the scope of leadership education usually manifested

indirectly through elements of course curriculum such as modeling, mentoring, and internships. One instructor, for example, stated that “I think I walk the walk... I do think that they [the students] leave my course as better leaders” (IN #1, 26/01/05). As with this instructor, the other ethics course instructors cited positive leadership role models within the students’ programs (faculty, mentors, and internship supervisors) as an important element of the students’ leadership education. All of the ethics courses associated leadership practice with meeting the needs of the community in some way; this included engaging in interdisciplinary communications in order to serve clients appropriately, assisting communities with public safety issues, and forging interdisciplinary partnerships. The skill-based aspect of leadership education manifested in two of the four ethics courses, where leadership skills discussed in the class included decision making, quality management, and the application of critical social theory in leadership situations.

### *Teaching Ethics*

In the leadership courses, conceptions of “ethics” ranged from very explicit and clearly articulated to primarily implicit and inferred. For example, one instructor explicitly defined “moral leadership” as a process that considers “beliefs, values, and attitudes”, that focuses on “human rights”, that bears in mind “moral leadership non-negotiable values”, and that examines the “incongruency between personal, moral values in leadership” and institutional policy (IN #3, 28/01/05). Conversely, another leadership course instructor generally did not communicate explicit conceptions of ethics within the course, but included ethical content in an implicit manner by suggesting moral standards for professional behaviour: “... that you do the right thing regardless of whether or not you are going to get credit for it” (IN #7, 31/01/05). All of the leadership courses

consistently and explicitly associated their respective conceptions of ethics with specific kinds of professional practice, and two of the courses explicitly mentioned professional codes of ethics. Three of the four leadership courses also implicitly suggested that ethical behaviour could be associated with activities such as community development and social activism. The same three courses conceptualized ethics as including issues regarding personal value systems (personal beliefs and attitudes), professional value systems (institutional policies), the incongruencies between personal and professional value systems, providing safe (confidential) environments for clients, and taking responsibility for personal and professional relationships. Two of the four leadership course instructors conceptualized ethics as including human rights issues; different aspects of human rights issues were explored in these courses, ranging from the rights of employees to the rights of children. One course instructor conceptualized ethics strictly within a professional context, and defined ethical conduct as “controlling right behaviour through governance” according to a professional code of ethics within an organizational setting (IN #6, 26/01/05).

The scope of ethics education within the leadership courses was extremely varied. One leadership course instructor approached the ethical component of a leadership course almost exclusively through current event case studies, and examined ethical issues related primarily to decision making exclusively within a professional context. Another instructor used personal values as the ethical hallmark of a leadership course, and based the scope of ethics education within the course on defining and “living up to your values” (IN #7, 31/01/05). One instructor indicated that, within the context of a professional leadership or management course, “almost everything you do is ethical”; this instructor

offered a fairly wide scope of ethics education within a professional context that included basic human rights, issues regarding resource allocation, access to resources, staff relationships, confidentiality, and the ethical implications of dealing with management information systems (IN #8-9, 28/01/05). One of the leadership courses included a much broader and comprehensive overview of the subject of ethics than the other courses; the conceptions of ethics presented in the course ranged from societal standards of right and wrong (including shared or “universal” values), to multi-level analytical ethical decision making, to approaches to moral development (DM #3, 1 – 6; IN #3, 28/01/05). One of the four leadership course instructors used a specific ethical theory as a basis for ethics education within the course (IN #8-9, 28/01/05), while the remainder of the instructors based the ethical content of their courses on the conclusions they had reached through personal experience, professional experience, or common sense.

In the ethics courses, conceptions of “ethics” were fairly consistent; they were manifest within the course content, and focused primarily on ethical behaviour within a professional context. The conception of ethics provided to students in one ethics course was fairly representative of the conceptions presented in other courses; in this course ethics was defined as “the study of moral issues and decisions confronting individuals and organizations engaged in professional practice, and of related questions about the moral ideals, policies, and relationships of people and corporations involved in a professional field” (DM #2, 09). In all of the ethics courses, conceptions of ethics included: human rights, professional responsibility and obligation, balancing or reconciling personal and professional values, and moral integrity. Three out of the four course instructors placed a significant emphasis on adhering to professional codes of

ethics within a work environment, and using those professional codes as a guide for appropriate behaviour. Ethics courses also cited empathy, compassion, honesty, accountability, valuing diversity, and trustworthiness as elements of ethical practice.

The scope of ethics education in the ethics courses was explicit and consistent. The instructors of the ethics courses were able to articulate specific ethical theories, principles, or points of view that informed the delivery of their courses, although these points of view varied from course to course. For example, one course instructor identified utilitarianism as the primary ethical principle that guided the delivery of course content related to ethics, while another instructor cited Noddings' ethic of care as a significant influence on content delivery. Ethical decision making was a primary focus within the ethics courses, although, again, different decision making frameworks were used from course to course. One instructor cited use of several frameworks for ethical decision making within a course in order to provide students with a number of options for approaching ethical dilemmas based on a variety of ethical theories (IN #5, 25/01/05). Another instructor featured an ethical decision making framework within the curriculum that was based on guidelines provided by a professional association rather than a specific ethical theory (IN #1, 26/01/05). Three of the four ethics courses provided a comprehensive overview of ethical and moral principles and theory. While each course was quite similar in terms of the scope of ethical education, each class offered unique elements of content that were not found elsewhere. Some of the unique elements that were found in only one of the four ethics courses include: "boundary" issues, environmental ethics, international ethics (in terms of foreign business practice),

computer ethics, social justice, moral (character) education, peace education, and ethical issues regarding legal liability.

### Integration of Leadership and Ethics

One of the initial indicators of integrated leadership ethics course content in the research sample emerged through the identification of specific subject areas that could not be categorized as either leadership or ethics content. Such content items included conflict (including the definition and analysis of conflicting issues), power and influence (including power imbalances and issues regarding authority), self-awareness, the dynamics of human relationships, and collective or collaborative efforts to influence the common good. These content items figured centrally in the delivery of many of the courses. For example, in one of the courses, power and influence were portrayed as being essential to the process of effective leadership, and as elements that lead to high levels of morale within an organization (DM #7, 04). The frequent occurrence of these topics within the curricula of both the leadership and the ethics courses indicate that they are important content elements that serve to integrate leadership and ethics education.

#### *Definition of Integration*

One of the key questions addressed in this research study was: How are the subjects of leadership and ethics integrated, theoretically and practically, within the context of undergraduate classrooms at the University of Saskatchewan? The word “integration”, as referred to in this thesis, indicates “the combining of diverse parts into a complex whole; a complex state the parts of which are distinguishable” (OED2, s.v. “integration”). In reference to leadership and ethics education, this definition implies that “leadership” does not take preference over “ethics” in an educational setting; that both



are important elements of a discrete and definite “whole” leadership ethics education course or program.

### *Levels of Integration*

In this study, courses were categorized as either “leadership” or “ethics” courses. The reason for this is that there were no courses in the University of Saskatchewan course calendar that explicitly self-identified as “leadership and ethics” courses, or “leadership ethics” courses. The leadership courses all contained substantive content in the subject area of leadership or management, and they all displayed some commonalities in terms of curriculum topics and pedagogical approaches. However, the differences between these courses were substantial, and the same holds true for those courses that were grouped under the “ethics” category. The subjects of leadership and ethics were integrated within the courses in different ways; in some courses, the integration was explicit; in others, it was implicit; and in others it was a combination of both. In addition, there was a far higher level of integration in some courses than in others.

The contextual elements of each individual course are important to consider with regard to the integration of leadership and ethics content. As mentioned earlier, the particular context of each course (program, college, etc.) is instrumental in influencing the specific course content. For this reason, the data regarding the integration of leadership and ethics within the research sample is reported in aggregate form, and any significant anomalies are mentioned individually.

### *Conceptions of Professionalism and Leadership*

When interpreting the data regarding the integration of leadership and ethics within University of Saskatchewan undergraduate courses, it is important to consider that

in the majority of the courses in this study, conceptions of leadership were primarily linked with conceptions of professional practice. Instructors often felt that by virtue of becoming a professional practitioner in a certain field, an individual also consequently becomes a leader in that field. This conception of leadership was linked to specific activities associated with professional practice, such as advocacy, mentoring, and modelling appropriate professional behaviour. This clear association between leadership and professionalism is significant with regard to the integration of leadership and ethics within course content because “integration” of these topics was often perceived by instructors as being a series of explicit links made between professional practice and ethical conduct.

#### *Theoretical Integration*

In the majority of the courses, the subjects of leadership and ethics were not integrated, or even connected, in an explicit theoretical manner. In the two leadership courses that featured elements of curricula detailing leadership or management theory, for example, there was no similar content regarding ethical theory. This was also the case with the ethics courses that featured elements of ethical theory. Course specific contexts may be a determinant regarding this lack of theoretical linkage; one leadership course instructor, for example, indicated that there was no ethical theory in the course because it was covered in detail during a lower-level prerequisite course. However, it was rarely noted by instructors that leadership theory and ethical theory could be or are linked, and none of the instructors in the research sample indicated that they had a comprehensive knowledge of both leadership and ethics theory.

### *Practical Integration*

All of the courses in the research sample provided students with some level of leadership and ethics integration on a practical, applied level. This practical integration was approached in several ways.

Several course instructors took an implicit approach to the practical integration of leadership and ethics in the delivery of their courses. For example, one leadership instructor indicated that concepts regarding leadership and ethics were integrated within the course, but in a very implicit manner. This instructor characterized the ethical content in relation to the leadership content of the course as “a stream that runs under everything” (IN #7, 31/01/05). The explicit integration of leadership and ethics in this course was minimal, but students were exposed to ethical issues (in the form of case studies) regularly, and were encouraged to be consciously inclusive, aware of diversity with regard to personal values, and respectful of the rights of others in their professional leadership practice.

In other courses, the practical integration of leadership and ethics concepts was explicit. In one leadership course, positional leadership was associated with being aware of prevailing beliefs and attitudes, affecting the moral development of others, modeling and rewarding ethical behaviour, creating a safe environment for all stakeholders in the organization, and establishing an ethical climate within the work place. These associations were observed through the use of case studies that demonstrated applied behaviour. This type of explicit integration also occurred within one of the ethics courses, where the instructor engaged students in exercises to actively critique moral or immoral leadership behaviour displayed by individuals in the profession. This instructor

also facilitated discussion with regard to where expectations of moral leadership come from, how they influence professional practice, and how those expectations can be reconciled with personal beliefs and values.

The practical roles of advocate and mentor were identified in most courses as leadership roles that were associated with principles of ethical behaviour. In one course, for example, the practice of engaging in a mentoring relationship was offered to students as a way that they could refine both their professional and ethical practice; the students were encouraged to find a mentor to assist with their development, and were in turn expected to become responsible, ethical mentors themselves. The role of advocate was mentioned by several instructors as an essential leadership role that requires a high level of ethical conduct. In one ethics course, students are expected to take “the responsibility to use initiative, and take some action related to advocacy. And that’s actually defined as a role for the [students]... And that is ethics wound into leadership, for sure” (IN #1, 26/01/05).

Other approaches to integrating leadership and ethics within the undergraduate courses included: citing links between professional leadership and specific virtues, placing emphasis on modelling or leading by example, associating ethical decision making with situational leadership, discussing specific situations in which formal leaders incorporate ethics into their professional practice (hiring, for example), and discussing how community standards of ethical conduct are related to specific kinds of professional leadership practice. It is clear that some level of integration occurred within all of the courses; however, the approach to integrating topics and the level of integration varied from course to course.

## Pedagogical Tools in Leadership and Ethics Education

Instructors of the eight courses indicated a number of pedagogical strategies that were useful for teaching leadership and ethics. None of the course instructors indicated that a particular strategy or strategies were specifically useful for integrating these two topics within the classroom. However, since some level of integration of the two topics occurred in each course, it is logical to assume that the pedagogical tools addressed here are effective not only for teaching leadership and ethics independently, but also for teaching integrated leadership ethics content. The subsequent paragraphs describe the pedagogical tools that course instructors indicated were the most widely used or the most effective in their classroom settings.

### *Case Studies*

Case studies were used in all eight courses and were generally identified by instructors as being very effective. The major purpose of employing case studies in a classroom setting was to help students connect theory with practical examples. However, case studies were used in several different ways. One course instructor used current case examples to help generate critical group discussion about current events that link to professional practice as well as to issues regarding leadership and ethics. Another instructor used case studies as a vehicle to help students learn how to identify ethical issues. This instructor used case studies with caution, as she felt that students tend to “latch on to the particulars of the case and not necessarily take it beyond that to look at what really is at stake” (IN #5, 25/01/05). In this instructor’s course, case studies were a tool used only when students had achieved a solid foundational knowledge and were consequently able to use case examples to enhance their understanding. In another

course, approximately half of the students' in-class work consisted of the analysis of case studies, where the instructor's intent was to allow students the opportunity to apply their discipline-specific knowledge to real-life situations. The students in this course looked at past examples of professional "failures" in order to critically assess what went wrong, and to develop alternative courses of action. In all of the courses, case studies were framed by a specific type of professional practice.

### *Group Discussion*

Group discussion is another pedagogical tool that was identified as being effectively used within all eight courses. As with the use of case studies, group discussion was approached by instructors in a number of different ways. One instructor used group discussion as a foundational tool within an ethics course; this instructor would have the students report the results of their small group discussions back to the class, and would then help the students to integrate and synthesize their findings by linking the students' self-guided group work to specific themes or theories. In another course, students were required to take turns facilitating small group learning sessions in which the group collectively set an agenda for the session and assumed ownership of the learning that took place within the session. Another course instructor used large group discussion to generate questions after the class had listened to a guest speaker or presentation. In all of the courses, group discussion was identified as a pedagogical tool that was essential for helping students actively engage in classroom learning about leadership and/or ethics.

### *Group Work*

“Group work” is a strategy that was used in six of the eight courses to help students build on or explore foundational knowledge that had been conveyed through a lecture format. This pedagogical strategy is slightly different from group discussion, as some kind of final product is the result of group work. Group work took different forms within the sample and included activities such as: developing a group presentation to deliver to the rest of the class; participating in an experiential visit to a professional agency and designing a corresponding pilot project with respect to that agency; working as a group to achieve results in a classroom exercise; working as a group to develop a written document that assesses, critiques, and presents possible solutions to an ethical dilemma; and working as a group to critique and provide feedback for other participants within the course.

### *Structured Controversy*

Structured controversy is a unique pedagogical tool that was identified by one instructor as being particularly effective for facilitating the learning of ethics within the classroom setting. The process of structured controversy was described by the instructor as a modified debate. It is approached by providing students with reading packages regarding a controversial topic (which is framed in the form of a resolution) that they are expected to read and review. Students are given different reading packages that reflect varying points of view regarding the same issue, so one student may have a reading package that is completely different from his or her peers. The students are then grouped into small teams, are provided with time to share what they have learned from their reading packages, and are invited to prepare arguments both for and against the

resolution. Two teams then engage in a modified debate, where specific rules for conduct apply, and the rest of the class is expected to listen and observe carefully. In round two of the exercise, the students switch sides and switch opponents, so they, as well as the classroom observers, experience the richness of debating from two different perspectives. The instructor of this course identified structured controversy as an excellent tool for helping students to think critically, to consider all perspectives and aspects of ethical issues, and to work cooperatively to share information regarding issues at hand.

#### *Virtual Professional Settings*

The use of a “virtual professional setting” exercise was another specific tool that a course instructor identified as being particularly effective with regard to teaching leadership content. This exercise is approached by first assigning students to small work groups, and then assigning each work group a specific kind of virtual professional setting. It is then the group’s responsibility to research that particular setting, to assign each group member a role within that setting, and to collectively create an organizational manual for that setting. As part of this exercise, the groups are required to research the demographics of their particular settings, to look into political issues that would be pertinent in their environments, and to consider specific job descriptions within their settings. The purpose of the exercise is twofold: to provide the students the opportunity to work collectively with a group of individuals they may or may not know (and may or may not like!), and to help the students apply the material learned within the course to foster a deeper understanding of a wide range of professional work environments.



### *Other Pedagogical Tools*

Other pedagogical tools that were mentioned by course instructors as being effective ways to instruct leadership or ethics were: lecture, videos (used as a springboard for conversation), experiential on-site visits, PowerPoint presentations, guest presentations, reflective journaling, and in-class exercises designed to prompt synthesis of theoretical material. These pedagogical tools were most often used in conjunction with tools such as case studies, group discussion, and group work, which were identified as the most useful pedagogical tools for the instruction of leadership or ethics course content.

### Evaluation of Student Learning Outcomes

One method of determining the level of emphasis and integration of leadership and ethics content within undergraduate credit courses is to examine how students in the courses are evaluated. The instructors of the courses in this study used a wide variety of evaluation methods, including assessment of student performance on: quizzes, completion of reflective journals, participation in experiential site visits, participation in group project work, modelling of professional behaviour, in-class assignments, midterm exams, reading responses, major independent project work, personal and group contribution within the classroom setting, preparation of independent profession-specific assignments, in-class presentations, performance in “mandatory roles”, attendance, written self-assessments, and final exams. Levels of inclusion with regard to leadership and ethics content within the methods of evaluation varied greatly from course to course. For example, in one leadership course, course content regarding ethics was considered “fair game” for examination, but was not actually present in the final exam; whereas in

another leadership course, the subject of ethics figured centrally in the course delivery and questions regarding values and ethics constituted approximately one-third of the final exam.

With respect to the integration of leadership and ethics, the documentary material revealed that students were typically expected to have some level of integrated knowledge. Significant evaluated assignments or final exams from three of the four leadership courses included an expectation of specific knowledge regarding ethics. Final exam questions regarding ethical content in the leadership courses were primarily implicit in nature and sought the expression of student understanding regarding ethical elements such as personal and institutional values, principles of professional practice, professional responsibility, and confidentiality. Not as many significant evaluation tools were available for assessment with regard to the ethics courses; however, the majority of course instructors appeared to expect at least a minimal understanding of the connections between leadership and ethics. Specific elements of integrated knowledge that were evaluated within the ethics courses included: levels of interdisciplinary team work; levels of critical reflection with regard to professional leadership or ethical issues; levels of empathy, honesty, respect, and accountability demonstrated as part of professional leadership practice; and consideration of legal and ethical issues in the process of business planning.

### Summary

The results of this study address my primary research goals, which were to identify how leadership and ethics are conceptualized in undergraduate courses, to determine the scope of leadership and ethics education offered within leadership courses,

and to determine if and how leadership and ethics are integrated in undergraduate courses. The original data collected in this study has demonstrated that:

1. In leadership courses, leadership is explicitly conceptualized, while conceptions of ethics range from being very implicit to very explicit;
2. In leadership courses, the scope of leadership education is consistent from course to course and primarily linked to the use of leadership skills in a professional context, while the scope of ethics education is extremely varied and based on a wide range of espoused ethical positions;
3. In ethics courses, leadership is implicitly conceptualized and associated with ethical practice, while conceptions of ethics are fairly consistent and based on the demonstration of ethical behaviour within a professional context;
4. In ethics courses, the scope of leadership education varies from course to course and is generally delivered on an intuitive basis, while the scope of ethics education is explicit, consistent, and generally delivered based on one or more ethical theories;
5. Specific content items such as conflict, power, self-awareness, and collaboration emerged in most of the courses regardless of their designation as leadership or ethics courses, indicating that they are important content elements that serve to integrate leadership and ethics education;
6. Theoretical integration of leadership and ethics in the undergraduate courses sampled is rare;
7. Some integration of leadership and ethics on a practical level occurs in all undergraduate courses sampled; and

8. The most effective pedagogical tools for teaching leadership and/or ethics include case studies, group discussion, group work, structured controversy, and virtual professional settings.

These findings provide a solid foundation on which to build further research efforts with regard to leadership and ethics education. They also provide a basis for specific recommendations to the University of Saskatchewan regarding approaches to leadership and ethics credit programming for undergraduate students.

## Chapter Five

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary of the Study

##### *Impetus*

During an extended period of employment as the coordinator of an undergraduate leadership development program, I observed that the subject of ethics was often not afforded an explicit or prominent place in post-secondary leadership development programming. This observation led to my investigation of leadership, ethics, and adult education literature. This literature not only linked the concepts of leadership and ethics, but also cited reasons why the two subjects should be integrated in the context of adult learning environments. However, the literature did not provide an adequate indication of what kinds of pedagogical strategies and tools were effective for facilitating leadership ethics education, nor did it cite any examples of current pedagogical practice in this area. Consequently, I developed a research question that would help me to describe current pedagogical practice in the areas of leadership and ethics education at the University of Saskatchewan.

##### *Methodology and Design*

I explored leadership and ethics content within a small sample of undergraduate courses at the University of Saskatchewan. I used content analysis and qualitative interviewing to gather original data. The intent of this two-pronged approach was to collect as much data as possible in order to accurately describe current pedagogical practice in the areas of leadership and ethics at the University of Saskatchewan. This approach served to increase the reliability of the study by allowing me to triangulate

patterns and trends with regard to leadership and ethics education at the University of Saskatchewan. The validity of the study was supported by the course instructors throughout the interview process; one instructor even indicated:

I'd have to say that I think your research project has changed my life because... I do think that I have a very strong ethical perspective throughout the course, and so having [you] come here and tell me that the fact that I deal with ethics is going to make better leaders... I found that very affirming. I thought, "Oh, you're right". I mean, I can see the connection. But I'm not sure until you brought the spotlight over here that I really pictured it as being so integrated; so much a part of the same kind of theme. (IN #1, 26/01/05)

Data analysis was approached through a process of reflection, data synthesis, and category construction. I then engaged in an active reflection on the synthesized data in order to determine themes and anomalies.

### Research Findings

The results of this study yielded many compelling insights into current pedagogical practice regarding leadership and ethics education at the University of Saskatchewan. The over-arching research question was: *Are the subjects of ethics and leadership—however conceptualized—integrated within the curricula of undergraduate classes that are offered for credit at the University of Saskatchewan?* The data gathered in response to this question is briefly summarized under the following data categories: leadership courses, ethics courses, scope of practice in leadership and ethics education, pedagogical tools, and integration of leadership and ethics.

### *Leadership Courses*

The leadership courses incorporated ethics, to some degree, into their curricula. In most cases, the espoused conceptions of ethics in these courses were conveyed implicitly; often the instructors' attitudes and beliefs, and consequently their expectations of students, comprised the ethical content of the course. In others, an exploration of personal values, beliefs, and attitudes was perceived as the primary ethical component of the course; such course content was implemented in isolation from any explicit discussion regarding ethical principles. Students participating in the leadership courses were expected to demonstrate an understanding of the ethical elements of the course as modelled by the instructor; this understanding was framed in the context of professional practice.

### *Ethics Courses*

Similarly, the ethics courses incorporated the concept of leadership, to some degree, into their curricula. This incorporation was also primarily implicit although explicit references to leadership behaviour such as modelling, mentoring, and advocacy did occur frequently within these courses. The ethics course instructors did not identify leadership theory as the basis of their leadership instruction; often their beliefs regarding leadership best practice in the professional setting guided the delivery of leadership course content. Students who participated in the ethics courses were expected to demonstrate an understanding of leadership principles, primarily through modelling ethical behaviour and actively taking on the roles of advocate or role model.

### *Scope of Practice in Leadership and Ethics Education*

The scope of practice, especially with regard to integrating leadership and ethics, was inconsistent across the courses researched. The range of theoretical and historical background presented with regard to both topics was extensive in range, but varied according to preferences or background of the instructor.

### *Pedagogical Tools*

The course instructors identified case studies, group discussions, and group work as effective pedagogical tools in the instruction of leadership and/or ethics. The instructors qualified this by maintaining that these tools are used in tandem with other teaching methods, such as lecture and guest presentations, in order to ensure balance and adequate transfer of knowledge. Two unique pedagogical tools, structured controversy and virtual professional settings, were cited as being particularly effective with regard to teaching leadership and/or ethics.

### *Integration of Leadership and Ethics*

With regard to the over-arching research question, I found that leadership and ethics are integrated, at some level, within University of Saskatchewan leadership and ethics courses. This integration was typically of a practical rather than theoretical nature; students were expected to understand how the integration of leadership and ethics looked in practice, but not necessarily expected to understand theoretical links between the two topics. In terms of both the scope of leadership/ethics education and the types of pedagogical tools used, the levels and types of integration observed varied from course to course. However, the following elements of leadership and ethics education at the University of Saskatchewan were observed consistently:



1. Instructors recognize that leadership and ethics are practically linked, and base their delivery of integrated course content primarily on an amalgam of insights gained from personal and professional experience;
2. Integration of leadership and ethics within credit courses is, generally, done on an intuitive, implicit basis; and
3. Students in both leadership and ethics courses at the University of Saskatchewan are expected to demonstrate understanding that leadership and ethics are practically linked.

### Conclusions

The results of this study yield positive news: leadership and ethics are being integrated in undergraduate courses at the University of Saskatchewan. It must be noted, however, that this integrated education is not consistent across the University's colleges and programs; the espoused conceptions of leadership and ethics, the scope of leadership/ethics education, and the levels of leadership/ethics integration are extremely varied across the spectrum of classes offered. It is with this in mind that I make recommendations for further study and suggest the implications that this study may have with regard to current educational practice in post-secondary institutions.

### Recommendations for Further Study

This descriptive study provides a basis for several kinds of further research in the area of leadership and ethics education for adult learners. First, it creates a foundation for deeper inquiry into the nature of the relationship between leadership and ethics; this would logically lead to further study regarding the ways in which adults can effectively learn and retain practical or applied knowledge in this integrated field. Second, the

research may set the stage for further exploration and description of current pedagogical practice, as documentation in this area is sparse. An extension of this study might include: a descriptive study detailing integrated leadership ethics course content offered in non-professional colleges that offer liberal arts programs; a descriptive study detailing integrated leadership ethics course content at a variety of undergraduate and graduate levels, perhaps exploring the differences in programming for first year students versus graduate students; an in-depth observation, description, and analysis of pedagogical tools used to facilitate learning in leadership and ethics; follow-up research with students who have engaged in leadership or ethics courses in order to determine short term learning outcomes; or, long term research that analyzes the over-all effects of participating in integrated leadership ethics education. Third, and perhaps most practically, this study may lead to structured experimentation in the implementation of leadership ethics credit programming at post-secondary institutions. Such structured experimentation will yield growing evidence regarding best practice in leadership ethics education.

#### Implications for Practice

Obviously, leadership and ethical development are important to the University of Saskatchewan and are considered essential components of program curricula; this is demonstrated by the number of leadership and ethics courses offered across a variety of programs and colleges. The literature review and research conducted as part of this study indicate that: leadership and ethics education is beneficial for post-secondary students; leadership and ethics education should be integrated in the context of post-secondary environments; and leadership and ethics are currently being integrated, to varying degrees, in undergraduate courses at the University of Saskatchewan. The integration of

leadership and ethics is thus occurring, but it is widely variant and primarily implicit. Given these results, in addition to the evidence suggesting that “ethical leadership involves reflecting on ethicality in a very conscious way” (Walker, 2004, p. 2), it is my opinion that all undergraduate students should be offered an integrated leadership ethics component within post-secondary curricula that is consistent across the student body, regardless of academic program.

At the University of Saskatchewan, such an integrated leadership ethics component could be built upon the current strengths of the institution’s system of education delivery. Any number of approaches could be taken, ranging from the creation of mandatory leadership ethics courses, to the modification of existing curricula in order to include explicit leadership ethics content. These efforts could then be expanded and built upon by program-specific leadership ethics programming, which would situate the students’ prior learning within a context of specialized professional practice. Regardless of approach, such conscious effort would help to provide a consistent level of leadership ethics education across the spectrum of University of Saskatchewan students, and in turn answer the public’s demand for accountability regarding the ability of the University’s graduates to participate effectively and ethically in Canadian society. My advocacy of this type of leadership ethics education may represent an “ideal”; however, it is certainly an ideal that is within reach given the unique ability of institutions such as the University of Saskatchewan to use original research in order to innovate in the area of adult education.

### Concluding Remarks

Based on this research, in consideration of the demands of contemporary society, and considering my own personal history with student services, it is my view that an integrated leadership ethics education should be offered to all undergraduate students. By making this type of education a cornerstone of post-secondary educational practice, institutions will make a bold statement about the potential that young adults possess to facilitate positive change. Through such educational initiatives, colleges and universities will also become more effective in fulfilling their social responsibility to graduate capable, ethical professionals. An integrated leadership ethics education for undergraduates, then, is well worth the effort.

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APPENDIX A

Ethics – Approval and Consent Form





## Participant Consent Form

You are invited to participate in a study entitled: **“Creating ‘good’ leaders: Examining the role of ethics in Canadian post-secondary leadership education”**. Please read the following guidelines carefully, and feel free to ask any questions you might have.

### **Researcher:**

Robin Alison Mueller, Graduate Student

Masters of Continuing Education,

Department of Educational Foundations

College of Education

University of Saskatchewan

306.966.7603

### **Thesis Supervisor:**

Dr. Scott McLean

Associate Professor and Associate Dean

(Research)

Extension Division

University of Saskatchewan

306.966.1960

**Purpose and Procedure:**

The purpose of this study is to explore how the subjects of ethics and leadership are practically (pedagogically) integrated in courses that are offered for credit at the University of Saskatchewan. I seek to identify and understand how, if at all, the subjects of ethics and leadership “cross over” in the curricula of University of Saskatchewan classes that are offered by a cross-section of departments and colleges.

I plan to conduct interviews with a number of University of Saskatchewan professors who teach credit courses in leadership or ethics. These interviews will be taped, transcribed, and analyzed so that I may: clarify the information presented in course syllabi; identify the leadership and ethics content that is currently being implemented in the context of undergraduate courses at the University of Saskatchewan; and explore how ethics and leadership are pedagogically integrated in these courses.

The interviews will be approximately one and a half hours in length. I would appreciate the opportunity to contact interview participants after the interview transcriptions have been completed for further clarification (if needed).

**Potential Risks:**

This study will involve very little risk to the participants. Upon the conclusion of the research, all the documented course information that has been collected by the researcher will be destroyed. The interview data that is collected will be confidentially and securely stored under lock and key by Dr. Scott McLean, Associate Dean (Research), Extension Division, University of Saskatchewan.



These interviews will provide participants with the opportunity to share their pedagogical strategies. All interview participants will be offered executive summaries of the study data upon completion of the research.

**Confidentiality:**

The findings of this study will be reported in my thesis, which will be defended as a partial requirement of the degree Masters of Continuing Education, Department of Educational Foundations, College of Education, University of Saskatchewan. The data gathered in this study will be reported both in aggregate form and by direct quotations. Your identity will be kept confidential. All identifying information (your name, the course title and number, your Department and College names) will be removed from the thesis report. You will be given a pseudonym, and consent forms will be stored separately from the study data so that it will not be possible to associate a name with any given set of responses. It should be noted, however, that participants are being sampled from a relatively small group; despite all best efforts to conceal identity, it may still be possible to be identified based on what you have said. For this reason, you will be given the opportunity to review the transcript of your interview, and to add, alter, or delete information from the transcripts as you see fit.

Upon conclusion of this study, all identifying information will be destroyed.

**Right to Withdraw:**

You may withdraw from this study for any reason, at any time. If you withdraw from the study at any time, any data that you have contributed will be destroyed.

**Questions:**

If you have any questions concerning the study, please feel free to ask at any point. In addition, you are also free to contact myself or my thesis supervisor at the numbers provided above if you have questions at a later time. This study has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Sciences Research Ethics Board on November 25, 2004. Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to that committee through the Office of Research Services (966-2084).

**Consent to Participate:**

I have read and understood the description provided above. I have been provided with an opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered satisfactorily. I consent to participate in the study described above, and I understand that I may withdraw this consent at any time. A copy of this consent form has been given to me for my records.

---

Signature of Participant

---

Date

---

Signature of Researcher

## APPENDIX B

### Content Analysis – Framework and Highlighting Key

## Content Analysis Framework

### *Quantitative Analysis*

How many times do:

- Specific words regarding leadership emerge in the document?
- Non-specific words regarding leadership emerge in the document?
- Specific words regarding ethics emerge in the document?
- Non-specific words regarding ethics emerge in the document?
- Words relating to both leadership and ethics emerge in the document?

Does the document make reference to a professional code of ethics?

### *Qualitative Analysis – Inquiry Framework*

1. How is leadership conceptualized in the context of this course? Is this latent or manifest?
2. How is ethics conceptualized in the context of this course? Is this latent or manifest?
3. What is the scope of leadership education in this course? Is this latent or manifest?
4. What is the scope of ethics education in this course? Is this latent or manifest?
5. Is a specific framework for ethical behavior / practice offered in this course?
6. Is a specific framework for effective leadership practice offered in this course?
7. What pedagogical strategies are used in this course?
8. Are leadership and ethics integrated in this course? How?

9. What is the range of assignments / exams (class evaluation model)? Are leadership and / or ethics explicitly mentioned in these?
10. Do class evaluations / exams / quizzes / assignments indicate an expectation that elements of ethics and / or leadership are learned by students participating in the course?
11. What “miscellaneous” items or themes occur in this document that may be of interest?

## Highlighting Key

**Specific words and phrases** = “Specially or peculiarly pertaining to a certain thing” (OED2, s.v. “specific”).

**Non-specific words and phrases** = “not restricted in extent”; “lacking in specificity, definiteness, or precision” (OED2, s.v. “non-specific”).

Words and phrases are here categorized as either specific or non-specific based on the researcher’s subjective perspective.

---

### **Yellow: specific words / phrases → “ethics”**

- ethics
- ethical
- ethical dilemma
- code of ethics
- moral
- morals
- beliefs
- principles
- values
- unethical
- bioethical

### **Pink: specific words / phrases → “leadership”**

- leadership
- leader
- facilitator
- manager
- management
- manage

### **Blue: non-specific words / phrases → “ethics”**

- social consciousness
- empathy
- conflict of interest
- personal boundaries
- respect
- accountability
- honesty
- integrity
- compassion
- legal issues
- licensure

- conscientious
- reliability
- confidentiality
- responsibility
- legal issues
- legal implications
- law
- trust
- rights
- safety
- privacy
- responsible
- duty
- whistle blowing
- confidential
- care
- fair
- conscience
- truth
- trustworthiness
- reliability
- obligation
- courage
- conflict of interest
- greater good
- virtue
- best interests
- justice
- kindness

**Green: non-specific words / phrases → “leadership”**

- self-awareness
- team work
- governance
- productivity
- service delivery
- practice
- communication
- interaction
- advocacy
- advocate
- professional competency
- standards for professional behavior
- group

- problem solving
- competence
- efficiency
- professional
- mediation
- knowledge
- cooperation
- commitment
- consistency
- mentor
- listening skills
- collaboration
- interpersonal interaction
- decision making
- integration
- interpersonal interaction
- delegation
- persistent
- flexibility
- vision
- initiate
- motivation
- courage

**Orange: words / phrases related to leadership and ethics:**

- Critical thinking
- Reflection
- Community / Community service
- Social action
- Social determinants
- Interdisciplinary
- Collaborative
- Linking theory to practice
- Greater social good
- Global society
- Collective



APPENDIX C

Interview Question Frameworks

## Interview Questions and Prompts – Ethics Courses

### *Introduction*

We're here today to discuss the course (insert course name) that you teach here, at the University of Saskatchewan. Of particular interest are the major themes of the course, the specific course content, and the teaching tools that you use in the practical context of the classroom.

If, at any time, you require clarification of a question or the interview process, please feel free to ask.

### *Question:*

1. Is this course required, or is it an elective?
  - What percentage of students (approximately) take this course if it is an elective?
2. Why was this course developed / why is it offered?
3. How was this course developed?
4. Are there any materials or subjects covered during this course that are not outlined on the syllabus?
  - Eg / Is any of the course content delivered on an improvisational basis, in response to student requests or in-class discussion?
5. What specific teaching tools do you use in the delivery of this course? Which, in your opinion, are the most effective?
  - Lecture
  - Large group discussion
  - Small group discussions

- Case studies
  - Experiential learning
  - Video
  - Guest presenters
  - Group presentations
  - In-class exercises
  - Etc.
6. What are the core principles that drive the delivery of this course?
- What are the major themes that underlie the course content?
7. Is the delivery of this course informed by a specific ethical point of view or any specific ethical theories? Please elaborate.
- Do you know how this ethical point of view was arrived at?
8. Is the subject of leadership incorporated into the content and / or delivery of this course?

*If the participant indicates “yes” to question #8:*

9. Is the delivery of the leadership content in this course informed by a particular leadership theory or point of view?
- How was this point of view arrived at?
10. How do you define “leadership” in the context of this course?
11. In this course, what activities are the concept(s) of “leadership” primarily related to (Eg/ professional practice, personal behaviour, community development, business management, environmental protection, social action, etc.)?

12. In this course, what specific skills, behaviours, or traits is “leadership” associated with (Eg/ communication skills, facilitation, empathy, etc.)?
13. Throughout this course, do you discuss any specific frameworks for practice that relate to ethical or leadership behaviours (Eg/ a decision making framework, steps for dealing with moral dilemmas, etc.)?
14. Is the inclusion of the subject of leadership in this course explicit or implicit?
15. What specific pedagogical tools are used to facilitate the integration of leadership into this course?
16. Have you encountered any significant obstacles when integrating leadership into this course?
  - If so, please describe the obstacles in detail.
17. How have students responded to the leadership content in this course?

*If the participant indicates “no” to question #8 :*

18. What is your perception of what “leadership” means?
19. Do you think that this course contains material regarding personal or professional development that is related to the practice of leadership?

*Conclusion*

Is there anything you would like to add or clarify?

Thank you for participating in this interview.

## Interview Questions and Prompts – Leadership Courses

### *Introduction*

We're here today to discuss the course (insert course name) that you teach here, at the University of Saskatchewan. Of particular interest are the major themes of the course, the specific course content, and the teaching tools that you use in the practical context of the classroom.

If, at any time, you require clarification of a question or the interview process, please feel free to ask.

### *Questions*

1. Is this course required, or is it an elective?
  - What percentage of students (approximately) take this course if it is an elective?
2. Why was this course developed / why is it offered?
3. How was this course developed?
4. Are there any materials or subjects covered during this course that are not outlined on the syllabus?
  - Eg / Is any of the course content delivered on an improvisational basis, in response to student requests or in class discussion?
5. What specific teaching tools do you use in the delivery of this course? Which tools, in your opinion, are the most effective?
  - Lecture
  - Large group discussion
  - Small group discussions

- Case studies
  - Experiential learning
  - Video
  - Guest presenters
  - Group presentations
  - In-class exercises
  - Etc.
6. What are the core principles that drive the delivery of this course?
- What are the major themes that underlie the course content?
7. Is the delivery of this course informed by a particular leadership theory or point of view?
- How was this point of view arrived at?
8. Is the subject of ethics incorporated into the content and delivery of this course?

*If the participant indicates “yes” to question #8:*

9. Is the delivery of the ethical content in this course informed by a specific ethical theory or point of view? Please elaborate.
- How was this ethical point of view arrived at?
10. What is the scope of the ethical content in this course (Eg/ does the course cover ethical theory, moral decision making, identifying ethical dilemmas, etc.)?
11. How do you define “ethics” in this course?
12. What activities are the concept(s) of “ethics” related to in this course (Eg/ professional practice, personal behaviour, community development, business management, environmental protection, social action, etc.)?

13. Throughout this course, do you discuss any specific frameworks for practice that relate to ethical or leadership behaviours (eg/ a decision making framework, steps for managing conflict situations, etc.)?
14. Is the inclusion of the subject of ethics in this course explicit or implicit?
15. What specific pedagogical tools are used to facilitate the integration of ethics into this course?
16. Have you encountered any significant obstacles when integrating ethics into this course?
  - If so, please describe the obstacles in detail.
17. How have students responded to the ethical content in this course?

*If the participant indicates “no” to question #8:*

18. What is your perception of what “ethics” means?
19. Do you think that this course contains material regarding personal or professional development that is related to the ethical practice?

*Conclusion*

Is there anything you would like to add or clarify?

Thank you for participating in this interview.