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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 the lack of funding and necessary resources, as well as 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. Many of the teachers, including Gleason dedicate substantial amount of extra effort and time to help 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 course of action is considered ethically wrong, however, Duffy left the decision up to Gleason since he was head of the program.

MATHTUTOR made hefty profits the year before, and when Gleason considers this and 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 for a non-profit cause would it be considered morally acceptable? If 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. Furthermore, Gleason is an educator and a role model for all students. By making a copy of the software, he is not setting a good example for his students to follow.

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 basic math skills while the teachers focus on other areas of improvement. Since she appointed Gleason as the program coordinator, she has the right to blame him for copying the software if they were to be caught (which is highly likely), even if she had pressured him to make that decision. She also has the right and responsibility as a Principal, a role model, and a representative of the school to follow all laws and ultimately reverse her stance to copy the software.

Every student of City High School has a right to receive the best education that can be offered to them no matter their social or economic situation. They have a right to expect resources and opportunities that will give them the basic skills and education to better their lives and 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 goal of 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. Since MATHTUTOR is their top candidate, they presumably deserve to reap the profits for their outstanding product and well-designed program. 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 could focus on other teaching aspects that demand their attention. Also, this would expedite the learning process so the students could gain the competitive advantage they need for college and possibly reach kids who have a different learning process. The downside to this plan is that the producer of MATHTUTOR loses revenue for their highly established product. The most negative consequence of this scenario would result in Gleason and the school being caught for copyright infringement and being prosecuted by MATHTUTOR. This would ultimately incur more costs to the high school than if they purchased the software. Gleason will most likely be held accountable since he would physically copy the software and ultimately make the choice to do it. The probable negative repercussions will reflect upon Gleason’s career and ultimately tarnish his role as an educator. Most importantly this course of action will teach the students that copying or stealing software is an acceptable means to reach ones goal.

A second plan would be to raise money to purchase the software and use it legally. Despite a prolonged approach to accomplish the success of the math lab, the software would be obtained without breaking any laws while making sure MATHTUTOR receives their profit. Students could participate in fundraisers that would contribute to the cost of the software as well as produce a proud and rewarding result. They could also go to the media, tell their story, and ask for additional donations to complete their much needed math lab. There is also the possibility to ask MATHTUTOR once again for a discount based on their outstanding dedication and commitment to obtain their product ethically. However, a negative outcome would be directing attention to the fundraising and not the tutoring of students who currently still need the extra help. The prolonged approach may not allow some students to see the math lab up and running, and with attention focused on fundraising, these students may fall behind. Furthermore, if the funds were raised but other needs for the school arise, there is the possibility that the money is used towards to a completely different purpose. MATHTUTOR may also deny this request despite their noble efforts, and they may not reach their goal by fundraising or donations. Gleason could also become frustrated with the time-consuming process and decide to work at a more affluent school. The students could lose a dedicated teacher that truly wanted to help them further their academic career.

Principal Duffy and Gleason could try approaching the school board and convince them to support the new math lab by paying for the software or at least contributing some funds to the cause. Considering the generous donation of the computers and their outstanding academic performance, as well as Duffy’s high recognition within the education community, the board’s decision could be swayed. The board could possibly acknowledge the efforts of the students and faculty and make some sort of contribution for the math lab. They could however, deny the request and claim the lack of money to support the project. The board may make a recommendation to refocus the project into a general tutoring lab that could be used for all departments such as math, English and science. The school board will see that multiple departments are suffering from the lack of necessary resources, and could be more likely to consider increasing the budget if they notice everyone’s effort to solve the problem. If all departments were involved, this could conclude to more support in 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 departments could help raise the money for the betterment of all of the students and staff.

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 lab, 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.

Alternatively, 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, with the possibility of being sold or given away to fund other needs. Too many other feasible choices and course of actions exist to consider doing nothing!

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. As educators and positive role models this would not be the ethical choice.

From a teleological perspective, one alternative 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. Current student and future students as well as the faculty would benefit because the software would enhance the students’ math skills, and the teachers could better divide their time between tutoring and preparing to teach their own classes. From this view, the end justifies the means.

However, copying the software for the overall benefit of City High School demonstrates ethical egoism by focusing on their own self-interest and does not consider the impact on the global economy as a whole. If it was leaked that they copied the software (this is highly possible), then the math lab would ultimately be shut down, and City High School will reap no benefits from the lab. Teleological views also have emphasis on the greater good for the greater number of people. Copying the software may have a positive impact on student education, staff members, as well as sympathetic members of the community. If we did not have these laws and morals to protect the creators of such work then there would be no incentive to make the investment to develop them; these creations impact various fields that shape our economy. This idea might be reflected in future generations, which would negatively impact our economy and the greater good of our society.

Following thorough analysis, we have concluded that Roger Gleason as an individual would be expressing altruism for City High School without any regard of his own self-interest which could have a major impact on his career, personal, legal, and social life if he decided to make the copies of the MATHTUTOR program. He must explore alternate solutions rather than simply making copies of the software. By combining internal and external fundraising, going to the media for further donations, approaching the Board of Education for additional funding, and even asking MATHTUTOR for a discount or donation once again, Gleason’s actions would contribute to a better result for the students, himself, and everyone involved with the school. If all else fails and they do not reach their goal, then selling a couple computers to raise more money for the needed software is also an alternative course of action that could help meet their goal and keep Gleason out of trouble.

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, egoistic approach. People need to identify and utilize alternative 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.

Gleason has worked hard to build a well-established career as an educator, and he takes pride in his accomplishments. If he were to make the copy and be caught, it would negatively impact all the hard work he has put forth thus far. Gleason is dedicated and ambitious, and he can get this lab running without deceit and manipulation.