

Moral Orientation of Educators and Their Commitment to Core Professional Value: Preliminary Research Findings

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Abstract

Educators and other licensed professional caregivers often face ethical dilemmas in their respective practice when core professional values, reflective of the ethic of care moral orientation, are in conflict with policies that inform professional practices. More specifically, the moral orientation and commitment to professional values of educators play an essential role in the development and resolution of ethical dilemmas in the field of education. Conflicts between ethics, professional values and education policy can lead to relationships, and learning environments that are not conducive to learning. The ability to provide appropriate instruction and services for all students can be challenged when educators are faced with ethical dilemmas in their practice, resulting in inadequate education or inappropriate services. Little research has been done on bridging the policy-practice gaps that exist for educators in their day-to-day practice. This quantitative study employed the Measure of Moral Orientation and the Commitment to Core Professional Values Scale to assess teachers' commitment to professional values and their preferred moral voice –Justice vs. Care. Findings showed that teachers were strongly committed to core professional values and had a preferred moral voice of justice. Implications for practice will be discussed.

Keywords: conflict, ethic of care, ethic of justice, moral voice, policy-practice gap