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| **Case Report 2**  Name: Aaron Timberlake, Felisha Stanley, Grant Holloway, Jessica Hoffman, Mariah Skeeters  Section: -77  Case Study: 3.2  Date: 3/13/2016 |

In society, mankind strives to maximize benefits while minimizing costs. Roger Gleason and Mary Lou Duffy find themselves in a similar situation as they face an ethical dilemma that will impact various stakeholders. Gleason is a mathematics teacher at City High School. He is rather ambitious and hopes that the transfer to City High School will enhance his career. The school has an excellent academic reputation despite lacking funding, necessary resources, and belonging to a district of low income families. Many students enter City High School below the academic standard and begin high school behind in math and English. Gleason as well as many of the teachers at City High School put in a substantial amount of extra effort and time helping the students reach the standard academic level. A generous donation of 22 Power Macintosh PCs was given to the school, and it was decided that Gleason would run a new mathematic computer lab containing 14 of the 22 computers. During a meeting with the highly regarded Principal of City High School, Duffy, the question arose of how to acquire the software for this new math lab. Principal Duffy made it abundantly clear that there was no room in the budget to fund the purchase of new software licenses for the computers, and without a software program, the math lab would be useless. MATHTUTOR is an educational software program and decidedly the best candidate for the aspirations of this new math lab. However, the company that owns the rights to MATHTUTOR does not donate software or offer any special deals for their product. To cover just 10 of the 14 computers would have an estimated cost of $7,000 that the school did not have. The school currently owns one license for the MATHTUTOR program, and Principal Duffy suggested they simply make copies of the software for the other computers. Both Principal Duffy and Gleason know that this is a wrong decision, and she left the decision up to Gleason since he was head of the program. MATHTUTOR made hefty profits the year before, and when Gleason considers the educational deprivation of the students, he becomes conflicted on the right course of action. Is it morally ethical to take another’s intellectual property (in this case, software), even if the company or owner is financially stable and has a high return on their investment? If such an act is selfless and non-for-profit, and copying the software would benefit students who already face economic hardship, is it acceptable to make copies of another’s work to help someone less fortunate? Should Gleason make a copy of the software?

In order to make a fully-informed decision about the correct approach to this ethical dilemma, it is important to consider the IT components involved. Within this case, it is relevant that 22 Power Macintosh Personal Computers with 100 megabytes of memory each have been donated to City High School, and 14 of those 22 computers will be used to create a new math lab. Gleason and Duffy want to install MATHTUTOR, a software on a series of diskettes that teaches many subjects of math, onto these computers. This software will alleviate the stress put on faculty members who volunteer their time to tutor students in remedial math. If the new computers and MATHTUTOR software were available to students, faculty would be able to help more students or spend more time perfecting their curriculum. In general, all students would benefit from this math lab in some way.

In addition to the relevant IT components, the relevant stakeholders and their rights further complicate the process of solving this ethical dilemma. The four main stakeholders in this scenario are Gleason, Duffy, the students of City High School, and MATHTUTOR. As a teacher, Gleason has the right to try providing his students with the best educational resources available to them. He also has the right to minimize the workload of other faculty members who volunteer to tutor students. He knows it would be most efficient if students used a math tutoring software on the new computers, and at the same time, faculty members can spend their extra time reaching out to other students. Most importantly, Gleason has a right to refuse to make copies of MATHTUTOR because copying the software is illegal and he could be held responsible. Principal Duffy also has a right and responsibility to provide her students with necessary learning resources that will help them catch up academically. She also aims to maximize faculty efficiency, which means utilizing the new computers to teach students while the faculty teaches more students. Since she appointed Gleason as the program coordinator, she has the right to blame him if he makes a decision that gets them in trouble, even if she had pressured him to make that decision. Every student of City High School has a right to receive the best education that can be offered to them. They have a right to expect resources and opportunities that will allow them to apply to colleges without worrying about their ability to compete with other applicants. If these students lack remedial math skills, they will have a difficult time surviving general education courses in college. Ultimately, the academic success of these students is the most important thing the teachers and principal of City High School. MATHTUTOR has a right to profit from their software and protect their intellectual property. They most likely have a copyright which restricts distribution and copying of the software. Purchasing one copy does not give someone the right to copy it onto multiple computers and deprive MATHTUTOR of their rightful profits. Overall, the rights of these stakeholders cause conflict when deciding the best course of action.

The first possible course of action would be to copy the software. They would secure the resource for the deserving students, and the teachers would get a break from teaching the remedial math. Also, this would expedite the learning process so the students could gain the competitive advantage they need for college. The downside to this plan is that the company that produces MATHTUTOR loses revenue. The most negative consequence of this scenario would result in Gleason and the school would get caught for copyright infringement and be prosecuted by MATHTUTOR. This would ultimately incur more costs to the high school than if they purchased the software.

A second plan would be to raise money to purchase the software and use it legally. Despite potentially taking years to accomplish, the software should be obtained without breaking any laws while making sure MATHTUTOR receives their profit. Students could participate in a fundraiser that will contribute to the cost of the software. However, a negative outcome would entail Gleason giving up on the school altogether after years of fundraising without acquiring the $7000. Furthermore, if the funds are raised but have to be used for a completely different purpose, Gleason would be frustrated and decide to work at a more affluent school. The students would lose a dedicated teacher that truly wanted to help them further their academic career.

While trying to raise the money externally through fundraisers, Gleason could try approaching the school board itself and convince them to fund the department so they can pay for the software. They could also try to raise money from internally by asking other departments for assistance. The computers could eventually benefit all departments, and in the meantime, Gleason could lend the lab to teachers of English, Science, and other departments. If the other teachers ran into funding issues as well, he could help them. The school board will see that multiple departments are suffering, and they would be more likely to consider increasing the budget if they notice everyone’s effort to solve the problem. They are all part of the same school, trying to reach the same goal. Helping the students prepare for the real world should be their main goal whether that be in math, English or any other skills, and it is important that the focus be on the students. For that reason the other teacher would hopefully help to raise the money for the betterment of the students.

Alternatively, the last course of action includes Gleason and the principal trying to sell some of the computers to purchase the software. On the bright side, some computers would still be of use in the math classrooms, and it would alleviate the burden on the teachers which results in an increase of student skills. However, the students need a dedicated computer lab to fully reap the benefits of the software because this would give each student plenty of time to learn. There is also a possibility that the sale of the software would anger the company that donated the computers, causing them to refuse to help the high school in the future and demand compensation. What if they did nothing? This course of action has been considered, and it is not a viable option. Although no laws would be broken that result in cheating the company out of software revenue if Gleason did nothing, the students would miss an opportunity to use sophisticated software they have never used before to increase their math skills. Even worse, the computers become useless and underutilized, eventually being sold or given away to fund teacher salaries.

When viewing this case from the deontological perspective, Gleason should not make the copies. Deontological views focus solely on the act and whether or not it is intrinsically moral to perform that act. The act of copying the software is wrong, no matter what that means for the students and the school. Also, it is morally wrong to teach students that stealing is an acceptable way of getting what you want or need. Gleason and the principal would be endorsing lying, from a deontological viewpoint, if they decided to copy the software. From a teleological perspective, the correct decision would be to copy the software onto the other computers in order to provide students with important math tutoring. Currently, there are many obstacles in the way of successfully having the lab up and running, and nothing is guaranteed. Teleological perspectives focus on the consequence of the action, not the action itself. If the consequence can justify an action, then the act is not immoral. In this case, copying the software would result in an immediate improvement of the math tutoring program. Students and faculty alike would benefit because the software would enhance the students’ math skills, and the faculty could better divide their time between tutoring and preparing to teach their own classes. From this view, the end justifies the means. Either way, the students, who are our future, would benefit greatly from this lab if it contains the math tutoring software.

Following thorough analysis, we have concluded that Roger Gleason must explore alternate options such as internal and external fundraising, going to the media for further donations, approaching the Board of Education for additional funding, or selling a couple computers to raise funds. If these options have been tried and failed and they have not reached their goal, then Gleason could possibly go to MATHTUTOR and ask them for a donation on the difference. This approach takes a lot more time and effort than simply making a copy, but this is the ethically right decision to make. If they copy the MATHTUTOR software, they are teaching students to lie and steal in order to obtain necessities. Even when faced with extreme difficulties, it is never morally correct to lie, cheat, or steal to reach your goals. Gleason should do anything legal and within his power to ethically obtain the tutoring software for these students. This option may not guarantee that the students will get the software they so desperately need and deserve, but as teachers and role models, they would be exhibiting a vital value in today’s world. Individuals should use truth, honesty, integrity, and hard work to reach goals. Stealing the software is not universally sound; if everyone took the copy approach, our economy would suffer and future growth of software development would diminish. Our society’s current view of intellectual property shows that people greedily take the teleological approach. People need to know about the opportunities to reach their goals in a moral way. Gleason’s situation may not seem significant on its own, but it represents a common ethical dilemma we constantly face today.