

9-1-2012

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Recommended Citation

Ogilvie, John R. (2012) "Mary Gentile Helps Our Students Give Voice to Their Values," *Organization Management Journal*: Vol. 9: Iss. 3, Article 6.

Available at: <https://scholarship.shu.edu/omj/vol9/iss3/6>

WHITE PAPER

Mary Gentile Helps Our Students Give Voice to Their Values

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At all levels of education, questions are being raised and assumptions challenged. Educators, administrators, government officials, and society in general have raised questions about the effectiveness of education methods. Business students in particular have been accused of low levels of preparation and skating through courses (Glenn, April 14, 2011). One response to these concerns is to “flip” classrooms to engage students and find better means of learning (Bergmann & Sams, 2011; Ojalvo & Doyne, 2011). Flipping moves traditional lectures online and alternatively, class time is used for problem solving and answering questions. You may have received an e-mail about a workshop on flipped learning recently as well. The White Paper by Mary Gentile, though not linked directly to the flipping movement, embodies similar principles in efforts to help students resolve ethical dilemmas. She challenges some of our basic assumptions about ethics education and offers some new thoughts and approaches about teaching ethics.

At the same time, others are noting the lack of ethics among business students (Foreman, 2006) and executives (Carroll, 2007). These observations have led to further questions about how ethics are taught in business schools (Evans, Trevino & Weaver, 2006). The curriculum and methods of teaching ethics to business students has likewise been questioned (Canales, Massey, & Wrzesniewski, 2010).

Mary Gentile has tackled all of these concerns in her White Paper. As suggested in her book *Giving Voice to Values* (2010) and her website based at Babson (www.GivingVoiceToValues.org), this paper extends the views in her book to further reflect on how her approach has grown and what it has been able to achieve. It is based on a values-driven approach to leadership, which begins with self-examination, a strong tradition in the field of management and organizational behavior.

We often focus only on awareness and analysis of ethical issues. Dr. Gentile’s Giving Voice to Values (GVV) approach goes beyond analysis to action. Managers need to make decisions and take action, even in disconcerting ethical dilemmas. Students

are active and engaged in discussing how they will act in these dilemmas using their values as a foundation.

Although the typical approach to flipping materials tends to focus on *how* things are done in the classroom, this White Paper also flips to what and who are taught. Her approach offers alternatives to persuading or preaching, with which many of us are uncomfortable.

GVV has been widely adopted in over 140 schools and organizations on six continents. Private corporations, like Lockheed Martin, have adopted this approach, and others are interested in using GVV for corporate training. Given the importance of both developing ethical managers and the need to improve learning effectiveness, GVV offers us some new variations on teaching ethics.

Mary Gentile is getting it done through GVV. Explore the links, try some of the cases and activities, even consider integrating her approach more broadly into your course and curriculum. Question your assumptions, try new alternatives, and develop research activities to test them.

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